STREAMLINING TEXTS FOR AN AMBITIOUS TREATY

MEMBER STATES STARTED WORK IN CONTACT GROUPS ON DAY ONE OF INC-4

HIGHLIGHTS OF DAY 1, INC-4

- As INC-4 opened in plenary, statements made on behalf of a group of states and by individual states reaffirmed the growing majority support for binding global rules to address the full life cycle of plastics in the treaty to end plastic pollution. The INC moved to establish Contact Groups for substantive discussions on the Revised Draft Text of the treaty, as proposed by the INC Chair.

- Both contact groups saw steady progress later in the afternoon:
  
  ○ Contact Group 2 (CG2) finished the first round of discussions on the key elements assigned by the INC Chair; the Co-Chairs have been mandated to deliver new streamlined texts, based on existing options the Revised Draft Text, as basis for further substantive discussions.
  
  ○ Contact Group 1 (CG1) have not yet finished their initial round of discussions on how to organise their tasks as assigned by the INC Chair, especially regarding potential directions for streamlining. There is an outstanding list of more than 20 speakers as the group ended work for Day 1 at 7:30 PM.

NEWS IN BRIEF

- INC-4 opened the first day in plenary, with the aim of moving swiftly through the first few agenda items, into contact groups discussions on substantive matters, focusing on the Revised Draft Text of the treaty. Statements were made on behalf of a group of countries, as well as by some individual states; most of the statements reaffirmed the growing majority support for an ambitious treaty that addresses the full life cycle of plastic.

- Binding measures were emphasized and prioritized by states, including elimination and reduction measures, including bans on problematic and avoidable plastic products and chemicals and polymers of concern, and design and system requirements for non-prohibited products and practices, as well as a robust financing mechanism.

- The committee then moved into two Contact Groups:
  
  ○ CG1 was mandated to consider the elements addressed in parts I and II of the revised draft text, including any relevant proposed annexes, and make recommendations on streamlining the text;
  
  ○ CG2 was mandated to consider the elements addressed in parts III to VI of the revised draft text, including any relevant proposed annex, and make recommendations on streamlining the text.

- CG1 started initial discussions on the organisation of work of the group, and elements included Part II of the revised draft, with the intention of not excluding any opinions while identifying the main options, potential overalls and areas requiring clean up, streamlining and bridging of proposals. The role of the group’s Co-Chairs its subgroups’ Co-Facilitators—including their potential mandates to produce streamlined texts based on existing options in the revised draft for states’ consideration—were being discussed when the group ended the work for Day 1. An outstanding list of more than 20 speakers is left for the day after.

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1 From 8PM April 22, until 8PM Apr 23, 2024
2 See UNEP/PP/INC.4/4 Scenario Note
• CG2 started a broad discussion to share views on possible ways to identify convergence, to pave the way for sub-groups to undertake more substantive line-by-line discussions on the text. The intention was:
  ○ To identify possible realignment of elements, structural changes, bridging proposals, and areas of the text that may benefit from streamlining; and
  ○ To consolidate where relevant, with no loss of substance and while fully preserving the positions and views of all delegations in the revised text.
• In CG2, many states reiterated the need for new and additional, predictable financial resources and of a dedicated multilateral fund as the financial mechanism. Some supported a hybrid approach, as support grew for formal intersessional work to further explore specific elements of the mechanism. CG2 Co-Chairs and Co-facilitators received a mandate to undertake a ‘technical streamlining’ of the existing options in the revised draft.

WHAT TO EXPECT ON DAY TWO (24 APRIL 2024)

• In CG1, states will continue the first initial discussion of the revised draft text with the aim of mandating the co-chairs or co-facilitators of the relevant subgroups to produce a revised streamlined text, for further consideration in relevant subgroups.
• In CG2, Co-facilitators will complete the streamlining of Parts III, IV and VI of the Revised Draft for the continued substantive discussions to be held in Sub-groups. It was proposed to go directly into Sub-group 2.1 on the morning of 24 April, if streamlined revised text is timely provided and uploaded as in-session documents on the INC website.

WWF RECOMMENDATIONS

States must ensure that the negotiations at INC-4 deliver the necessary progress to enable timely conclusion of the negotiations by the end of 2024. Now is the time to speed up priorities.

For Day 2:

• WWF urges Member States to continue productive discussions in both contact groups, and prevent obstructions to streamlining efforts. WWF encourages states to support the role of the Co-Chairs and Co-Facilitators in conducting technical streamlining, based on existing options, to allow the CGs to make substantial progress.
• In CG1, WWF recommends Member States to continue their initial discussion on streamlining. WWF commends the proposal for technical streamlining by the co-chairs and the co-facilitators, and for this revised streamlined text to be used as basis in subgroups for further substantial discussions.
  ○ Moving into substantive discussions in Contact Group 1 and its subgroups, WWF commends new proposals on chemicals and polymers of concerns (submitted by Norway, on behalf of Norway, Cook Islands, and Rwanda) and problematic and avoidable plastic products (submitted by the United Kingdom, on behalf of United Kingdom and Thailand).
  ○ These proposals further developed the details of these provisions based on ‘Option 1’ (binding-obligation option) and would take the discussions on these two priority topics one step further. WWF recommends delegations to support in-session documents that advance the development of lists and criteria for elimination of products, chemicals or polymers and use them as basis for further discussions at INC-4.
In CG2, WWF recommends states to use the streamlined revised text that will be presented by the co-facilitators as basis for further discussions in subgroups.

At INC-4, WWF urges states to:

- Join the growing majority supporting global rules in the treaty.
- Streamline the key setups and specific texts for prioritised control measures:
  - Binding, global bans, phase-outs and phased reductions to eliminate high-risk and avoidable plastic products and chemicals of concern.
  - Binding, global requirements on product design and performance to ensure reduction, reuse and safe recycling for all plastic products.
  - Be specific on the necessary elements of prioritised implementation measures.
- A comprehensive finance package, utilizing all available sources and including a robust financing mechanism for the implementation of specific binding measures; as well as other non-financial means of implementation, including technology transfer, technical assistance, and capacity building.
- Requirements for monitoring and reporting, periodic assessments; and mechanisms to allow for scientific recommendations and Parties’ decisions on strengthening the treaty over time.
- Agree on intersessional work plan for these top priorities:
  - Criteria to assess and list plastic products and chemicals for bans and phased reductions.
  - General and sector-specific requirements for product design and performance towards non-toxic circularity.
  - Specific details on implementation measures, including compliance, reporting, and assessment; and on financial mechanisms.
- Mandate the development of a full draft of the treaty text before INC-5.

For further information for expected discussions throughout INC-4, recommended priority areas and WWF recommendations on the revised draft text, please see WWF’s Technical Paper.

or visit: www.panda.org/plastictreaty

for information on the treaty negotiation, including timeline, reports, briefs and quick guide to the INC process

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