29 July 2026

Fourth letter from the Chair of the INC on Plastic Pollution

Reflections following the informal in-person meeting of Heads of Delegation held in Nairobi and an update on implementation of the Roadmap.

Dear friends,

I would like to start by thanking you for your active participation in the informal in-person meeting of Heads of Delegation (HODs) that took place in Nairobi between 30 June and 3 July 2026. This meeting was the first opportunity we had to engage in substantive discussions in the 10 months since the second part of the fifth session of the INC to develop an international legally binding instrument on plastic pollution, including in the marine environment (INC-5.2).

As I expressed in my Note of 2 June and Additional Note of 16 June that were shared ahead of the informal in-person meeting in Nairobi, my expectations were twofold: to have a comprehensive review of progress by revisiting the different issues under consideration for the instrument, and to explore new ideas and proposals.

The meeting was indeed successful in achieving both objectives, and I would like to underscore that this would not have been possible without the strong commitment of all delegations, whose active and constructive participation across all Clusters was instrumental in this success. I greatly appreciate these efforts, which are a testament to the willingness to advance towards an outcome that can enjoy the support of everyone, and that can be an effective response to the global challenge presented by plastic pollution.

As previously announced, I am currently undertaking the following steps, with the support of the Secretariat, to facilitate our future work:

- **Circulation of the Summary Note of the informal in-person Heads of Delegation meeting:** I intend to share with all Members shortly a Summary Note of our discussions in Nairobi. This will help ensure that the ideas and contributions remain accessible for future reference and can be drawn upon by Members as they consider subsequent engagements.

- **Preparation of the *Aid to Negotiations*:** This informal reference document is being developed to serve as a basis for our forthcoming discussions and to help structure our engagement in the next phase of our efforts as outlined below in this letter. As I have previously stated, this is a ‘no surprises’

document, bringing together what has already been considered and discussed by Members. I also intend to communicate this document to Members in the timeframe indicated previously, aiming to do so by early August.

From Nairobi to Bangkok

I hope that the weeks ahead will offer delegations the opportunity to reflect on the different ideas and proposals that were shared during our time together in Nairobi.

I also invite all Members to continue reaching out to each other. I have seen during the Nairobi meeting that many bilateral exchanges took place. This is an excellent indication of the strong interest in finding possible solutions, especially in areas where divergence still exists. I encourage everyone to continue working in this spirit, in line with the concepts of Pamoja (togetherness) and Umoja (unity).

Having this in mind, I would like to highlight one important aspect that will require our careful consideration during this period. Although the discussion about the instrument will remain our main focus of attention, it will also be key to revisit the mandates that the Diplomatic Conference of Plenipotentiaries could set out in its resolutions, as these will be a component of the package to be agreed as part of the outcome of the INC.

This discussion is very significant and complementary to the substance of the instrument, as we are trying to achieve a level of detail that ensures its comprehensiveness, but also that will allow it to remain as our enduring point of reference for the years to come.

The instrument should be both concise and comprehensive, while remaining sufficiently adaptable to address both current and future challenges effectively. In trying to achieve this balance, the draft resolutions that the INC can agree to forward to the Diplomatic Conference for its consideration for future work can play an important role.

In other words, the resolutions of the Diplomatic Conference that will accompany the text of the instrument at the moment of its adoption can be a critical and useful set of documents to define the agenda of work and the next steps, including in the preparation for the entry into force of the instrument and the decisions that will need to be developed and forwarded to the Conference of the Parties for consideration and adoption at its first meeting (COP-1).

The resolutions of the Diplomatic Conference can also incorporate mandates for

elaboration of critical issues, especially in preparation for COP-1. These items can include mandates to develop draft decisions for COP-1 as well as for the interim process, including for the interim preparatory body. For example:

- Mandates for the development of draft Rules of Procedure of the Conference of the Parties;
- Mandates to operationalize the financial mechanism at COP-1;
- Mandates for preparation of other decisions that COP-1 should adopt; or
- Mandate and set-up of the process between the adoption of the instrument and COP-1, including interim secretariat arrangements.

I invite everyone to initiate these considerations as soon as possible. I believe that our meeting in Bangkok will offer a great opportunity to start addressing this discussion.

Bangkok

As I mentioned in the Umoja closing session in Nairobi, I will be working with the support of the Secretariat on the modalities and organization of work for our second informal in-person HODs meeting to be held in Bangkok from 27 to 30 September 2026. Following the successful experience in Nairobi, I intend, to the extent possible, to keep the same meeting structure for our time together in Bangkok. This includes the organization of the work in Clusters, supported by the same Co-facilitators where possible, and providing space for bilateral exchanges and consultations among Members.

Having said this, it is natural that the meeting in Bangkok will have some new features, as well as new objectives. Our main goal there will be to advance our considerations on outstanding issues, working with the help of the ***Aid to Negotiations*** to begin consolidating areas of convergence, advance consideration on outstanding issues, and hopefully start identifying some solutions.

This can be critical to the future steps after Bangkok, including on a second iteration of the ***Aid to Negotiations***, where I can reflect the progress made by Members in their deliberations.

I also intend to continue with my consultations on specific issues, the details of which will be communicated well in advance of the Bangkok meeting.

As I did with the previous HODs meetings, I will prepare a Note by the Chair in advance of the upcoming informal in-person HODs meeting in Bangkok, setting out the details for the meeting, including the organization of work.

Observer Participation

One area that deserves further attention is how to think of ways to further enhance participation of Observers. As is widely known, the draft Rules of Procedure that provisionally apply to the work of the INC provide for participation of Observers in formal INC sessions. However, we have yet to find a well-structured and organized approach for Observer engagement and participation in informal settings. This has been a recurring topic of discussion within both the Bureau and my own engagements with Observers.

As this issue remains unresolved, and following consultations with the Bureau, the format of the meeting in Bangkok will be the same as the informal in-person HODs meeting held in Nairobi.

As you may remember, UNEA Resolution 5/14 includes specific references to the participation of Observers, including a mandate to initiate a multistakeholder action agenda. This means that this is an area of long-term interest for the INC. The work the Committee does today may be the basis for the procedures and mechanisms we will need to have in place when we start the implementation of the instrument. With this in mind, I intend to continue working on this issue.

United in purpose

In Nairobi, we coalesced around the concepts of Pamoja and Umoja. It was a demonstration that we can be united around one single purpose, which is to deliver an international legally binding instrument on plastic pollution, including in the marine environment, in line with our mandate established in UNEA Resolution 5/14.

I am strongly convinced that every Member of the Committee is engaging constructively and in good faith to achieve an outcome that can be meaningful, durable and capable of meeting future needs. In Nairobi, I was greatly encouraged to see all Members present their positions, ideas and proposals with transparency and inspired by a true spirit of collaboration, and that all exchanges were conducted with respect, openness and thoughtful consideration, even on topics of significant divergence. The importance of this type of engagement cannot be overstated. In fact, I would say that it is a prerequisite for our success. From my side, I will continue to do everything in my power to contribute to this positive and constructive atmosphere, guided by the values of multilateralism and our shared commitment to achieving a successful outcome.

Julio Cordano
INC Chair