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

Bureau meeting

Thursday, 5 March 2026

15:00- 17:00 EAT

Online

SUMMARY AND ACTION POINTS INC BUREAU MEETING 5 MARCH 2026

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: Mr. Linroy Christian (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 the Chair of the Committee, Mr. Julio Cordano.
3. The Secretariat was represented by the Executive Secretary of the INC, Ms. Jyoti Mathur-Filipp.
4. The Chair opened the meeting by thanking the Committee for the trust placed in him by electing him as Chair of the Committee at the third part of the fifth session of the intergovernmental negotiating committee (INC-5.3). He congratulated Mr. Linroy Christian (Antigua and Barbuda) for his election as Vice-Chair representing the Small Island Developing States, and congratulated Ms. Irma Gurguliani (Georgia) on her designation as Rapporteur. He expressed thanks to Ms. Johanna Lissinger-Peitz (Sweden) for her dedication to her role as Vice-Chair presiding over the elections at INC-5.3. He also thanked the Bureau for engaging with constituencies leading up to the elections at INC-5.3 and thanked the Bureau members in advance for continuing this engagement in the lead-up to INC-5.4, noting that he looked forward to continuing this inclusive and collaborative way of working in the period ahead.
5. The Executive Secretary congratulated the Chair and Mr. Christian on their elections, as well as Ms. Gurguliani on her designation as Rapporteur. She noted that the outcome of INC-5.3 sent a strong signal in reinforcing the Committee's collective commitment to advancing the process. She expressed gratitude to Ms. Lissinger-Peitz for her guidance, dedication and commitment throughout the lead-up to and during INC-5.3.
6. She noted that there was clear engagement and determination expressed by delegates during INC-5.3 and expressed that it would be essential to sustain this constructive spirit in the months

ahead. This engagement was also reflected in the strong participation at INC-5.3, with 317 delegates representing 160 Members, as well as 97 participants from 97 observer organizations, of which 89 were from non-governmental organizations. The final list of participants,¹ along with attendance statistics,² have been made available on the INC-5.3 website. The results of the participant survey will also be made available once finalized.

7. The Executive Secretary further informed that the draft report of INC-5.3 has been sent to the Rapporteur for review, after which it will be circulated to the Members of the Committee for review, with a view to its consideration for adoption by the Committee at a later date.
8. Regarding the upcoming informal virtual Heads of Delegation (HODs) meeting scheduled for 12 March 2026, she reported that 170 delegates from 103 Members have registered at the time of reporting. Members are reminded to complete registrations by 8 March to ensure Interactio is able to provide necessary links for all participants in a timely manner.
9. The Chair introduced Mr. Gonzalo Guaiquil and Ms. Macarena Quezada as members of his team and informed the Bureau that they would be assisting him throughout the process. The Chair then provided an overview of the agenda which was adopted without comment.
10. Under agenda item 2 on 'Next steps for INC-5.4', the Chair remarked that significant efforts must be carried out in order to ensure Members arrive at INC-5.4 well-equipped to work toward conclusion of an instrument on plastic pollution. He indicated that he has set out initial steps toward INC-5.4 in a letter sent to all Members of the Committee via email to INC national focal points and made available on the INC website on 20 February 2026.³ In this letter, the Chair emphasized his commitment to the principles of transparency, inclusivity and predictability in the work of the Committee, including in relation to how all work will be organized moving forward.
11. He noted that the initial proposal is to estimate the possible date of INC-5.4 and then plan from there all necessary steps required to make progress in the lead-up to the resumed session. As there are many international conferences planned for 2026, including the UNCCD COP, the CBD COP and the UNFCCC COP, INC-5.4 must be planned to ensure minimal overlap with these meetings. For this reason, he noted that INC-5.4 would likely be held at the end of 2026 or early 2027 in a proposed 10-day resumed session, including a rest day. One Bureau member noted that the length and timing of INC-5.4 should remain flexible and be guided by progress achieved through the intersessional roadmap. It was further noted that the date of INC-5.4 should avoid overlap with major holidays, including the Islamic holy month of Ramadan and the Eid holidays.
12. The Chair emphasized that the Committee must use a variety of modalities to ensure development of a text that all Members can support. He noted that he intends to circulate an additional letter in the coming weeks which will provide a clear roadmap to the Membership reflecting key dates and milestones, as well as proposed modalities to be used in the lead-up to INC-5.4. The roadmap will be developed following consultations with Members of the Committee to ensure it reflects a common understanding of the way forward. The roadmap and letter will also be developed without prejudice to the possibility of additional letters or reflection notes that may be necessary at later stages. The draft roadmap, which will take into account feedback from this Bureau meeting, will be introduced at the virtual HODs to be held on 12 March, with the final letter and roadmap being released following the HODs to avoid prejudging any outcomes of the meeting. This would also ensure that the roadmap takes into account the outcome of the HODs and feedback received from Members.

¹ <https://wedocs.unep.org/handle/20.500.11822/49259>

² <https://wedocs.unep.org/handle/20.500.11822/49269>

³ <https://wedocs.unep.org/handle/20.500.11822/49268>

13. At the outset of presenting an overview of the path toward INC-5.4, the Chair noted that the informal meeting convened by the Government of Japan had concluded and expressed support for all Member-led initiatives that focus on advancing work toward INC-5.4 provided they are complementary to the work of the Committee, without replacing this work. He stressed that such informal meetings fall outside the scope of initiatives planned by the Committee but that outcomes of these meetings may contribute to a more robust discussions on the path toward INC-5.4. He requested that the conveners of any Member-led initiatives inform the Bureau and Committee of any outcomes so that all Members remain apprised of progress made.
14. The Chair noted that he would convene several in-person initiatives in advance of INC-5.4, including an in-person HODs meeting anticipated for the week of 29 June 2026, with the day preceding the HODs being allocated for regional meetings. It is also anticipated that an in-person intersessional meeting of negotiators will be convened later in 2026 with participation open to all interested Members.
15. These in-person initiatives will also be supplemented with regular virtual HODs which will serve as an opportunity to stock-take and identify areas that may require focused discussions leading up to INC-5.4. The Chair noted that the first of these virtual HODs will be held 12 March, with the aim of holding additional virtual HODs every 4-6 weeks, subject to the overall calendar availability.
16. The Chair noted the importance of having a common textual basis to resume negotiations at INC-5.4 and indicated that there have been several texts produced thus far, including Chair's Texts, texts produced in informal meetings, and proposals from Members or groups of Members. He emphasized that it would be important to consider developing a single text that brings together the progress made in other texts and which could be used to facilitate exchanges and provide a basis for a deeper understanding among Members of the Committee. He indicated that this proposed text would strive to capture the full extent of the progress made in the process and present in a structured manner those areas that may require more work. He affirmed that this text would not attempt to provide solutions to topics for which there are clear divergences, but would instead present these areas of divergence through options or bracketed text. He proposed that a version of this new text could be issued following the in-person HODs to be held at the end of June.
17. The Chair informed the Bureau that the text would be developed collaboratively and iteratively, using information gathered from consultations and meetings held in advance of INC-5.4. He emphasized that discussions in the lead-up to INC-5.4 should remain mostly focused on ensuring conceptual alignment rather than on textual negotiations, in particular in those issues where there are significant divergences. He stressed that conceptual alignment and progressing toward a common understanding on key topics are critical steps before arriving at INC-5.4.
18. The Chair expressed his intention to also engage on a regular basis with all regional and political groups over the coming months, and indicated that he has already held online meetings with some regional groups. He requested the Bureau to convey to all regional and political groups his availability to meet virtually. Some Bureau members conveyed the intention of their constituencies to invite the Chair to meetings over the coming weeks. The Chair also noted that, subject to the availability of financial resources, in-person stand-alone regional consultations could be considered prior to INC-5.4 as was the case before previous INC sessions.
19. Noting the importance of Observers in the process, the Chair informed the Bureau of his intention to host regular virtual dialogues with Observers to ensure they remain adequately informed of progress made and that their views are consistently heard.

20. The Chair also conveyed his intention to convene a meeting with the Co-Chairs of INC-5.2 to canvass their perceptions on how best to advance discussions in light of the progress made at INC-5.2. He also noted it would be valuable to discuss lessons learned from discussions held in the Contact Groups during INC-5.2.
21. Bureau members welcomed the principled approach outlined by the Chair, as well as the Chair's initial overview of the path toward INC-5.4, while expressing the importance of continued consultation with the Bureau and Committee as the next iteration of the roadmap is developed. Bureau members noted that, in developing the roadmap, the objectives, expectations and expected outcomes of each initiative should be identified and included to ensure that the roadmap goes beyond identifying only modalities and accompanying timelines. The Chair conveyed that information on general expectations and objectives would be added to the roadmap while noting that the exact format and content of each initiative may need to be adjusted after details become clearer.
22. Bureau members noted the importance of agreeing on dates for INC-5.4 as a priority and welcomed guidance from the Chair on possible dates as soon as possible. The Bureau discussed the need to ensure sufficient time to dedicate to negotiations at INC-5.4 while also understanding that a longer resumed session would result in additional resource expenditure. It was also noted that there must be a balance between maintaining momentum while also allowing sufficient time for positions to mature in advance of INC-5.4.
23. Bureau members recognized the importance of Member-led initiatives in the lead-up to INC-5.4. It was highlighted that there is some concern about the membership of informal group meetings and that these initiatives should endeavour to reflect the interests of the broader Membership to the extent possible. Bureau members raised the question of how to ensure progress in Member-led initiatives is captured in the broader process.
24. The Chair noted that it may be challenging to determine how best to capture progress made in any Member-led initiatives, and proposed that the regular virtual HODs could be used as a platform for conveners of Member-led initiatives to inform the broader Membership of any progress made.. He also noted that Members should remain free to prepare and conduct their own initiatives, but that these initiatives are not part of the work programme of the Committee. However, he emphasized that these Member-led initiatives should be considered as complementary to the work of the Committee.
25. On the proposed length of INC-5.4, the Chair considered that a 10-day resumed session would be an appropriate length to allow Members to carry out consultations, meaningfully engage in the development of text, and work toward a final outcome. He further expressed that he remained open to inputs and feedback on the length of the resumed session.
26. One Bureau member requested whether it was possible to provide simultaneous interpretation during any informal online and in-person HODs meetings to ensure inclusive participation. The Chair acknowledged the concern, with the Secretariat noting that funding is not available for interpretation at informal meetings. The Secretariat recalled that interpretation is provided to the formal plenary meetings during the INC sessions and has been provided for some of the in-person stand-alone regional consultations to prepare for INC session, subject to the availability of funding. The Chair emphasized the need to balance logistical and financial constraints while continuing to embed the principles of transparency, inclusivity and predictability across the work of the Committee.
27. In response to a question on the possibility of high-level political engagement on key issues where significant divergence remains, the Chair noted the importance of supporting high-level engagement in the process while recognising the need to ensure the modes of work are specifically tailored to address key issues and discussions. He reflected on the important

progress made in contact group settings to date, while acknowledging that both political and high-level engagement modes of work may be required to address key issues and points of divergence.

28. Before closing the agenda item, the Chair thanked Bureau members for productive engagement and reaffirmed his intention to finalise the draft roadmap and circulate it to Bureau members to enable circulation within their respective constituencies for feedback. He further noted his intention to present the elements of the draft roadmap at the upcoming virtual and in-person informal HODs meetings, to enable additional input and guidance from all Members of the Committee.
29. Under the agenda item 3 on 'Other matters', a Bureau member sought clarification on how the outcomes of Member-led initiatives and meetings could be conveyed to all constituencies and incorporated into the work of the Committee. The Chair reiterated the value of Member-led initiatives for the process and encouraged the conveners of such initiatives to inform the Membership of any outcomes or progress made. He noted that, while such initiatives fall outside the scope of the work of the Committee, they provide an important opportunity to facilitate broader engagement between Members. He further encouraged those Members organising such initiatives to share outcomes of these meetings at the upcoming virtual or in-person informal HODs meetings, to ensure visibility of outcomes to all Members of the Committee.
30. In light of the Chair's request to communicate outcomes of Member-led initiatives, a Bureau Member representing the Asia-Pacific States Group indicated the intention to share with the Chair and Bureau the written summary of outcomes from the informal small group meeting hosted by the Government of Japan from 1 to 3 March 2026.
31. Before closing the meeting, the Chair invited the Executive Secretary to provide closing remarks. The Executive Secretary thanked the Chair and Bureau members for an informative and constructive meeting.
32. In his closing remarks, the Chair thanked the Bureau for a productive meeting. He reiterated his intent to finalise and circulate the draft roadmap to the Bureau as a priority.