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Progress towards developing an International Legally Binding Instrument on Plastic Pollution, including in the Marine Environment

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Introduction

The United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA-5.2) in March 2022 unanimously endorsed in Nairobi a historic resolution to End Plastic Pollution ([resolution 5/14](#)),

01

UNEP has the mandate to forge an international legally binding instrument to prevent and reduce global plastic pollution by 2024

02

The UNEP ED to convene an Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee (INC) starting beginning 2022 to complete its work by 2024

03

The INC is to develop an international legally binding instrument on plastic pollution including the marine environment

04

UNEP ED to prioritize providing necessary support to developing countries & countries with economies in transition; relevant stakeholders to enable their effective participation in the negotiating processes; provide a forum that is open to all stakeholders to exchange information and activities

05

All Member States to continue & step-up activities, & adopt voluntary measures, to combat plastic pollution, including sustainable consumption & to develop national action plans, provide statics on environmental sound management of plastic waste

Why focus on plastic pollution?

- Plastic Pollution is visible everywhere, over land, in rivers, lakes and ocean. Since 1950s 8.3 billion tonnes of plastic have been produced; today 6.3 billion tonnes are plastic waste and only 10% can be recycled. 8-12 million tonnes are leaking into the oceans annually. The forecast is 1,100 million tonnes of plastic waste by 2050.
- By 2023, about 400 million tonnes of plastic waste was produced annually. (UNEP 2023). It is estimated that 75 to 199 million tonnes of plastic is currently found in our oceans. Unless we change how we produce, use and dispose of plastic, the amount of plastic waste entering aquatic ecosystems could nearly triple from 9-14 million tonnes per year in 2016 to a projected 23-37 million tonnes per year by 2040 (UNEP 2023)
- Around the world, one million plastic bottles are purchased every minute, while up to five trillion plastic bags are used worldwide every year. In total, half of all plastic produced is designed for single-use purposes – for example food or beverage containers used just once and then thrown away. (UNEP 2023). There is an increasing trend towards single use plastics, most have become part of our daily lives. (water bottles, milk bottles cutlery, shopping bags..)
- In 2022, there have been reports of plastic particles found in human lungs and in human blood; and a 2021 report found microplastics in human placenta..
- **Source UNEP 2023 ‘Our planet is choking on plastic’** . https://www.unep.org/interactives/beat-plastic-pollution/?gad_source=1&gclid=CjwKCAiAzc2tBhA6EiwArv-i6a_w9sh2RnglG0aEhxjClbgNzlxEtagVZDgzSIFK169j8p2PMjQP1RoCq08QAvD_BwE

INC 1 Uruguay 28 Nov to 2 Dec 2022)

- The first session of the [Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee](#) to develop an international legally binding instrument on plastic pollution, including in the marine environment (INC-1), sought to facilitate the exchange of information, gathering of perspectives from different stakeholders across the plastics life cycle.
- The meeting collected information on the challenges and opportunities that should be considered in the negotiations; existing actions that are helping to shift the needle on plastic pollution, including in the marine environment; how stakeholders are approaching actions on plastic pollution; key opportunities and challenges that the global agreement could address.
- During this INC a hybrid Multistakeholder Forum was held that included state and non state actors which included informal sector, indigenous people, and youth
- This meeting did not complete discussions on procedural matters which were carried over to the 2nd INC.
- INC secretariat requested to prepare a document outlining key elements of the instrument based **on a comprehensive approach that addresses the full lifecycle of plastics** (as per resolution 5/14) to be discussed by the INC2

For more information: [-https://www.unep.org/inc-plastic-pollution/session-1/forum#ForumDialogue](https://www.unep.org/inc-plastic-pollution/session-1/forum#ForumDialogue); (INC1 full report)

<https://enb.iisd.org/sites/default/files/2022-12/enb3607e.pdf> and (INC2 summary) <https://enb.iisd.org/plastic-pollution-marine-environment-negotiating-committee-inc1-summary#brief-analysis-inc-1>

INC2 – Paris 9 May – 2 June 2023

INC2 was dominated by 2 key actions:

Completing procedural matters left over from INC-1; electing the bureau and approving the draft rules of procedure.

- This process took a longer than expected time due to various disagreements amongst the member states over the procedural matters .

Taking the first steps toward negotiating a new treaty on plastics pollution by considering the elements presented in an options paper requested by INC1.

- Discussions on the Options Paper were carried out in 2 contact groups and focused on objectives; core obligations, control measures and voluntary approaches; means of implementation; implementation measures, and additional matters.
- **Key outcomes from INC2** were 1) the request for the chair to prepare a committee driven zero draft of the suggested instrument for discussion at INC3. 2) the pending procedural matters were solved, and election of the bureau completed.
- For more information: (full INC2 report): <https://enb.iisd.org/sites/default/files/2023-06/enb3612e.pdf>; (summary of INC report) : <https://enb.iisd.org/plastic-pollution-marine-environment-negotiating-committee-inc2-summary#brief-analysis-inc-2>

INC3 11-19 November 2023 (Nairobi, Kenya)

At this stage, the negotiation process was at mid-point. The objectives of INC3 were to:

- a. Advance the development of the instrument using the [Zero Draft](#) prepared by INC Chair and the Secretariat as a basis;
 - b. Identify the possible content of provisions on elements not discussed at INC-2, including those related to principles, definitions and scope as guided by a synthesis report prepared by the Secretariat and the Co-Facilitators summary.
 - c. Develop a complete first draft text for consideration at INC-4
- The [Zero Draft](#) seeks to **regulate single-use plastics and set ambitious targets with accelerated timelines**. It contains sections broadly addressing: the life cycle of plastics and plastic products with the aim of addressing plastic pollution; means of implementation; and implementation plans and institutional arrangements.
 - Three contact groups were set up to address different aspects of the [Zero Draft](#), emphasizing the need for inclusivity in the process.

INC3 11-19 November 2023 (Nairobi, Kenya) contd

- Taking in the views expressed during the first two INC sessions, the delegates discussed a **comprehensive lifecycle approach, national action plans, international cooperation, hazardous materials criteria, environmentally sound substitutes, and the vulnerabilities of small island developing states (SIDS).**

Key outcome: No single draft was achieved as an outcome of this meeting. A revised Zero Draft will be presented at INC-4. From the meeting emerged two things shaping the ambition: one relates to **defining the lifecycle of plastics**, and if measures will begin far upstream, midstream, or downstream. The second relates to the **type of obligations the treaty will have.**

For more information (full inc3 report) <https://enb.iisd.org/sites/default/files/2023-11/enb3620e.pdf>; (summary INC3 report): <https://enb.iisd.org/plastic-pollution-marine-environment-negotiating-committee-inc3-summary#brief-analysis-inc-3>

INC4 & INC 5

- **INC4** will be held from 21-30 April 2024 in Ottawa, Canada

This session will discuss the updated draft resolution (prepared after INC3)

<https://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/44526/RevisedZeroDraftText.pdf>

- **INC5** - The final text of the instrument will be agreed upon during the 5th INC meeting to be held in the Republic of Korea in November 2024.
- **In 2025 a diplomatic conference** will be held to adopt the instrument and open it for signature.

Opportunities for Rotary

Several opportunities exist for Rotary to engage in the call to end plastic pollution. These include:

- a. Having a **clear message that Rotary is bringing to the table (and sticking to it!)** eg are we supporting the full life cycle approach? or are we only calling for strict regulation on production? or use of plastics? or are we only supporting end of plastic waste? What measures are we calling for?
- b. Once the message is clear, **Rotary may call upon all the clubs to start rallying around the message** through country or region wide campaigns, awareness activities in the communities and schools, and globally with key partners. The end polio campaign provides lessons on sustaining world-wide campaigns.
- c. **Rotary may build on the Adopt a River MOU between UNEP and Rotary International** and engage in activities with UNEP focused on the implementation of the agreed upon instrument to end Plastic Pollution. The MOU was signed in 2019 and may be revised by the 2 parties on matters of mutual interest.



Thank you for your attention