

Intergovernmental negotiating committee to develop an international legally binding instrument on plastic pollution, including in the marine environment

Bureau meeting

Wednesday, 12 November 2025

15:00- 17:00 EAT

Online

SUMMARY AND ACTION POINTS INC BUREAU MEETING 12 NOVEMBER 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 by welcoming Bureau members and thanking them for their trust and confidence in her. She expressed hope for election of a new Chair by acclamation. She also welcomed Mr. Julio Cordano as an observer to the Bureau. She then gave the floor to the Executive Secretary for her introductory remarks.
6. The Executive Secretary expressed appreciation to the Vice-Chair Presiding for taking on the important role of presiding over Bureau meetings leading up to elections at INC-5.3. She welcomed Mr. Cordano in his capacity as an observer of the Bureau and further expressed appreciation to all Bureau members for their time and continued commitment in the time leading toward INC-5.3.

7. The Vice-Chair Presiding then outlined the proposed agenda, noting that the discussion under agenda item 3 on 'Preparations for INC' would not prejudice any decision that may be made under the leadership of a new Chair, nor would it entail a discussion on planning any substantive INC activities in advance of elections.
8. The Bureau was informed that Ms. Asha Challenger (Antigua and Barbuda) intended to submit her resignation from both her role as Vice-Chair representing the Small Island Developing States and, consequently, also as Rapporteur, and that she would elaborate further under the agenda item on 'Other matters'.
9. One Bureau member emphasized that, as the Bureau was to focus on preparations for elections ahead of INC-5.3, any discussion of dates of future sessions should be postponed until after INC-5.3, as per the Vice-Chair Presiding's mandate. Other Bureau members expressed that it would be useful to receive information from the Secretariat on possible dates of future INC sessions. As an alternative approach, the Bureau member proposed that the topic could be raised under the agenda item on 'Other matters', provided it was solely for the purpose of the Secretariat conveying information and not for the purpose of engaging in a discussion on the matter. Bureau members acknowledged the importance of hearing about possible dates for a subsequent session to be able to begin discussions within and among the regional groups and agreed to hear from the Secretariat on the topic under 'Other matters.' With these changes, the agenda was adopted.
10. Under agenda item 2 on 'Adoption of reports', the Bureau considered for adoption the draft reports of 27 October and 30 October, as shared with the Bureau and posted on the INC website. Both reports were adopted without comment.
11. Under the agenda item 3 sub-item on 'Logistics of INC-5.3 in Geneva', the Secretariat informed the Bureau that the invitation for INC-5.3 was circulated to Members of the Committee on 5 November, and that registration opened on 10 November with a deadline of **16 January 2026**. The Secretariat further informed the Bureau that the deadline for eligible delegates to apply for travel support is strictly 28 November, with funding available for only one delegate per eligible country. The Secretariat noted that, for delegates that need an entry visa to Switzerland, they are strongly encouraged to submit their application to the competent authorities as soon as possible.
12. The Secretariat expressed hope that INC Members would consider extending their delegates that will already be attending the first session of the Plenary of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Panel on Chemicals, Waste and Pollution (ISP), or send delegates already based in Geneva at the Permanent Missions, in order to ensure efficiency, cost-effectiveness and sustainable use of resources. As the session will be using the same space in the Geneva International Conference Centre (CICG) as the ISP meeting, rooms have been secured on the condition that no changes in room set-up occur. Although there is no limitation on the size of Member delegations, all delegations are encouraged to give consideration to the size of their representation given the space restrictions at the venue.
13. The Secretariat informed the Bureau that the CICG plenary hall has capacity for 490 delegates, and seating arrangements will be made for one delegate at the microphone plus one additional seat. An overflow room would be made available for any additional delegates that are not able to attend in the main plenary room due to capacity constraints, although additional overflow rooms would have cost implications. Badging is expected to open on Friday, 6 February, with rooms for regional coordination available from 0800h on Saturday, 7 February. Regarding DSA, delegates will be paid via UN Debit Card as per past practice. Bureau members inquired about the possibility of making the rooms for regional consultations available on Friday, 6 February for the regional groups wishing to hold their coordination meetings in the afternoon of the day prior to INC-5.3 and advised the Secretariat to liaise with the ISP interim secretariat

in that regard. The Secretariat informed the Bureau that this would not be possible as the rooms at CICG are contractually allocated for the ISP meeting that is still taking place on Friday, 6 February 2026, and that extending the use of rooms beyond 7 February would also result in additional costs for the meeting.

14. On observer participation, the Secretariat informed the Bureau that, due to venue constraints, not all observers in attendance may be able to be accommodated in the dedicated seating in the plenary hall but that they may follow proceedings from the overflow room, space permitting. Considering the nature of the resumed session, no travel support is available for observers to attend INC-5.3.
15. Bureau members emphasized that every effort should be made to ensure INC-5.3 is carried out in a cost-effective manner and requested that the Secretariat provide a detailed breakdown of projected costs associated with the resumed session. The Secretariat was further requested to prepare a list of possible cost-saving measures, to ensure effective use of resources.
16. In response to a question on the number of Secretariat staff needed at INC-5.3, the Secretariat informed the Bureau that, where possible, support staff would be drawn from existing UNEP and MEA staff in Geneva, as well as those already in attendance at the ISP. In relation to the possibility of a hybrid meeting, the Secretariat informed the Bureau that there would be cost implications associated with using an online meeting platform for two-way remote participation and further noted that a webcast system will be used to broadcast the session. However, it was highlighted that webcast would only allow for viewing the session and should not be mistaken as a platform to enable active participation. The Secretariat also indicated that, if elections proceed to a vote, it would not be possible to carry out a vote by secret ballot through hybrid modalities. In response to a question on the numbering of the subsequent (substantive) session of the INC, the Secretariat informed the Bureau that it would depend on whether the Committee decides to close or adjourn the February session.
17. In response to questions, the Secretariat noted that sessions, including those during which elections are held, are open to observers, unless the Committee decides otherwise in accordance with rule 53 of the draft rules of procedure provisionally applied, and that the cost implications associated with participation by observers would stem from the need for additional overflow rooms and additional staff for registration and badging of observers. Whether observers may make statements is ultimately a decision of the Committee. The Secretariat also informed the Bureau that, due to logistical constraints and the limited time of the session, there would be no dedicated room available for observers.
18. Bureau members agreed that the presence of observers at INC-5.3 will be important and expressed support for determining the best way to ensure observers are included at INC-5.3, noting the significance of such participation in line with UNEA resolution 5/14. They proposed designating seating space in the plenary hall while also recognizing that there are room capacity limitations and other logistical matters to consider. It was also noted that observers may be asked to leave the plenary session when elections are taking place. The Bureau then requested the Secretariat to proceed with sending the invitations to observer organisations for participation in INC-5.3, clearly outlining in the invitation letter the nature of the meeting and the limitations of the venue, including reference to participation of one representative per accredited observer organization.
19. Under the sub-item on 'Preparations for elections', the Secretariat conveyed to the Bureau that it had been informed of four nominations for Chair: Mr. Julio Cordano (Chile, nominated by the Group of Latin America and Caribbean States for Chair, or alternatively to assume the vacant Vice-Chair seat on the Bureau); Mr. Luay Sadeq AlMukhtar (Iraq, nominated by Iraq); Ms. Nazia Zaib Ali (Pakistan, nominated by Pakistan); and Mr. Ndiaye Cheikh Sylla (Senegal, nominated by the African Group of Negotiators on plastic pollution). The Secretariat

recognized that, as a result of Ms. Challenger's resignation from the Bureau, there will also be an official nomination for the position of Vice-Chair for the Small Island Developing States and a need for the Committee to designate a Rapporteur from among the Vice-Chairs once elections have concluded.

20. The Bureau expressed a clear preference for appointing a Chair by acclamation and encouraged candidates for Chair to commence engaging with Members of the Committee bilaterally, regionally and across regions toward this shared objective. The Bureau supported the idea that candidates outline their proposed approach to the role of Chair when engaging in consultations, including by clearly outlining their respective views for intersessional work, facilitators, the textual starting point for negotiations, and how to build trust and incorporate lessons learned from INC-5.2 in the process. The Bureau discussed the important role of Vice-Chairs ahead of elections in facilitating discussions between candidates and INC Members from their respective regions, where requested. The Bureau also emphasized the importance of candidates for Chair consulting amongst themselves with a view to reaching a common understanding and strengthening the possibility of elections by acclamation.
21. Bureau members had differing views on the sequencing of elections for Chair and Vice-Chairs of the Committee, with some Bureau members proposing to hold elections for any Vice-Chair vacancies before proceeding to election of the Chair, while other Bureau members noted that election of the Chair should precede other elections. Responding to questions from the Bureau, the Secretariat clarified that, under established practice and in accordance with the draft rules of procedure as provisionally applied, elections are carried out for specific positions. Elections for the role of Chair are usually carried out first, followed by elections for any vacant posts of Vice-Chairs.
22. The Bureau was aligned on the need to have a common understanding of the process of elections at INC-5.3.
23. The Bureau noted it will continue to discuss the issue with the aim of seeking agreement on sequencing of elections in advance of INC-5.3 and the Bureau requested the Secretariat to circulate a revised note on the conduct of the elections in advance of INC-5.3.
24. Under the agenda item 4 on 'Other matters', Ms. Challenger indicated that she would submit her formal resignation by way of official letter and that the constituency of Small Island Developing States intended to nominate Mr. Linroy Christian (Antigua and Barbuda) for Vice-Chair representing Small Island Developing States. She expressed her hope that the Bureau would invite Mr. Christian to attend Bureau meetings as observer in the time between her resignation taking effect and a decision of the Committee on his election. The Bureau further thanked Ms. Challenger for her dedication and contributions as both a member of the Bureau and as Rapporteur.
25. The Secretariat informed the Bureau of possible dates for a substantive session of the INC in 2026 following elections in February. Taking into account that the global calendar of environmental meetings for 2026 is nearly full, the Secretariat has reserved two timeslots at the United Nations Office at Nairobi for the next full INC session: 30 August – 5 September 2026; and 4 – 10 October 2026, with no possibility for extension of either timeslot due to unavailability at the venue. Both slots include a day for regional consultations. The Secretariat also informed the Bureau it would be advisable that a tentative indication to block the dates is made in early 2026. The Secretariat further informed the Bureau that, should a Member wish to offer to host the next substantive session, the Secretariat would need to know as early as possible to be able to undertake necessary preparations.
26. A Bureau member requested clarity from the Secretariat on timeframes for the delivery of two possible webinars before INC-5.3; one on election procedures to be delivered to Members of

the Committee and one to inform observers about the ongoing process. The Secretariat noted the webinars could be delivered in January 2026 ahead of INC-5.3, with further information to be provided at a later date.

27. In her closing remarks, the Vice-Chair Presiding thanked the Bureau members for their contributions and important reflections during the meeting.
28. The meeting was closed with the upcoming Bureau meetings to be scheduled on a monthly, or on an ad hoc basis, as deemed necessary.