

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

Bureau meeting

Monday, 25 May 2026

15:00- 17:00 EAT

Online

INFORMAL NOTES AND ACTION POINTS INC BUREAU MEETING 25 MAY 2026

Note by the Secretariat

1. The meeting was attended by the following members:

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: Mr. Linroy Christian (Antigua and Barbuda);

Western European and Other States: Ms. Johanna Lissinger-Peitz (Sweden); Ms. Larke Williams (United States of America).
2. The meeting was presided over by the Chair of the Committee, Ambassador Julio Cordano.
3. The Secretariat was represented by the Executive Secretary of the INC, Ms. Jyoti Mathur-Filipp.
4. On request of the Bureau at the outset of the meeting, the Legal Advisor clarified that the draft rules of procedure provisionally applied to the work of the INC do not preclude the Bureau from agreeing on dates for meetings when one of the constituencies is not present. He further noted that meetings of the Committee, in the absence of a decision by the INC itself, are convened by the Executive Director of UNEP in consultation with the Bureau. Taking note of the explanation, and recognizing past practice, the Chair proposed to hold an informal meeting, as not all constituencies were represented.
5. In the absence of representation of all constituencies on the Bureau, the Chair proposed to use the meeting agenda as a guide to structure discussions without adopting the agenda.
6. The Chair thanked the Bureau members for their continued engagement in the process and for working with their constituencies toward INC-5.4. He remarked that the meeting would focus on the next steps toward the implementation of the Roadmap set out in the Chair's second letter of [16 March 2026](#), and in particular the upcoming informal virtual Heads of Delegation meeting of 30 May and informal in-person Heads of Delegation meeting beginning 30 June.
7. In her opening remarks, the Executive Secretary informed the Bureau that the second informal virtual Heads of Delegation meeting held on 30 April was attended by 241 participants representing 112 Members of the Committee. She noted that the second webinar with Observers

to the INC, held on 19 May in two sessions to accommodate participants across different time zones, was attended by 293 participants, including delegates representing 16 Members of the Committee.

8. The Executive Secretary informed the Bureau that the third informal virtual Heads of Delegation meeting is being held in two sessions on 3 and 4 June to accommodate participants across different time zones. The 'Meeting Outline and Guiding Questions' was circulated to Members of the Committee on 20 May and Members were requested to register by 29 May. As of the date of reporting, 268 delegates representing 132 Members of the Committee have registered for the informal virtual meeting.
9. The Executive Secretary also informed the Bureau that 320 delegates representing 141 Members of the Committee have registered for the informal in-person Heads of Delegation meeting beginning 30 June, with a registration deadline of 14 June 2026. She recalled that a notification has been circulated to Members informing them that the meeting will now follow a 'Head of Delegation plus three' format, which is an increase from the previously applied 'Head of Delegation plus two' format. Therefore, Members are reminded that participation will include the designated Head of Delegation, or their designated representative, accompanied by up to three additional delegates.
10. Under agenda item 2 on 'Adoption of the report of the Bureau meeting of 23 April 2026', the Chair noted that the report would not be raised for adoption without all regional groups represented, and that this item would be raised at a subsequent meeting.
11. On agenda item 3 on 'Updates on the implementation of the Roadmap' the Chair noted his intention to release an additional communication in advance of the informal in-person Heads of Delegation meeting in Nairobi to reflect the latest developments in the steps toward INC-5.4, based on inputs and feedback provided by the Bureau and Members of the Committee. He further noted that this additional communication will be prepared to assist Members in engaging at the in-person Heads of Delegation meeting, and will be developed to elaborate on the approach to be taken at that meeting.
12. The Chair thanked a Bureau member representing the Asia-Pacific States for sharing with the Bureau a written summary of the Member-led meeting held in Dakar, Senegal from 10-12 May, and also thanked all Bureau members for their onward transmission of this summary to their respective constituencies.
13. Responding to the Chair's request for updates on Member-led meetings that took place since the last Bureau meeting, one Bureau member provided an update on informal discussions that took place among a group of Members on the topic of product design. The Bureau member noted that the group had acknowledged the importance of transparency in the Chair's Roadmap and proposed that the Bureau members could circulate an informal text on product design, transmitted to the Bureau, representing progress made at INC-5.2, to their respective constituencies ahead of the informal in-person Heads of Delegation meeting in Nairobi, clarifying that the text does not prejudice future negotiations or outcomes under the INC process.
14. The Chair informed the Bureau that he has continued to meet with Members and Observers, both individually and in groups since the last Bureau meeting. The Chair provided an overview of the recent meetings he has held with Observers and emphasized that such meetings continue to provide an opportunity to hear about matters of priority to Observers. He underscored that he will continue such engagements on a regular basis, with additional meetings scheduled throughout the current week and in the future.
15. The Chair recalled that the second informal virtual Heads of Delegation meeting was held on 30 April. He noted that his [summary document](#) of the meeting was transmitted to the INC Focal

Points on 12 May and was also published on the [INC website](#). He expressed his hope that the summary document will remain helpful to the Members of the Committee as a means of capturing progress and noted that he intends to continue to prepare and share such summaries of future informal meetings. Bureau members welcomed the summary, noting that it aligns with the principle of transparency.

16. The Chair provided an overview of the discussions that took place during the most recent informal virtual Heads of Delegation meeting, recalling that it focused on the issues of scope of the future instrument as well as complementarity and collaboration of the instrument with existing legal regimes. He noted that these topics were chosen as a means of exploring both the inner contours and outer limits of the instrument, and underscored that the interrelationships between these topics can continue to be explored as discussions progress.
17. The Chair encouraged Members to continue engaging on the topic of scope leading to INC-5.4, including in a manner that explores its relationship with other topics under consideration for the future instrument. The Chair also encouraged Members to continue considering the role that the future instrument will play within the landscape of existing Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs) and legal regimes, noting the importance of avoiding duplication with other MEAs and identifying the lines of collaboration with existing legal regimes.
18. Under agenda item 4 on 'Next steps to INC-5.4' the Chair introduced two documents related to the next steps in the Roadmap that were sent to the Bureau in advance of the meeting. The first document contained the meeting outline and guiding questions for the upcoming informal virtual Heads of Delegation meeting of 3 and 4 June, and was shared with the Bureau for information on 19 May. It was then circulated on 20 May to the INC Focal Points and registered participants of the virtual Heads of Delegation meeting. He noted that this virtual Heads of Delegation meeting would be held in two sessions to accommodate participants in different time zones, as requested by Bureau members in previous meetings.
19. The Chair outlined the document containing the meeting outline and guiding questions for the informal virtual Heads of Delegation meeting, referring to the guiding questions on the topics of plastic products and national plans and national reporting. He noted that the topics had been chosen based on conversations with Members and groups of Members, and that the narrative section of the document sets out the rationale for selecting these topics for discussion.
20. Responding to a question, the Chair informed the Bureau that the informal virtual Heads of Delegation meeting should be considered as a single meeting that is being organized in two sessions, rather than being considered as two separate meetings. He explained that this was to ensure broad participation across time zones and that Members giving an intervention in the first part of the meeting should refrain from duplicating that intervention in the second part.
21. Bureau members expressed support for the content of the document while underscoring the importance of sharing guiding questions in advance to ensure Members of the Committee are able to adequately prepare for meetings.
22. The Chair then introduced the second document, a draft 'Note by the Chair', which sets out information on the informal in-person Heads of Delegation meeting scheduled to begin 30 June in Nairobi. The draft note includes information on the objective, proposed outcomes, format, mode of work, clusters, co-facilitators and documentation related to the meeting, along with a proposed daily schedule of work for the meeting.
23. In relation to the participation format of the informal in-person Heads of Delegation meeting, the Chair noted that it had been adjusted from a "Head of Delegation plus two" to a "Head of Delegation plus three" format, following discussions with Members. He emphasized that this adjustment would not affect the existing travel support arrangements for the meeting, and that

no additional applications for travel support could be accommodated. As most tickets for sponsored delegates have already been issued by the Secretariat, the Chair informed the Bureau that it is no longer possible to accommodate last minute changes in beneficiary allocations for travel support.

24. The Chair also noted that the additional participants would need to be accounted for in room capacities at the meeting, including rooms for regional meetings, to avoid overcrowding, in accordance with security, health and safety requirements. He further informed the Bureau that the Secretariat had advised that there was limited flexibility to reallocate rooms, including for regional groups, and to modify the format or capacity of existing rooms.
25. On request of the Chair, the Secretariat provided an overview of room capacities for the meeting, including regional meeting rooms. The Secretariat further noted that there would be some bilateral meeting rooms available that delegations can reserve, recalling that the instructions to reserve rooms have been included in the [Information Note to Participants](#) of the meeting.
26. The Chair highlighted his intention to draw on the spirit of Nairobi at the in-person Heads of Delegation meeting by adopting a ‘Pamoja-Umoja’ approach. This approach would emphasize the Swahili concepts of ‘togetherness’ and ‘unity’ by opening and closing the meeting using a collaborative approach that draws on reflections from participants.
27. He outlined that the in-person meeting would have two main purposes. The first related to providing an opportunity for Members to meet in-person for the first substantive discussions since INC-5.2 in order to review progress made in the process to date. This review of progress would contribute to the Chair’s development of an informal reference document, which will be a no-surprises text and will reflect the most advanced points of progress reached on each topic in formal sessions to date. He emphasized that this informal reference document will be prepared as an ‘Aid to Negotiations’ and will contain only previously stated positions and content. He noted that the document would not prejudge positions and could contain options or placeholders where there are multiple approaches to an issue. The Chair informed the Bureau that he intended to release the first iteration of this ‘Aid to Negotiations’ after the in-person Heads of Delegation meeting, with a revised version to be released later in the year to reflect any evolution in discussions.
28. The second purpose outlined by the Chair was to provide a platform for encouraging Members to be creative and forthcoming, and to approach each topic with a view to exploring potential solutions. The Chair noted that there was no expectation of arriving at solutions to every issue, but that the meeting would provide an opportunity to put forward any new ideas that have not yet been explored in the process. He further noted that these new ideas would not be incorporated into the informal reference document but could be reflected in a Chair’s summary document to be produced following the meeting. This Chair’s summary would capture any innovative approaches raised during the meeting and, for transparency, would also provide a factual overview of the areas of discussion that took place during the meeting.
29. The Chair referred to the four proposed clusters of issues identified in his draft note, recognizing that some Members prefer to engage with issues of higher convergence first while others prefer to first engage with issues of lower convergence. He noted that he had sought to take a balanced approach that consolidates the various points of view in a manner that recognizes the interrelationships between issues, facilitates focused dialogue and preserves a comprehensive view of the instrument as a whole.
30. He highlighted that some issues in the draft note had not been included under any clusters and that these issues would be the topics of targeted consultations to be held by the Chair throughout the in-person meeting.

31. The Chair noted that he intended to hold consultations on these issues early in each day of the meeting or during lunch breaks in order to avoid overlaps with the work in the clusters. He further noted that he would provide additional information on the rationale for each cluster in his next communication to be released in advance of the in-person meeting.
32. The Chair noted his intention to identify two co-facilitators per cluster of issues and hoped to inform the Bureau of the names of the eight co-facilitators shortly. He emphasized that the co-facilitators should have significant experience, with due regard also being given to regional balance and, where possible, gender balance.
33. The Chair emphasized the importance of carefully selecting co-facilitators, noting they will be a critical part of the in-person Heads of Delegation meeting as well as the process moving forward. He informed the Bureau that the co-facilitators would be responsible for guiding the work of their respective clusters by promoting solutions-oriented contributions from all Members. He noted that it was his hope that the co-facilitators identified for the in-person Heads of Delegation meeting would carry forward their role leading up to INC-5.4, without prejudice to also acting as co-facilitators at INC-5.4.
34. The Chair noted that the co-facilitators would be tasked to engage with their clusters using a facilitative approach that embraces the principles of transparency, inclusivity and predictability. The co-facilitators would also be tasked with providing daily reports to the Chair, which would then assist the Chair in providing daily updates to all participants of the meeting in an open discussion setting.
35. Bureau members expressed support for the draft note, including for the proposed organization of work and emphasis on working in the spirit of 'togetherness' and 'unity'. Bureau members highlighted the importance of further exploring how the Bureau could contribute to the success of the in-person meeting, including through ensuring the Bureau is convened at some point during the in-person meeting.
36. Bureau members agreed on the importance of identifying experienced co-facilitators for the process and requested that time be reserved for co-facilitators to report progress to the Bureau as well as to the Chair during the in-person meeting. Bureau members encouraged the Chair to identify co-facilitators as early as possible.
37. In relation to the clustering of issues in the draft note, Bureau members appreciated the diversity of ways in which issues could be clustered and requested the Chair to consider issuing guiding questions for issues or clusters of issues in advance of the in-person meeting. Bureau members also provided suggestions for the Chair's consideration on possible adjustments to the proposed clusters in the final version of the note. It was also noted that the clustering used at the informal in-person Heads of Delegation meeting should not prejudice any clustering used in future meetings, including at INC-5.4.
38. The Bureau supported the Chair's plan to release both an informal reference document collating progress made to date, as well as a summary document that provided a factual overview of discussions that will take place during the in-person meeting, including discussions on innovative proposals.
39. In response to questions from the Bureau, the Chair recalled that his next communication, to be released in advance of the informal in-person Heads of Delegation meeting, would provide additional rationale and information on the organization of the clusters, and could be supplemented by a guiding narrative for each cluster of issues. He also noted that he would take the comments from Bureau members into consideration in finalizing the note. He supported convening Bureau meetings during the in-person Heads of Delegation meeting and noted the

important role of the Bureau in ensuring the success of the meeting. He also acknowledged that the co-facilitators may have limited time to report back during the meeting and supported a proposal for co-facilitators to report to the Bureau at some point during the in-person meeting.

40. The Chair also supported comments from Bureau members on encouraging Members to refrain from making national statements at the in-person meeting and underscored the need to focus on solutions-oriented discussions.
41. The Chair noted that no 'Friends of the Chair' group has yet been established, but co-facilitators could potentially be a part of such a group, if formed, along with other senior members of delegations, as appropriate. He underscored that any 'Friends of the Chair' group that might be formed in the future could assist the Chair in proposing solutions to issues encountered at INC-5.4, but that any such group would be kept simple and flexible in nature.
42. In relation to the clustering of issues, the Chair noted that there are formal documents, including UNEA Resolution 5/14, that refer to topics in a specific manner. He expressed that the work of the informal in-person Heads of Delegation meeting should not prejudice outcomes that may arise in a formal setting.
43. Referring to the issues for which the Chair will hold targeted consultations, the Chair noted that Members had requested discussions on the arrangement of topics in the instrument. He added that the arrangement of topics would also affect the narrative of the instrument and underscored that any rearrangement would require support of the Committee. He informed the Bureau that he would provide further information on this topic in due course and would continue to engage with Members and groups of Members in this regard.
44. Moving to the topic of the date of the fourth part of the fifth session (INC-5.4), the Chair recalled that an available window of 13-24 March 2027 was identified, as informed at the previous [Bureau meeting of 23 April](#). Noting Members' requests to identify possible dates for INC-5.4 as early as possible, the Chair reiterated the importance of confirming the window of 13-24 March 2027 for the resumed session and recalled that the Secretariat had considered all necessary factors in identifying these dates, including observed holidays; venue availability and administrative timelines; major international meetings; and the need to have sufficient time to make progress in informal settings before convening in-person at INC-5.4. He noted that there has been no offer from any Member to host INC-5.4 and recalled that Members interested in hosting are invited to notify the Secretariat by the end of June. In the event that no offer to host is received, INC-5.4 would be held at the United Nations Office at Nairobi.
45. The Chair also recalled that he has heard differing perspectives on the length of time necessary for INC-5.4, with some Members preferring a shorter session and others preferring a 10-day session, inclusive of an unscheduled day midway through. He emphasized that the Secretariat would need to reserve the identified window in March 2027 to ensure the availability of meeting space, without prejudging the specific length of the resumed session.
46. The Chair proposed that the dates of 13-24 March 2027 be confirmed and requested the Secretariat to fix the dates in the global calendar via a save-the-date, on the understanding that these dates may be slightly adjusted based on any suitable offer to host that may be received by the end of June. The Chair noted that this would allow for an agreement on the maximum length of the resumed session while still allowing for flexibility to convene a shorter session as necessary. He also noted that it would secure the space in the international meeting calendar, ensuring predictability and certainty, while maintaining flexibility in the event that a suitable host country offer is received.

47. Bureau members urged the Chair to ensure minimal overlap between the specific dates of INC-5.4 with other major meetings and observed holidays and agreed on the importance of fixing the dates while accounting for flexibility in the event a suitable offer to host is received.
48. The Chair noted that the INC Secretariat had consulted with other secretariats to ensure minimal overlap with other major meetings, as well as minimal overlap of delegates between meetings. In response to a question from the Bureau on whether the flexibility for possible host countries may result in a significant difference in the date of the resumed session, the Chair noted that any potential host country would be encouraged to host the meeting within or near the identified window of time.
49. The Bureau agreed with the approach set out by the Chair and with requesting the Secretariat to send a save-the-date for INC-5.4 to fix the dates of 13-24 March 2027 in the international meeting calendar, on the understanding that these dates may be slightly adjusted based on any suitable offer to host that is received by the end of June.
50. In relation to a second informal in-person meeting proposed for the week of 27 September 2026 in Nairobi, as first raised in the Bureau meeting of 23 April, the Chair recalled that the Secretariat had identified these dates as not conflicting with observed holidays or major intergovernmental meetings. He noted that the dates should be confirmed as soon as possible to allow the Secretariat sufficient time for administrative processes including travel arrangements. He underscored the importance of meeting at least twice in-person in advance of INC-5.4, and noted that this is a view shared by many Members.
51. The Chair proposed that the Bureau request the Secretariat to confirm in the international meeting calendar the week of 27 September for an in-person meeting, without prejudging the specific format or total length of the meeting, and for the Secretariat to begin the necessary processes toward organizing this informal in-person meeting in September. In response to questions from the Bureau, the Chair noted that the format and length of the meeting could be clarified following the informal in-person Heads of Delegation meeting in Nairobi, but that the entire week should be initially reserved to ensure flexibility.
52. The Bureau agreed with the dates for the informal in-person meeting during the week of 27 September and with requesting the Secretariat to move ahead in securing these dates in the international calendar. The Bureau also agreed with the Chair's proposal to discuss the format and length of this meeting following the informal in-person Heads of Delegation meeting in Nairobi.
53. Under agenda item 5 on 'Observer Engagement', the Chair provided an overview of the second informal webinar for Observers, held on 19 May in two sessions. He recalled that, during the webinar, he updated participants on the implementation of the Roadmap and provided a space for Observer organizations to ask questions and share reflections. He invited the Bureau members to view the recording of the webinar that was published on the [INC website](#).
54. The Chair also recalled that he provided an update during the webinar on Observers' engagement in the process. The Chair noted that, during the webinar, he encouraged Observers to continue their outreach to, and engagement with, Members of the Committee and to continue sharing their perspectives and expertise.
55. The Chair emphasized that the INC process is Member-led and that it is not his role to prejudge the outcomes of any negotiations. He further emphasized that the legitimacy of the process depends on its Member-led nature and that Observer engagement strengthens this legitimacy when it informs deliberations but weakens this legitimacy when it is seen as substituting deliberations. The Chair underscored his commitment to maintaining both the openness and

integrity of the process and his strong belief in the importance of maintaining momentum and inclusive dialogue moving forward.

56. The Chair noted that the next informational webinar for Observers would be held before the informal in-person Heads of Delegation meeting, with an additional informational webinar to be held after the meeting. He further noted that these webinars would respectively inform about the modes of work and share possible lessons learned from the informal in-person Heads of Delegation meeting.
57. The Chair recalled a note shared with the Bureau on 13 May, for its consideration, proposing possible measures to enhance Observer engagement in the INC process. In this note, the Chair outlined a non-exhaustive list of four possible approaches to enhancing Observer engagement, with targeted activities under each approach. The Chair emphasized that engagement with Observers could benefit from a more structured approach. He highlighted one proposal in the note related to supporting the voluntary, self-organization of Observers into thematic groups or constituencies within the INC Observer community in order to facilitate effective engagement and communication. He noted that he had raised this idea to Observers during the 19 May webinar and recalled that it was well-received. He also noted that the other measures outlined in the note were not meant to be an exhaustive list, but were intended to be used as a basis for a discussion in the Bureau on how best to enhance Observer engagement while also respecting the Member-led nature of the process.
58. Bureau members agreed on the importance of constructive engagement with Observers to the INC process while underscoring that any approach must continue to respect the Member-led nature of the process and align with the draft rules of procedure provisionally applied to the work of the INC. Bureau members commented on the possible value of considering modalities to facilitate a potential in-person meeting with Observers and Members before INC-5.4. Bureau members added that any such meeting should be held in a configuration other than a Heads of Delegation meeting as Heads of Delegation meetings are reserved to Members of the Committee.
59. Bureau members noted the importance for Observers of being able to interact with Members while stressing that any approach must consider resource implications. It was proposed that Observers continue to engage with national authorities, including on the margins of other meetings where participation overlaps, while other possible approaches to Observer engagement are considered. Bureau members further urged the Chair to ensure that all Observers are treated equally in any engagement, without differentiation based on their circumstances or financial resources.
60. The Chair welcomed the positive response to the proposed measures to enhance Observers' engagement and invited Bureau members to further reflect on the concept of Observer self-organization. He raised the possibility that the representatives of these groups, e.g. two representatives from each Observer constituency, could be invited to a future in-person meeting, provided Members agree to this approach. He also noted that these representatives could assist in transparency of the process by conveying information back to their respective constituencies.
61. The Chair noted that it remained important to have a flow of information from Members to Observers, and vice-versa. He reiterated his commitment to participating in webinars and meetings with Observers to ensure that Observers remain appropriately informed of Member deliberations. The Chair encouraged Members to participate in the webinars he convenes with Observers. He confirmed his intention to continue consultations with Bureau members on Observer engagement modalities until a common understanding on the way forward is reached, and noted he would engage with the Bureau on the matter leading up to the next Bureau meeting. He further noted that he would continue to encourage self-organization of Observers into constituencies or thematic groups.

62. Before closing the meeting, the Chair recalled that the save-the-date had already been sent for the next Bureau meeting to be held on 18 June.
63. In his closing remarks, the Chair expressed appreciation to the Bureau for its continued engagement.