
Informal technical briefing to support discussions at INC-1

Session 4 - Priorities, needs, challenges and barriers to end plastic pollution at national level; and existing information that might assist policymakers

Friday 11 November 2022

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Introduction

- Working documents are available at <https://www.unep.org/events/conference/inter-governmental-negotiating-committee-meeting-inc-1> under the meeting documents tab
- The briefings are in **English only**.
- **Recordings** of all 5 sessions will be made available on the same meeting page under the overview tab, **for information only**.
- The sessions are **not negotiations** and will not be reflected in the meeting documents prepared for INC-1.
- Please send questions to all panellists, and indicate:
 - **Country + name** if you are representing a member state
 - **Organization + name** if you are representing other groups

Topic 4: Priorities, needs, challenges and barriers to end plastic pollution at national level; and existing information that might assist policymakers

Structure of the discussion	Proposed timing
Introduction and welcome from the INC secretariat	5 mins
<u>Part 1)</u> a) Priorities, needs and challenges at national level (12-15 mins), Presenter: Feng b) Q & A session facilitated by the secretariat	45 mins
<u>Part 2)</u> a) Existing information that might assist policy makers (5-7 mins), Presenter: Heidi b) Q & A session facilitated by the secretariat	30 mins
Secretariat update on logistics	5 mins
Secretariat wrap-up & announcement of next sessions	5 mins

Priorities, needs, challenges and barriers relating to ending plastic pollution at the national level

[UNEP/PP/INC.1/11](#) and [UNEP/PP/INC.1/INF/8](#)

Preparation of an international legally binding instrument on plastic pollution, including in the marine environment

Overview

- **Key issues to include in the negotiation process emerged from 21 submissions of Member States**
- **Priorities, needs, challenges and barriers for countries along plastic life cycle:**
 - Upstream
 - Midstream
 - Downstream
- **Challenges, barriers, priorities and needs for Small Island Developing States (SIDS)**
- **Existing national measures to address plastic pollution**

Relevant documents



■ **UNEP/PP/INC.1/11**

Priorities, needs, challenges and barriers relating to ending plastic pollution at the national level



■ **UNEP/PP/INC.1/INF/8**

Addendum to the priorities, needs, challenges and barriers to end plastic pollution at national level (UNEP/PP/INC.1/11)

Key issues to include in the negotiation process

emerged from 21 submissions of Member States

1. **Clear definitions** of concepts such as “life cycle”, “circular economy”, “problematic plastics”, “plastic pollution” and “problem plastics”;
2. An “**international risk assessment framework** that considers the multidimensionality of plastic and microplastic particles”;
3. **Reducing the production of virgin plastics**;
4. **Sustainable product design**;
5. **Reducing and eliminating** single-use, problematic, unnecessary, hazardous and harmful plastics through product design;
6. **Removing hazardous chemicals** used as additives in plastics that pose risks to human health;

Key issues to include in the negotiation process

emerged from 21 submissions of Member States

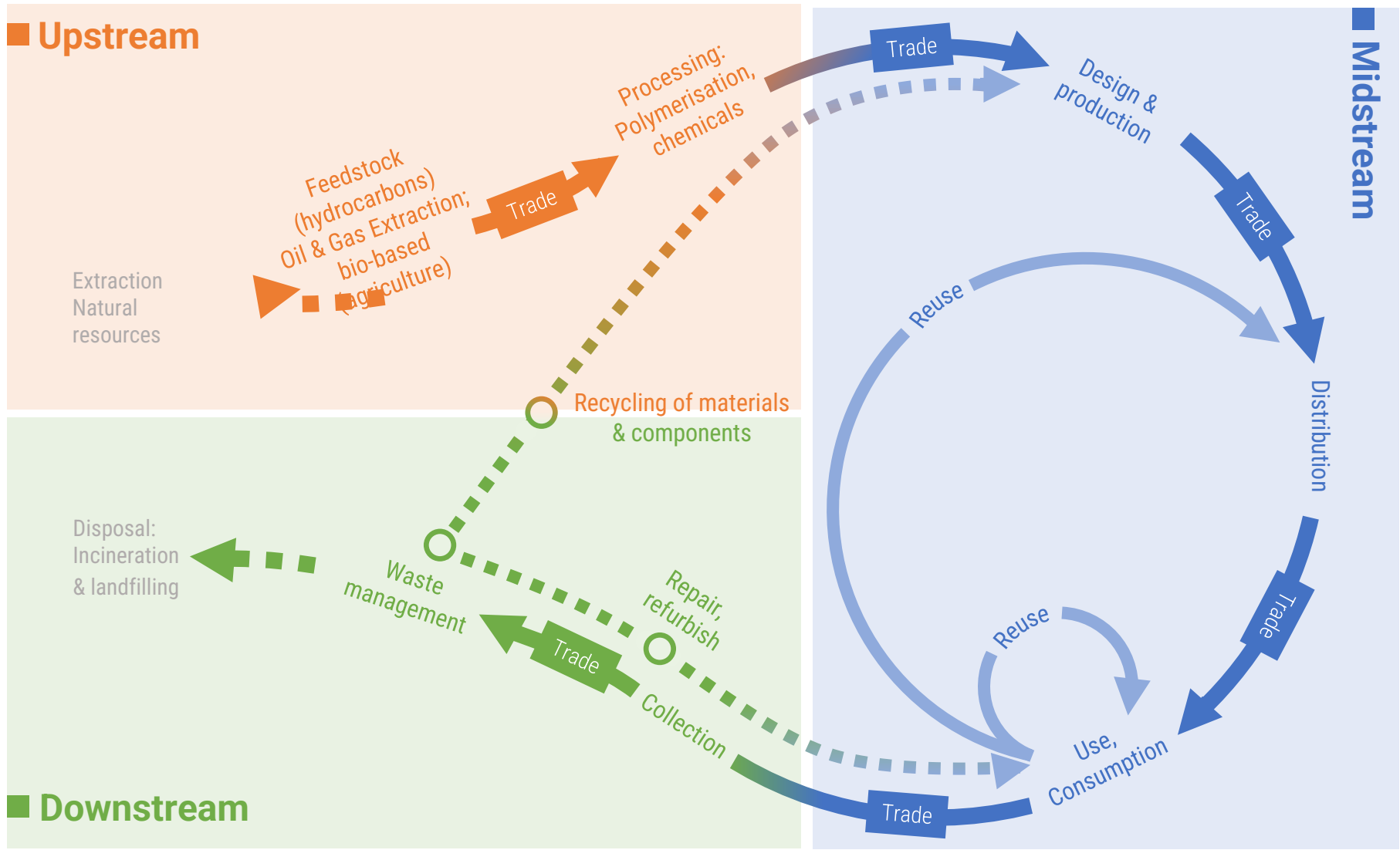
7. Innovating and developing more sustainable **alternatives**; “**Substitutive materials** for plastic” and the substitution of hazardous or harmful and unnecessary plastics;
8. **Standardization of materials** to ensure that feedstock and quality requirements are met and to improve reuse and economically feasible recycling;
9. **Standardization** for the benefit of trade, especially for recycled plastics;
10. **Labelling** to improve traceability, minimum recycled content, recyclability and safe disposal;
11. **Reduction in consumption and sustainable consumption** in the use phase;

Key issues to include in the negotiation process

emerged from 21 submissions of Member States

13. Special and specific attention to **microplastics**;
14. Safe, efficient and environmentally **sound collection, management and disposal of plastic waste**, including sea-based sources of marine plastic litter;
15. Recognition of **equity** issues such as a “just transition”, “human rights and public health” and “the right to a healthy environment”, and issues related to waste pickers and the informal sector;
16. Recognition of the importance of **trade** in the plastics value chain;
17. Synergies with the **Basel Convention** on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and Their Disposal, the Paris Agreement on climate change and other international conventions

Life cycle of plastic



Upstream phase of the plastic life cycle



Upstream

Key activities for countries with a significant role in the upstream phase include:

- The extraction of fossil fuels to produce plastics (oil and gas industries);
- The use of alternative feedstocks (e.g., bio-based feedstocks, recycled content) for production;
- The production process of petrochemical industries producing plastics

Priorities and needs in the upstream phase (identified by MS submissions) include:

- Measures to reduce virgin plastics;
- Harmonized standards for feedstock materials and quality;
- Access to competitively priced, high-quality recycled materials;
- Incentives to encourage the use of recycled plastic materials produced at the national level

Upstream phase of the plastic life cycle

Upstream

Challenges and barriers in the upstream phase:

- **Hydrocarbons as stranded assets and climate litigation** during the transition from virgin feedstocks;
- The plastic industry's **dependence** on the by-products of the oil and gas industries;
- In the insurance and reinsurance sector, the **increased risk for assets and liabilities** that climate change poses;
- **State aids and incentives** for virgin fossil fuels;
- **Market pricing of feedstocks and market incentives**;
- **Lack of regulation and failure of operational licences** to limit the climate impact of plastic production caused by the use of hydrocarbons as feedstock;
- **Planning and environmental impact assessment laws** have not been fully utilized to transition away from fossil fuels as feedstock;
- Lack of **sustainable and competitively priced alternative feedstocks** for plastic production

Midstream phase of the plastic life cycle

Key activities for countries with a significant role in the midstream phase include: Midstream

- The design and production of plastic and plastic-containing products with large-scale manufacturing sectors, the distribution and trade of plastic products, as well as use and reuse.
- All countries face issues relating to growing consumption of plastic products by individual and business users

Priorities and needs in the midstream phase (identified by MS submissions) include:

- Identifying, reducing and eliminating problematic and unnecessary products and packaging (including hazardous chemicals) through product design;
- Responsible and sustainable consumption, especially the environmental, social and economic impacts of the use of plastics and the need for sustainable consumption of plastics by private consumers, public procurers, business and industry.

Midstream phase of the plastic life cycle

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Midstream

Challenges and barriers in the midstream phase:

- Prevalence of **design and market dominance of single-use and disposable products**;
- Lack of policies, standards, incentives, support, markets and good practices for **sustainable product design**;
- Lack of affordable and accessible **reuse schemes**;
- Lack of **links between** extended producer responsibility and other **end-of-life-oriented policies and upstream and midstream goals**;
- Lack of **consistent standards, data, information, transparency and traceability** relating to the distribution and **trade** of plastic products;
- Lack of **reliable information, awareness and incentives to encourage sustainable consumption**, including labelling schemes;
- **Littering** during the use phase, especially in relation to single-use plastic products;
- **Inadequate monitoring and assessment of the effectiveness of measures** taken by countries to manage plastics;
- **Misleading “green product” claims** resulting from a lack of standardization;
- Lack of inclusion of environmental criteria in decision-making about **public procurement**

Downstream phase of the plastic life cycle

Key activities for countries with a significant role in the downstream phase include:

Downstream

- Repair, refurbishment and recycling, the trade of plastic waste and the disposal of residual wastes.

Priorities and needs in the downstream phase:

The need for waste minimization and reduction, reuse, repair, refurbishment, remanufacturing, recycling and final disposal

- Improving the **repair** culture and infrastructure
- Measures that ensure the safe, proper and environmentally sound **collection, management and disposal** of plastic waste and other types of waste containing plastics while enhancing recyclability and creating a more circular value chain for plastics;
- Measures to address the transboundary nature of plastic pollution;
- A mechanism for **tracing and controlling illegal trade, dumping** and transportation of plastic waste and its floating through sea water currents;
- Improving the **informal sector's** links to industrial value chains, including recognition of human rights.

Downstream phase of the plastic life cycle

Downstream

Challenges and barriers in the downstream phase (identified by MS submissions) include:

- Lack of legislation and incentives concerning the “**right to repair**”;
- **Barriers to repair** including technical and legal barriers, lack of durability (including the integration of planned obsolescence as part of design), and the **high cost of repair**;
- Lack of a common **legal definition** of end-of-life products as waste that excludes recyclable plastic products;
- Lack of **legislation, technology, infrastructure, capacity and investment for waste management**, along with a lack of effective compliance with and enforcement of waste management laws and policies;
- Lack of **knowledge at the household level**, which leads to poor sorting of plastic waste;
- **Poor collection and segregation of waste**, which inhibits effective recycling;
- Lack of **industrial recycling processes** on a large enough scale to be sufficiently feasible and profitable for investors

Downstream phase of the plastic life cycle

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Downstream

Challenges and barriers in the downstream phase include:

- Lack of **traceability and control of the illegal trade of plastic waste**;
- Lack of sufficient **traceability of recyclable and hazardous materials** to ensure transparent and effective recycling;
- Lack of recognition of the proximity principle, which advocates that **pollution should be managed at the point closest to its source**;
- Lack of **regulation and fiscal policy** requiring the accountability from producers for a product at each phase of its life cycle;
- The presence of **the informal sector**, in which primitive recycling to extract valuable materials is practiced in developing countries;
- **Open burning and dumping of plastic waste** in uncontrolled circumstances where affordable waste management is not available

Challenges, barriers, priorities and needs

for Small Island Developing States (SIDS) with specific conditions and needs

Priorities and needs for SIDS include:

- Manage imports of plastic products which do not fit local repair, refurbishment, reuse and recycling schemes, through product, procurement and import policies and actions
- Develop waste recycling solutions, where technically and economically feasible
- Integrate the informal waste sectors into decision-making
- Provide training and capacity building for informal sectors to enhance repair and refurbishment skills
- Raise the awareness of citizens through training or educational programmes

Challenges, barriers, priorities and needs

for Small Island Developing States (SIDS) with specific conditions and needs

The key challenges and barriers for SIDS are:

- Reliance on import of single-use plastic products, and packaging of imported products which are not recyclable, re-manufacturable or reusable
- Proximity of waste management centres (both formal and informal) to the ocean, increasing risk of leakage
- Lack of resources, capacity, space, sufficient feedstock of secondary materials and economy of scale for waste infrastructure
- Geographical location, with long distances to other islands or continents, which complicates collection and sharing of recycling infrastructure
- Lack of skilled local workers involved in repair, waste collection and recycling

Existing national measures to address plastic pollution

Group 1	Group 2	Group 3	Group 4
General waste and other laws and measures which include plastics but are not specifically aimed at plastics	Legal or economic instruments specific for plastics	Government policies	Voluntary schemes
▪ Tax and tipping fees on waste to landfill ▪ End-of-life laws for the segregation, collection, sorting and recycling of packaging waste ▪ Eco-design/sustainable product standards ▪ EPR regulation and guidance ▪ Carbon tax	▪ Bans on problematic and unnecessary types of plastic ▪ EPR specific for plastics ▪ Charges or levies on single-use plastic products	▪ Action plans ▪ Zero waste plans	▪ New Plastics Economy Global Commitment ▪ Plastics pacts in countries

Questions

Please send questions to all panellists

Please type:

Country + name if you are representing a member state
Organization + name if you are representing other groups

Existing information that might assist policymakers

[UNEP/PP/INC.1/13](#) and [UNEP/PP/INC.1/INF/4](#)

Preparation of an international legally binding instrument on plastic pollution,
including in the marine environment

Relevant documents

Working document: UNEP/PP/INC.1/13

Existing information that might assist policymakers

Information document: UNEP/PP/INC.1/INF/4

Addendum to the existing information that might assist policymakers

Document Overview

Request from the open-ended working group (OEWG) to prepare a “**listing of existing information for policy makers, building on UNEP/PP/OEWG/1/INF/3**” for the first INC meeting

- The documents aim to:
 - **Facilitate centralised accessibility** of existing information sources
 - Provide an **overview of** the research and science on the topic
 - **Organize and categorize information sources** among others according to the provisions and elements outlined in UNEA resolution 5/14 paragraphs 3 and 4

Document Content

UNEP/PP/INC.1/13

Non-exhaustive listing of categorized information, building on UNEP/PP/OEWG/1/INF/3 and drawing from submissions received in connection with the intergovernmental negotiating committee process, including the ad hoc open-ended working group meeting as well as desk research

- The information sources are categorized according to the following topics:
 - Analyses and assessments
 - Guidelines
 - Action Plans
 - Capacity development tools
 - Outlooks
 - Publications specifically on the intergovernmental negotiating committee process
 - Sectoral approaches

Document Content

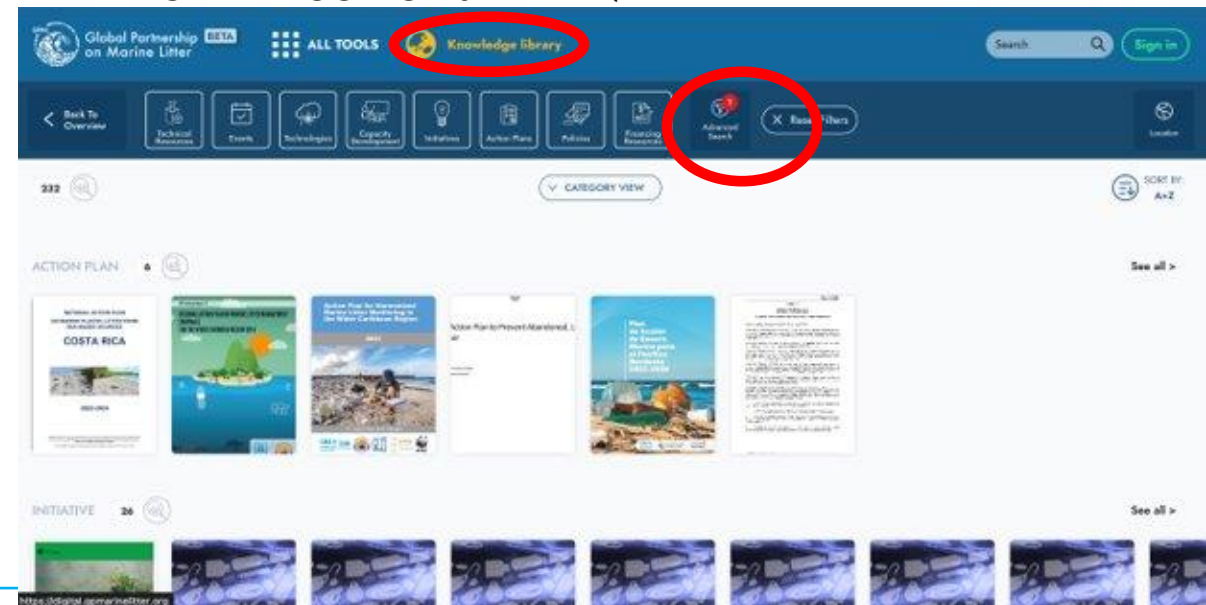
UNEP/PP/INC.1/INF/4

- Addendum to UNEP/PP/INC.1/13
- Provides a **baseline of relevant information sources** in table 1, which includes information from:
 - UNEP/PP/OEWG/1/INF/3
 - UNEP/PP/INC.1/13
 - Submissions received from relevant Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEA) and Regional Seas as well as internal input
- Information sources are presented according to UNEA resolution 5/14 paragraph 3 & 4

«Living» knowledge resource

All information sources are available through the **multistakeholder Global Partnership on Marine Litter (GPML) digital platform** which allows for:

- a **dynamic, up-to-date listing of information** through a “living” knowledge resource /continuous basis
- **detailed searches and sorting** of existing information through a tagging system (OP, SP 5/14, LC, Sectors, Source to sea pathways
- [Guidance videos, Help center, weekly drop-in](#)
- Contact us at unep-gpmarinelitter@un.org



Questions

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Logistical information

- **INC-1 logistics note:**

- i. <https://www.unep.org/events/conference/inter-governmental-negotiating-committee-meeting-inc-1> ,

- ii. new updated text will be **bolded**

- **Plastic-free meeting.** Delegates are suggested to bring their own water bottles to the meeting. Water dispensers for refilling will be provided.
- **Badge collection centre will open** 25 November, 9 a.m. - 6 p.m.; 26 November - 1 December, 8 a.m. - 5 p.m.
- **Transfer services** will be available between:
 - i. The capital Montevideo and Punta del Este for flight arrivals and departures
 - ii. Punta del Este city centre and the venue every day.
- **Visa letters:** The Government of Uruguay will issue special **individual letters** to participants authorizing entry into the country without a visa. Please note that only participants that require a visa will be issued the letter.
- **Accommodation list is available on-line:** Due to peak season in Uruguay, participants are encouraged to book hotels as early as possible.

Informal technical briefings

Tuesday 1 November	Topic 1: Organization of the INC-1 and its scenario note
Thursday 3 November	Topic 2: Potential elements; structure; glossary of key terms; and final provisions
Wednesday 9 November	Topic 3: Plastics science; and overview of existing funding
Friday 11 November	Topic 4: Priorities, needs, challenges and barriers to end plastic pollution at national level; and existing information that might assist policymakers
Tuesday 15 November	Topic 5: Organization of the Multistakeholder Forum; stakeholder engagement; and cooperation and coordination with relevant regional and international conventions, instruments and organizations

Thank you

For questions and queries, please write to:
unep-incplastic.secretariat@un.org