Intergovernmental negotiating committee to develop an international legally binding instrument on plastic pollution, including in the marine environment
Bureau meeting
Thursday, 16 October 2025
15:00- 17:00 EAT
Online

SUMMARY AND ACTION POINTS INC BUREAU MEETING 16 OCTOBER 2025

Note by the Secretariat

1. The meeting was attended by the following members:

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

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

   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 Secretariat was represented by the Executive Secretary of the INC, Ms. Jyoti Mathur-Filipp.

3. The INC Chair opened the meeting, at 15:00 EAT, and welcomed the Bureau members. In his opening remarks, the Chair emphasized the importance of the process moving forward smoothly and noted that the contributions from Bureau members in the meeting would enable constructive progress towards determining the next steps.

4. The Executive Secretary expressed appreciation to the Bureau members for their time and continued commitment and reiterated that the Secretariat stands ready to support the process moving forward.

5. The Chair then outlined the agenda, proposing that, under agenda item 2, Bureau members be given the opportunity to provide updates on regional consultations on the way forward. The agenda was adopted without comment.

6. Under agenda item 2 on ‘Next steps towards INC-5.3’, the Bureau was informed of the nomination by GRULAC of Mr. Julio Cordano (Republic of Chile) for election for the Bureau seat for the GRULAC region which will become vacant once the Chair’s resignation takes effect. The regional group also nominated Mr. Cordano for the position of Chair of the INC that

will become vacant following the resignation of the current Chair and for which elections will be carried out by the Committee. There was general support by Bureau members for inviting Mr. Cordano to attend Bureau meetings as an observer once the Chair's resignation takes effect and until his position is formally confirmed by the Committee.

7. The group of African States expressed to the Bureau its interest in Mr. Ndiaye Cheikh Sylla (Senegal), Vice-Chair of the INC, being designated as Acting Chair following the intended resignation of Mr. Luis Vayas Valdivieso, and also nominated him for the position of Chair of the INC that will become vacant following the resignation of the current Chair and for which elections will be carried out by the Committee.

8. Bureau members welcomed the information presented by GRULAC and the Group of African States.

9. The Bureau agreed to set a deadline of 31 October 2025 for any additional nominations by regions of candidates for the position of the Chair and noted the importance of receiving any formal nominations through Notes Verbales accompanied by curricula vitae and any other relevant information on the nominees. Some members questioned whether Notes Verbales and curricula vitae for nominees were necessary as there was no selection committee.

10. There were different views expressed by Bureau members on the elections of a new Chair. Some preferred to have swift transitional arrangements, including designating one of the Vice-Chairs as acting Chair with the primary mandate to facilitate the preparations for the elections. Therefore, any consultations and engagement in the intersessional period and preparations for INC-5.3 would then be guided by the Chair elected by the Committee. Others considered that an acting Chair designated by the Bureau should have the same powers and duties as the Chair and should exercise these to guide the work in the intersessional period and preparations for INC-5.3 later in 2026, with the elections of the new Chair taking place at that session. In such case, one of the other Vice-Chairs not standing for election could be designated to facilitate the elections process to ensure impartiality.

11. At the request of the Bureau, the Chair informed that he would consult with the Bureau members in advance of the next Bureau meeting on the designation of the acting Chair or/and on possible ways forward.

12. At the request of the Bureau, the Secretariat clarified that term "Acting Chair" is more common in rules of procedure for United Nations meetings and is also used in the draft rules of the INC process. It also clarified that no specific rule in the draft rules of procedure provisionally applied to the work of the INC addressed the situation of resignation by a Chair or a Vice-Chair in the period between the sessions of the Committee. As such, it was for the Bureau, as representatives of Members, to put in place the necessary arrangements to ensure continuity and effectiveness of the process in cases when such resignations occur and until elections by the Committee can take place. The roles and responsibilities of any acting Chair would ultimately be for the Bureau, as representatives of Members, to determine.

13. With respect to the election of the new Chair by the Committee, Bureau numbers emphasized the importance of ensuring that all Bureau members and regions have clarity on the next steps in the process. They noted that, as with previous Chairs, the incoming Chair would need to be able to demonstrate strong leadership, significant experience, abilities to consult and facilitate, adequate resources and time to fulfil the requirements of the role, and have trust among the Committee. At the request of the Bureau, the Secretariat clarified that election by acclamation of a single agreed candidate for one vacant position was possible in a hybrid or virtual meeting, but that, in the event of multiple candidates, voting by secret ballot in such setting would not be possible.

14. The Bureau discussed the possibility of convening a half-day INC session for the sole purpose of electing a new Chair. Such session would be organized in the morning of 9 December 2025 in Nairobi, Kenya, which would allow the meeting to make use of some of the logistical arrangements and representation of Members at UNEA-7 which will be held that week in the same location. At the request of the Bureau, the Secretariat clarified that meeting space would be available on this date. This arrangement would allow Member States representatives accredited to UNEA or those from the Permanent Missions in Nairobi to register for such an INC session and to represent their respective governments in the matter of elections. For any Members of the INC that do not have delegates accredited to UNEA and do not have Permanent Missions in Nairobi, the Secretariat would provide financial support for participation in the half-day INC session. For the Secretariat to have adequate time for preparations, the decision on whether to convene such a session on 9 December in Nairobi should be made by the Bureau by 23 October 2025. One region raised a concern that delegates participating in UNEA or another intergovernmental meeting who are not INC negotiators would possibly lack interest and preparedness to adequately represent their respective Members during elections at an INC session, and that, therefore, dedicated INC delegates would need to be able to participate.

15. At the request of the Bureau, the Secretariat noted other possible occasions for convening a half-day INC session for the purposes of conducting elections. These included convening a session at the UN offices in New York where all Members have Permanent Missions who can represent them during the elections process, or on the margins of the first session of the Science-Policy Panel scheduled to take place in early February in Geneva, Switzerland. The Secretariat, however, could not confirm availability of meeting space for these options at this time.

16. The Bureau agreed to revert to this matter at its next meeting, following consultations by Bureau members with their respective regions.

17. Under item 3 on ‘Other Matters’, the Chair recalled that Bureau members can send written comments on the report of the Bureau meeting of 7 October 2025 by Monday, 20 October.

18. The meeting ended at 18:45 EAT with the next Bureau meeting scheduled for 23 October 2025.