



# TIME FOR CHANGE

## EFFORTS TOWARDS CONSENSUS HAVE BEEN EXHAUSTED

### NEWS IN BRIEF

- The INC failed—again—to conclude on the text for an effective treaty to end plastic pollution. The negotiation dynamics and patterns of unproductive discussions in Busan, December 2024, was repeated and allowed to continue to hinder meaningful progress in its latest round of negotiations in Geneva, August 2025
- A large and growing majority of countries continue to unite and solidify their shared vision for a treaty with binding measures along the full life cycle of plastics.
  - [A proposal from Mexico and Switzerland on behalf of 85 countries](#) provided treaty text and lists for phasing out problematic and harmful plastic products.
  - [A proposal from UK and Chile on behalf of 32 countries](#) on product design received significant support in the contact group.
  - [Colombia and Peru delivered a text proposal on the CoP decision-making rules on behalf of 118 countries](#).
  - The majority continued to broaden alignment on a means-of-implementation package of various financial, technical and technology-transfer mechanisms, to enable Parties' effective implementation of the treaty.
- Stalling tactics from a minority, manifesting bad faith, continued to dominate the process. Some countries showed clear signals that they had no intention to join a treaty that includes anything beyond voluntary actions on waste management, and would employ all possible tactics to derail the process. A majority of countries working for an effective treaty were more vocal against such disruptive and delaying tactics at this INC.
- Following informal consultations during the final days in Geneva, the INC Chair released a [draft text proposal](#) on 13 August and a [revised text proposal](#) on 15 August 2025. The latter is *marginally better* than the first draft; but when compared to the true ambition of an effective treaty to end plastic pollution, it is clearly regressing towards a weak treaty text:
  - The article on plastic products is heavily bracketed and does not require any binding, immediate obligation to phase out the most harmful plastic products and chemicals.
  - The article on product design does not specify a binding obligation, missing the linkage to necessary systems and failing to include an annex for binding criteria nor a clear timeline for the COP's future works.
  - The articles on financial resources and mechanism, and on capacity-building, technical assistance and technology transfer both remain heavily bracketed, and do not ensure a sufficiently robust package for implementation assistance.
  - The decision-making rule for the COP creates a prohibitively high threshold for any decisions to be taken on matters of substance—this is more of a consensus-requirement in disguise than a genuine alternative for decision-making when consensus cannot be reached.
- After eight months and ten meeting days in overtime, [at least USD 8.7 million more](#) than estimated budget,<sup>1</sup> and more than 7 million tonnes of additional plastic pollution in our oceans since its last failed attempt, the INC once more suspended its session without delivering a treaty — this time with neither clear basis nor concrete plan for continued negotiations.

The failure at the resumed fifth session of the INC in Geneva shows that the efforts towards consensus in this process have been exhausted. It is a clear warning sign, that further extending efforts to reach consensus would result in either a continuation of deadlocks, or an unacceptable watered-down treaty not fit for its purpose of ending plastic pollution. It is evident that the process must change for the outcome to change.

## RECOMMENDATIONS TO PROGRESS

The honourable ideal of reaching consensus has been too long exploited by a few countries to hold back global environmental actions. Those who are most ready for change must now lead the way, break the deadlock, finalize the treaty text and be ready for adopting an effective instrument to end plastic pollution

It is imperative that leaders in favour of an effective treaty take on this responsibility and demonstrate political will. WWF calls on the majority supporting an effective treaty and leading states to explore alternative pathways to finalizing and adopting the plastic pollution treaty.

### WWF calls on government leaders to:

- Continue to work on and consolidate a text for a new effective treaty to end plastic pollution, building on the broadly supported proposals at INC-5.2.
- Mobilize political will and broaden support, including securing high-level political backing and involving business, academia, civil society, and consumer groups early to strengthen arguments across political, economic, health, and social dimensions.
- Proactively prepare for a majority-based decision and related scenarios, including securing pre-approved instructions for voting and aligning on relevant procedural fallback options, ensuring readiness for procedural challenges and to maintain momentum.
- Convene all interested states to a conference — to be organised in national capacity by one state or a group of states — to develop and finalize the core elements of the treaty. A conference organized in national capacity to finalize the key elements of the treaty could bring new energy and hope to the discussions and could considerably speed up the process. By setting the agenda and taking leadership for the outcomes of the meeting, a group of champion states can make sure that discussions are not sent off track by procedural tactics. The meeting could feed into other options for adoption, or at a resumed session for the INC.

---

<sup>1</sup> only counting costs of INC-5.2, in-person Heads of Delegation meeting, regional consultations and other meetings, not considering additional Secretariat costs.



or visit:

**[wwwf.panda.org/plastic treaty](https://wwwf.panda.org/plastic treaty)**

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



### For more information, contact:

Zaynab Sadan

Global Plastics Policy Lead  
[zsadan@wwf.org.za](mailto:zsadan@wwf.org.za)



Working to sustain the natural world for the benefit of people and wildlife.

together possible. [panda.org](https://panda.org)

WWF, 28 rue Mauverney, 1196 Gland, Switzerland. Tel. +41 22 364 9111

CH-550.0.128.920-7

WWF® and World Wide Fund for Nature® trademarks and ©1986 Panda Symbol are owned by WWF-World Wide Fund For Nature (formerly World Wildlife Fund). All rights reserved.