

Intergovernmental negotiating committee to develop an international legally binding instrument on plastic pollution, including in the marine environment

Bureau meeting

Tuesday, 21 January 2025

15:00- 17:00 EAT

Online

DRAFT SUMMARY AND ACTION POINTS INC BUREAU MEETING 21 JANUARY 2025

Note by the Secretariat

1. The meeting was attended by the following members:

INC Chair: Mr. Luis Vayas Valdivieso (Ecuador);

African States: Ms. Juliet Kabera (Rwanda); Mr. Ndiaye Cheikh Sylla (Senegal);

Asia-Pacific States: Mr. Hiroshi Ono (Japan); Mr. Mohammed Albarrak (Saudi Arabia);

Eastern European States: Mr. Harry Liiv (Estonia); Ms. Irma Gurguliani (Georgia);

Latin American and Caribbean States: Mr. Gustavo Meza-Cuadra Velasquez (Peru);

Small-Island Developing States: Ms. Asha Challenger (Antigua and Barbuda);

Western European and Other States: Ms. Johanna Lissinger-Peitz (Sweden); Ms. Larke Williams (United States of America).

2. The Bureau was joined by the Executive Director of United Nations Environment Programme, Ms. Inger Andersen.
3. The Secretariat was represented by the Executive Secretary of the INC, Ms. Jyoti Mathur-Filipp.
4. **The INC Chair opened the meeting and provided his reflections on the outcomes and lessons learnt from INC-5.1.** In doing so, he indicated that this meeting would focus on two points: (1) taking stock of INC-5.1 and (2) discussing the preparations for the resumed fifth session of the Committee (INC-5.2). He welcomed and thanked the Bureau, the Executive Director, the Secretariat and his team for their hard work in Busan. He noted all the preparation done well in advance for the session and recognised that, as expected, there were challenges. The Chair highlighted that INC-5.1 revealed many more areas of convergence than divergence and that the session provided an opportunity to engage in critical dialogue that will secure a comprehensive global instrument. The Chair accentuated that, going forward, improving the dialogue between groups of countries will be crucial for turning the bridges built in Busan into concrete roads for the effective fulfilment of the Committee's mandate. In concluding his opening intervention, he acknowledged the commitment and hard work of all the participants at INC-5.1, encouraging a strategic and organised planning for INC-5.2. He noted that the

second part of INC-5 is ahead of us, a session that calls on everyone to engage in critical dialogue at different levels in preparation.

5. **The Executive Director provided her reflections on the outcomes and lessons learnt from INC-5.1.** The Executive Director noted that there were meaningful advancements at INC-5.1, however, divergences remain in key areas. In her reflections, she highlighted the need for a clear organization of work and encouraged early strategic planning for INC-5.2. She emphasized the importance of timely and clear in-session scheduling, building also on lessons from other multilateral processes. She also noted the need for early consensus building, including crafting a pathway to increase bilateral and multilateral conversations. The Executive Director further highlighted the role of the Bureau in ensuring a smooth preparation for and organization of work at INC-5.2.
6. **The Executive Secretary provided a briefing on the feedback received through the INC-5.1. survey to participants,** the summary of which is available on the [INC-5 website](#). She also provided the [final attendance figures](#).
7. **The Bureau discussed lessons learnt from INC-5.1,** as per the guiding questions circulated ahead of the meeting (see annex). Overall progress on the text was noted. Based on the lessons learned from INC-5.1, increased clarity on the organization of work, schedule and the decision-making modalities at INC-5.2 were seen as essential. The importance of transparency was also highlighted, as well as the need to improve information sharing and coordination. Among other lessons, the need for inclusive consultations with all regions and establishing a clear flow of work between contact groups and informals were noted. Some suggested that the Contact Group structure from INC-5.1 might be retained at INC-5.2, if appropriate. The importance of clear mandates for the Contact Groups was raised as well as the importance of empowerment of co-chairs in moving the draft text forward. A stronger Bureau involvement, optimal utilization of the intersessional period, and a clear pathway in decision-making were essential in moving forward.
8. Additionally, comments were heard on the **Bureau's responsibility in leading the process and its involvement in decision-making**, and members of some region also highlighted the need to respect the announced schedules **to the extent possible**. Some noted that their regional group's priorities and submissions are not reflected in the current iteration of the Chair's text. It was noted that there was a need for clear guidance on the flow of negotiations and increased transparency in development in the non-paper in order to retain trust. In this regard, a Bureau member also emphasized the importance of continued coordinated work between the Secretariat and Chair.
9. The Chair took note of the feedback and summarized the views heard, acknowledging the organizational and time constraints, as well as the need for building ownership of the text. A **retreat with the Bureau and co-chairs** was proposed, preferably in conjunction with other meetings during the intersessional period, considering the financial constraints, during which the modalities of work and consistency across contact groups could be addressed.
10. **The Executive Director updated the Bureau on the status of the logistical planning for INC-5.2.** She informed the Bureau that the date and venue of INC-5.2 are yet to be determined and that consultations are ongoing to identify a suitable date and fit-for-purpose venue. She further added that, given tight timelines, the Secretariat is exploring venues, taking into account the availability and suitability of premises and of existing legal arrangements. While discussions are still ongoing, the possibility of holding INC-5.2 in Geneva in mid-July is being explored. The Bureau will be consulted prior to any formal announcement.

11. Bureau members requested that **relevant international and regional meetings be taken into account in determining the dates of the session to avoid overlaps**, including the BRICS meeting in Brazil in early July and BRS COP in late April until early May. It was pointed out that August might pose challenges with participation of some of the ministers. One member pointed out that a meeting in early July would therefore be preferable, notwithstanding the other meetings that are scheduled during that period. Questions were raised about the possibility of holding the session in Bangkok at the UN Convention Centre, or at other UN Headquarters. It was clarified that the venue in Bangkok did not have the required capacity, and that all other venues are being explored. Regarding the duration of INC-5.2, based on the lessons learned throughout the process, the need for a session longer than one week was emphasized, with varied comments that suggest a length between 10 to 14 days, with the possibility of a one-day break. The importance of ministerial engagement during the intersessional period and at INC-5.2 was also noted. The Secretariat was requested to take into account the above considerations when exploring possibilities for dates and venue for the session.
12. The Bureau took note that an **ad hoc Bureau meeting** may need to be convened to consult on the dates and venue of INC-5.2, once the Secretariat has identified a more definitive option.
13. **The intersessional period in the lead up to INC-5.2** was discussed. The Chair opened the discussions identifying two key achievements for the Committee to reach ahead of INC-5.2. Firstly, an in-person Heads of Delegation (HODs) meeting to make progress on substantive issues, as occurred between INC-4 and INC-5.1. Secondly, securing political momentum for the strategic engagement of high-level authorities in the process. The Bureau noted that HODs meetings before the session in Busan were particularly useful. The need for both online and in-person HODs meetings in the lead-up to INC-5.2 was highlighted. The Executive Director noted that an in-person HODs meeting could possibly take place in May. She also noted that currently the necessary financial resources to support the organization of any HODs or other in-person meetings were insufficient, and the Secretariat would start the mobilization of resources. She invited the Bureau Members to bring this issue to the attention of the relevant constituencies.
14. The Bureau discussed **Observer participation**, with various members reiterating that the involvement of Observer organizations in the process remains essential. In this regard, members of one region noted that Civil Society Organizations had not been involved adequately in the process despite their regions' requests, and that their effective participation in all meetings should be ensured at future meetings. Another added that while effective participation by Observers should be ensured, the venue capacity and budget constraints should equally be considered when determining the parameters of intersessional work meetings. It was further noted that HODs meetings require careful planning to provide a useful platform, during which contact group co-chairs could possibly play an important role.
15. The Chair noted that his consultations so far showed that there were different views among INC Members on the **potential focus of future HODs meetings**, with some preferring to discuss areas of existing convergence, while others suggested utilizing the HODs to bridge diverging views. The Chair also noted the importance of regional consultations and the possibility that they take place prior to or during an in-person HODs meeting.
16. The Bureau also discussed the **effective use of the intersessional period**, including the importance of capitalizing on other relevant multilateral meetings for engagement, such as the BRS COP and 2025 UN Ocean Conference. A Bureau member also noted that the intersessional period should be effectively utilized to ensure that the Legal Drafting Group can immediately begin work upon commencement of INC 5.2. It was also emphasized that the intersessional period could be used to arrive at agreement on the Rules of Procedure so that they can be adopted.

17. **The Bureau invited the Chair to prepare an initial draft of a roadmap document** outlining the process leading up to INC-5.2 for discussion in a future Bureau meeting. This document could be developed once the dates and venue of INC-5.2 have been determined.
18. **The Bureau was informed of the letter addressed to the Chair of the INC and copied to the Bureau members, received from the International Pollutants Elimination Network (IPEN), dated 17 January 2025, setting out concerns on the modalities of balanced Observer participation in the INC process.** The Bureau emphasized the importance of effective Observer participation at INC-5.2 and nobody objected to the participation of observers. The Chair acknowledged these requests, indicating he would share his response with the Bureau for information and that, as has been consistent with previous practice, both letters would be made available on the INC website.
19. **The Bureau requested (i) annotated agendas for upcoming Bureau meetings, highlighting areas for decision-making; and (ii) that Bureau meeting reports should be prepared by the Secretariat and shared with Bureau members the day after the meeting.** The report should be validated by the Bureau in order to maintain up to date records of the meetings. The Chair and the Secretariat took note of the requests. The Chair indicated Tuesday, 18 February 2025, as the date for next meeting of the Bureau.

Annex: Guiding questions circulated to the Bureau on Friday, 10 January 2025

Agenda Item 2. Outcomes of INC-5 and lessons learnt.

Which lessons from INC-5 can we bring forward to ensure a successful conclusion of the negotiation process?

Agenda Item 3. Planning towards INC-5.2.

a. Logistical update by the Secretariat.

b. Discussion on the preparations for the second part of the fifth session of the INC.

How can we best utilize this informal inter-sessional period so that we may advance in the substantive preparations for INC 5.2?

In what manner can we improve upon the existing organization of work for INC negotiations to best employ time?