

Intergovernmental negotiating committee to develop an international legally binding instrument
on plastic pollution, including in the marine environment
Bureau meeting
Tuesday, 18 March 2025
15:00- 17:00 EAT
Online

SUMMARY AND ACTION POINTS INC BUREAU MEETING 18 MARCH 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 INC Secretariat was represented by the Executive Secretary of the INC, Ms. Jyoti Mathur-Filipp.
3. The Bureau was also joined by INC Legal Adviser, Ms. Marianna Bolshakova.
4. The INC Chair opened the meeting by welcoming the Bureau from Geneva, where he was attending a retreat with the INC Secretariat team to advance the planning and preparations for INC-5.2. He highlighted the progress made since the previous meeting to set a date and venue for the resumed fifth session and thanked the Secretariat for its work in this regard. He expressed that he is looking forward to hearing the Bureau's views to build a common understanding on how to effectively use the remaining time prior to the resumed fifth session, to ensure a successful outcome in Geneva, an effective treaty, as mandated by resolution 5/14.
5. The Bureau considered the provisional agenda for the meeting. The Chair outlined the main focus of the meeting to be planning towards INC-5.2 as well as the preparation of the Bureau retreat. He informed the Bureau that a representative of Switzerland, the location of the INC-5.2 session, would be joining the Bureau to answer any questions the Bureau may have under agenda item 3(a). The Chair also informed the Bureau that the Executive Secretary would provide a brief update on relevant UNEP high-level events planned in the lead up to INC-5.2 under 'other matters'. One Bureau member requested to include a brief discussion on utilizing

INC Secretariat support under ‘other matters’. On this understanding, the provisional agenda for the meeting was adopted.

6. The Bureau considered and approved the summary and action points from its meeting held on 20 February 2025.
7. The Executive Secretary provided an update on logistics in planning towards INC-5.2. Invitations for INC-5.2 were dispatched on 3 March 2025. As requested at the closing plenary in Busan, the Executive Director will be inviting Ministers to attend the resumed fifth session. An invitation for this will be sent in the coming days. A high-level event would also possibly be planned in this regard. The registration portals for all participation categories opened on 6 March 2025 and will close on 6 June 2025. Delegates were encouraged to apply well in advance of the deadline. The portals are also open for applications for financial support for participation of two nominated funded delegates from eligible countries. Dedicated funding for participation of one high-level official (Minister, Vice-Minister, or Deputy Minister) will be made available in addition to the two funded delegates. As per past practice, funding will be available for members of the Bureau eligible for funding support. Funding will also be provided for 20 civil society observers.
8. A site visit at the Palais des Nations will be undertaken, where detailed logistics, including the rooms that will be provided for INC-5.2, as well as the news and media facilities, will be discussed. Meetings will also be held with various teams and service providers, including with security, audio-visual teams, and catering. In addition, a meeting with representatives from the Government of Switzerland on the topic of visas will be convened. An [Information Note for participants](#) has been made available on the INC website and will be updated regularly as preparations progress. As indicated in the invitation letter, regional groups will hold their consultations on 4 August 2025. Badge issuance will commence on the same day. As of 18 March 2025, 205 registrations had already been received, which includes 26 delegates from 15 countries and 157 participants from 96 observer organizations.
9. In response to questions from members of the Bureau, Ms. Andrea Zbinden from the Government of Switzerland confirmed that the Government of Switzerland coordinates closely with the UN Office in Geneva and the INC Secretariat to ensure that the session will run smoothly, including allocation of adequate meeting facilities and provision of catering that will fully meet the needs of the session. She reassured the Bureau that the visa issuance process will run smoothly, noting that many negotiation meetings and Conferences of the Parties take place in Geneva. The Bureau thanked the Government of Switzerland for support to the organization of the session.
10. The Executive Secretary provided the Bureau with a [budgetary update](#). She noted that the Government of Switzerland will cover the costs of the venue for INC-5.2. With thanks to the contributions of Japan and Norway, no funding gap exists for conference service meeting costs such as documentation and translation. Regarding a possible in-person three-day Heads of Delegation (HODs) meeting, a funding gap of over USD 930,000, excluding programme support costs, remains. Due to administrative deadlines and the current funding gap, the proposed in-person HODs meeting in Nairobi in May is no longer feasible. The Secretariat team is working to identify possible alternate options in June or July, should an in-person HODs be deemed necessary and should funding for it become available.
11. The Chair introduced the draft annotated roadmap towards INC 5.2, which was built on the key dates document previously circulated to the Bureau and was prepared by the Secretariat and circulated to the Bureau on 8 March 2025. The Executive Secretary provided a brief overview of the changes in dates compared to the timeline discussed by the Bureau at its previous meeting, along with documents and inputs as well as possible expected outputs.

As requested by the Bureau, the draft roadmap includes information on the objectives, main expected outcomes and input documentation for each of the events. The draft roadmap is intended to help continue discussions and is based on the elements identified by the Bureau at its last meeting. As a living document, the annotated roadmap is expected to be adjusted as required.

12. Responding to the draft roadmap, the Bureau discussed a possible in-person HODs meeting. Some regions had strong preference for an in-person HODs in June or July while others reflected mixed views on the need to hold the meeting in-person. The Bureau noted that documentation for any in-person HODs would need to be made available well in advance of the meeting. Bureau members discussed whether an in-person HODs meeting should focus on substantive discussions and the extent to which organization of work should be discussed.
13. With regard to regional consultations, the INC Secretariat clarified that since no in-person HODs meeting will be organized in May 2025, the regional consultations originally planned back-to-back with that meeting will now be organized in June and July 2025 at the seats of UNEP regional offices. The Secretariat continues to consult with regions to identify suitable dates.
14. With respect to Bureau meetings in the intersessional period, the Bureau indicated the importance of circulating documentation well ahead of each meeting in order to solicit meaningful regional input. The Bureau, therefore, requested that documentation deadlines be included in the next iteration of the draft roadmap.
15. With respect to the indicative document list for the Bureau retreat indicated in the draft roadmap, a document on examples of how other processes have used different in-session working modalities will be provided to inform discussions in the Bureau retreat.
16. The Chair summarized the discussions on the roadmap, thanking the Bureau for their questions on the draft roadmap and reflections on the intersessional period. He reiterated that he will work with the INC Secretariat to ensure that the draft roadmap and other documents will reflect the inputs from Bureau. The next iteration of the draft roadmap will include deadlines for documents set sufficiently in advance of the Bureau meetings, as requested during the discussion. Regarding the possible in-person HODs meeting, the Chair noted that many deemed the meeting important and that any such meeting would need to include discussions on substance. The Secretariat will continue seeking ways to raise the necessary resources, and should the meeting become possible, preparations will commence on the necessary documentation, including the agenda. In addition, the Chair highlighted that, should the Bureau deem it useful, a virtual HODs meeting remains a possibility, to discuss, for example, the organization of work for INC 5.2.
17. With regard to the Bureau retreat originally planned for April 2025, to accommodate the availability of all the Bureau members, the dates have been changed to 26 and 27 of May 2025 with a dedicated session for the Co-Chairs on 28 May. The proposed focus of the retreat will remain on planning towards INC-5.2, including discussions on expected outcomes for the resumed fifth session, next steps, the draft roadmap as well as the organization of work at INC-5.2. The location of the retreat is still to be confirmed, with Geneva and Nairobi as possible venues, depending on availability of space and other logistical considerations. The Secretariat will confirm the location of the retreat in the coming weeks. The proposed agenda and documentation as reflected in the draft roadmap, as well as possible draft elements of the Scenario Note, will be made available well in advance of the retreat.
18. Regarding ministerial participation at the resumed fifth session, it was noted that ministerial participation could be particularly useful towards the end of the session to further help facilitate consensus-building, as needed, or address any issues that may require political

intervention, with a possible high-level event organized on or around 12 August 2025 to mark the expected arrival of ministers, as an indication. In terms of the specific role for the Ministers, the Bureau will continue discussing this as part of the working modalities at the session.

19. Under the agenda item on ‘other matters’, some Bureau members noted the importance of utilizing the INC Secretariat effectively to support the process. The Chair expressed his appreciation for the continuous support provided by the Secretariat, highlighting the productive work being undertaken at the ongoing retreat between him and the INC Secretariat.
20. The Executive Secretary provided a briefing on high-level events in the upcoming months, noting the Executive Director of UNEP had sent a ‘Save the date’ invitation for an informal high-level breakfast on the margins of the BRS COP for the morning of 1 May 2025. The formal invitation will be sent out in the coming days and will be followed by the agenda and concept note. An event may also be hosted during the third UN Ocean Conference. The Executive Secretary also informed the Bureau that UNEP recently received a memorandum concerning a letter from the UN Secretary-General to all Member States and a memorandum from the Secretary-General’s Chief of Staff to the President of the UN General Assembly, both addressing the UN’s ongoing austerity measures and the way forward. Current austerity measures include hiring restrictions, reduction in travel, reduction in the purchase of services, strict meeting and interpretation service time, and shortened documents, among others. In light of these austerity measures, it will be imperative to adhere to the efficiency measures and procedures of Conference Services, which included documentation deadlines. The Secretariat therefore proposed that the Scenario Note be produced as an Information Document, which would allow it to be made available closer to the session when the organization of INC 5.2 was clearer.
21. The Chair thanked the Bureau for the constructive discussion. He informed the Bureau that its next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, 15 April 2025. The revised draft roadmap document reflecting the comments and feedback received during this meeting will be shared with the Bureau well in advance of its next meeting. He indicated that, during the next Bureau meeting, space will be made in the agenda to discuss the Bureau retreat in greater detail and also to provide any updates from the regions, should Bureau members consider it to be relevant.