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

SUMMARY AND ACTION POINTS INC BUREAU MEETING 17 DECEMBER 2025

Note by the Secretariat

1. The meeting was attended by the following members:

   African States: 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 meeting was presided over by Vice-Chair Ms. Johanna Lissinger-Peitz, as agreed by the Bureau during its meeting held on 30 October 2025.

3. As also agreed by the Bureau during its meeting held on 30 October, the meeting was attended by Mr. Julio Cordano (Chile) in an observer capacity as the nominee of the Group of Latin America and the Caribbean (GRULAC) for the vacant position for the region.

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

5. The Vice-Chair Presiding opened the meeting at 15:10 EAT, outlining the purpose of the meeting as focusing on the next steps toward INC-5.3. She noted that, at its previous meeting, the Bureau agreed on the way forward for the annotated agenda and had an initial discussion on the scenario note for INC-5.3, based on the draft proposed elements for consideration for the scenario note circulated to the Bureau. She expressed that the focus of the current meeting would be to ensure that the advance version of the scenario note, sent to the Bureau on 10 December, will provide predictability and clarity to Members of the Committee and will assist in progressing toward the possibility of elections by acclamation. She then gave the floor to the Executive Secretary for her introductory remarks.

6. The Executive Secretary noted that the recent seventh session of the United Nations Environment Assembly in Nairobi (UNEA-7) brought with it a high number of events related to plastic pollution and the INC process, and that all of these events had strong participation,

reflecting a renewed sense of momentum in the process. She expressed appreciation to the Bureau members for their support throughout 2025 and looked forward to the next steps for 2026.

7. The Vice-Chair Presiding then outlined the proposed agenda, which was adopted without comment.

8. Under agenda item 2 on ‘Adoption of reports’, the Bureau considered for adoption the draft report of the 3 December meeting of the Bureau, as shared with the Bureau and posted on the INC website after taking into account comments received in writing. The report was adopted without further comment.

9. Under the agenda item 3 sub-item on ‘Scenario note for INC-5.3’, the Vice Chair Presiding referred to the advance version of the draft scenario note that was shared with the Bureau on 10 December, reiterating her hope that perspectives on this advance draft were solicited from the regional groups in the lead-up to the meeting. The advance draft was based on the elements discussed with the Bureau at its previous meeting. She inquired whether, according to the outcomes of any regional consultations, the advance draft reflects a common understanding of how INC-5.3 will be carried out and whether any revisions should be made in the next draft before its publication in advance of the webinar for Members of the Committee scheduled for 15 January.

10. She recalled that the scenario note will be published at the same time as the information document by the Secretariat addressing procedures for elections and contains several cross references to this information document for further detail. The information document by the Secretariat will be based on the note by the Secretariat on procedures for elections to fill any vacancies for the positions of the Chair or Vice-Chairs circulated to the Bureau on 29 October 2025.

11. The Vice-Chair Presiding informed the Bureau that, in her discussions with Bureau members, she was frequently asked about the process involved in electing a Chair from a regional group that already has full representation on the Bureau. She requested the Secretariat to clarify the process in this regard.

12. The Secretariat informed the Bureau that, in the case of elections by secret ballot, once the results of the ballot count are announced and if the candidate obtaining the necessary majority is from a regional group currently fully represented in the Bureau, and that candidate is not already a member of the Bureau, one Vice-Chair from that regional group would need to resign before the successful candidate could be formally considered elected.

13. The Vice-Chair Presiding noted that the scenario note would benefit from further clarity on the adoption of the report of INC-5.3 which will happen only at the subsequent session of the INC due to the limited duration of INC-5.3. The language will, therefore, be slightly adjusted to make this clear.

14. She reminded the Bureau members that minor revisions to the scenario note could be considered following the Member’s webinar to be held on 15 January 2026 before it is released as an INF document in all six UN official languages.

15. The Bureau expressed overall support for the advance draft of the scenario note. It was requested that, in the next iteration of the scenario note, reference to specific rules of procedure related to elections be included. Clarification was sought on whether an in-person INC-5.3 would be necessary if elections were possible by acclamation, and whether INC-5.3 would be adjourned, as indicated in the advance draft scenario note, or closed at its conclusion. It was also requested that the scenario note be amended to include specific reference to the timing of

the opening of the session and clarification on the appointment of a new rapporteur, following anticipated resignation of the current rapporteur.

16. The Vice-Chair Presiding recalled that the Bureau, at its meeting on 3 December, agreed that it was preferable to adjourn INC-5.3, as reflected in the advance draft of the scenario note. She also noted that, to reflect the comments at this Bureau meeting, the next iteration of the scenario note would include specific reference to the relevant rules of procedure, timing of the start of the session and the explanation for the need to designate a new rapporteur.

17. Clarification was also requested about whether the language “focus only” on election of officers had a legal implication. It was clarified that there were none, and that the wording was intended simply to indicate that the resumed session would address only the election of officers and related administrative matters. It was agreed that the language in the scenario note could be slightly adjusted to clarify this.

18. The Secretariat recalled the note on the conduct of elections, sent to the Bureau on 29 October. It clarified that the note will be further revised with a view to making it public as information note for the session. To supplement this note, the 15 January webinar would also include information related to elections to ensure Members of the INC are aware of the process. On whether elections by acclamation would remove the need for an in-person session, the Secretariat clarified that the venue contract has been signed, committing the funds to be spent and that contracts with editors, interpreters and report writers are currently underway. Further, travel tickets are already being issued for funded delegates, representing a significant committed expenditure. However, the decision on the way forward ultimately rests with the Committee. The Secretariat also recalled that, in the event the Chair can be elected by acclamation, there would still be a need to fill other vacancies on the Bureau and to designate a new rapporteur due to the intended resignation of the current rapporteur, which would need to be accounted for when considering alternatives to an in-person session.

19. Clarification was requested on the possibility of managing the intersessional period with a Chair-Designate in the case of a single agreed candidate emerging. The Secretariat noted that there is no apparent established practice in the United Nations for such an arrangement in the absence of a decision by the intergovernmental body, but that it would revert with any further information on any such practice, should it be identified. It noted that decisions on Chairpersonship are made by the Committee and that, apart from silence procedure or another form of decision-making, designating a Chair could be procedurally difficult.

20. Following the feedback from the Bureau, the Vice-Chair Presiding proposed that she will work with the Secretariat to update the Scenario Note based on the comments received. The updated note will be published in English ahead of the webinar for Members on 15 January to allow sufficient time for Members to review it. The Secretariat will also provide the corresponding INF document to support participants’ preparation.

21. Under agenda item 3 sub-item on ‘Update on logistical arrangements’ the Executive Secretary provided an update on logistical arrangements. She informed that as of 17 December, 230 participants have been approved for INC-5.3, including 146 delegates from 103 Member States and 84 representatives from Observer organizations. She recalled that, to attend INC-5.3, all delegates must be duly registered, including those continuing from the first session of the Plenary of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Panel on Chemicals, Waste and Pollution (ISP-CWP P1) and Geneva-based delegates. Regarding travel support, she recalled that no further applications can be accepted at this stage, as the deadline has passed and the INC Secretariat has already begun processing the approved requests. The Executive Secretary also reminded that INC-5.3 badges will not grant access to the CICG rooms or venue on Friday, 6 February, the day before the session begins, and that only delegates registered to attend the ISP-CWP P1 will be permitted entry on that day.

22. In response to information provided by the Secretariat, Bureau members raised additional points for clarification on logistical arrangements, including opportunities for further cost savings measures related to INC-5.3, with a specific focus on costs associated with travel support to delegates and venue hire. The Executive Secretary emphasized that the Secretariat will continue to explore cost-saving measures wherever feasible. These measures include joint ticketing and shared services with ISP-CWP P1, as well as other options outlined in the Secretariat's note on cost-saving measures. Of the delegates receiving travel support, 23 are attending both INC and ISP-CWP P1 sessions, while most Geneva-based delegates are additional to those travelling from capitals, so their presence does not reduce overall travel costs. In response to a request for updated travel cost estimates, the Executive Secretary noted that the Secretariat will be able to provide an update once tickets have been issued as this impacts the estimates. Regarding the venue, she reiterated that the contract has been signed for all required rooms and that any change will result in financial loss.

23. Under agenda item 3 sub-item on 'Regional updates on preparations for elections' the Vice-Chair Presiding emphasized the importance for both the Bureau and Members of the Committee to continue engaging with candidates and regional groups, to support efforts towards electing a candidate by acclamation. There was general support in the Bureau for this approach and the importance of a single candidate to be elected by acclamation was highlighted. Bureau members from the Asia-Pacific States Group (APG) confirmed the selection of a single candidate from the region, Ms. Nazia Zaib Ali (Pakistan), and that a regional meeting has been scheduled for 23 December to provide an opportunity for all three candidates for Chair to engage with APG members ahead of INC-5.3.

24. Bureau members raised the possibility of the Vice-Chair Presiding, supported by the Bureau and Secretariat, facilitating steps to narrow the list of candidates towards electing a Chair by acclamation. The Vice-Chair Presiding echoed the importance of the Bureau continuing to play a key facilitation role but emphasized that Members of the Committee and regional groups should also continue to engage with candidates independently of the Bureau, to ensure broad engagement with candidates ahead of INC-5.3. She underlined that, while the Bureau can have facilitative role in the process, the responsibility for elections rests with the Committee as a whole and its Members.

25. The Vice-Chair Presiding offered, should it be agreeable and considered helpful by all candidates, to convene and facilitate a virtual meeting with all candidates for Chair, as well as regional coordinators, to provide an opportunity for the candidates to discuss amongst themselves their proposed approach to the role and the possibility of selecting a single candidate to support efforts towards electing a Chair by acclamation. She recalled that, at the Bureau meeting on 12 November, Bureau members discussed their role as facilitators in the process. In light of this, she emphasized that the work of the Bureau, including the Vice-Chair Presiding, would not extend beyond facilitating the process toward elections. She further emphasized that the ownership of arriving at a candidate for Chair by acclamation must come from the candidates and Members of the INC. She expressed that such a facilitative meeting would only take place if agreed by all candidates for Chair and that the eventual election of a Chair must, as much as possible, reflect the will of the Committee as a whole. The Bureau expressed support for ensuring that any engagement must only be in a facilitative manner. It was agreed that the possibility of a convened meeting would be canvassed among all candidates for Chair, with Bureau members reverting at the next meeting on a possible way forward.

26. Some members noted that defined qualifications and requirements can inform the process of converging on a single candidature for elections by acclamation and suggested that possible concrete steps could be further considered and discussed at the next Bureau meeting. The Bureau recalled discussing at previous meetings the desirable qualifications and requirements for a Chair and asked the Secretariat to compile and circulate these qualifications and

requirements in a document for discussion by the Bureau at its next meeting. Bureau members also emphasized the importance of taking concrete steps to narrow down the number of candidates in order to facilitate reaching consensus on a Chair by acclamation.

27. Before concluding discussions under the sub-item on ‘Regional updates on preparations for elections,’ the Vice-Chair Presiding thanked the Bureau for their continued engagement with regional groups and welcomed further updates from all regional groups at the next Bureau meeting.

28. Under the agenda item 4 on ‘Other matters’, the Bureau agreed to hold its next meeting on 12 January 2026, followed by a possible meeting on 19 January 2026 should there be a need to reflect on any issues arising from the webinar for Members scheduled for 15 January. No other matters were raised by the Bureau for consideration.

29. In her closing remarks, the Vice-Chair Presiding thanked the Bureau members for their contributions and ongoing support in advancing preparations for INC-5.3 and the broader process.

30. Before closing the meeting, the Executive Secretary also provided closing remarks, expressing gratitude to all Bureau members for their continued guidance and engagement in the process, particularly acknowledging the guidance and leadership of the Vice-Chair Presiding.

31. The meeting closed at 16:36 EAT.