

## Conceptual Framework on Production for INC-5

### Background

To deliver on the UNEA 5/14 mandate to promote sustainable production of plastics, which is supposed to be based on a comprehensive approach that addresses the full lifecycle of plastic, negotiators will need to agree on a way forward.\*

There are several justifications for addressing production in the Global Plastics Treaty, some of which relate to the effective functioning of the treaty and others to achieving its objectives:

- **monitoring progress** – in order to monitor progress on reducing emissions and releases of plastic and plastic chemicals into the environment, for scientific, technical and modelling purposes, parties will need to establish baseline information or inventory and periodically report on the types and quantities produced, which can then be reconciled with information on use, emissions, releases during the manufacturing process and waste management
- **effectiveness evaluation** – in order to evaluate the effectiveness of achieving our objectives, including the sustainable production of plastics, as well as inform future action, parties will need regular reporting on production (including imports and exports of primary plastic polymers and subsidies for the production of plastics), along with information at other stages of the lifecycle
- **climate change** – the production of plastic and the raw materials used to make it are associated with significant greenhouse gas emissions. Current levels of plastic production are incompatible with our global climate objectives, namely limiting global warming to 1.5°C and 2°C as outlined in the Paris Agreement. A global objective is needed to ensure our collective actions to reduce plastic production are aligned with global commitments to protect the climate system
- **circularity and waste management** – although 'circularity' is a misused term erroneously implying that used plastics can be put back into the economy in perpetuity, parties nevertheless aim to prolong the reintroduction of plastics into the economy. This includes, for example, restricting chemicals that undermine recycling and increasing separate collection and recycling systems. However, without reducing overall plastics production, these initiatives will be continuously undermined because the sheer volume of plastic makes circularity unachievable and uneconomical, as well as undermining alternative systems such as reuse
- **financial support** – a global objective to reduce production to sustainable levels would provide a clear direction of travel for the treaty and will define the level of action required throughout the plastics lifecycle. In the absence of such a clear benchmark, assessing and securing the scale and magnitude of financial resources required to assist developing countries will remain elusive and inadequate.

Moreover, the production of plastics does not exist within a silo. It exacerbates the impacts of each of the other stages of the lifecycle of plastics, both further upstream and further downstream. For any measures taken across the lifecycle to be successful, current unsustainable levels of production must be addressed. This is why a dedicated approach on production is needed.

For these reasons, and to ensure the integrity of the treaty, negotiators should include at a minimum: (i) data reporting on production; (ii) a global objective to reduce production to sustainable levels; and (iii) implementation of a package of policies across the full lifecycle of plastics including on production, some defined and others to be defined via a start-and-strengthen approach. This should be a red line.

To this end, negotiators in Geneva must prioritise agreeing treaty text based on the proposals submitted by Panama and the Pacific Islands on behalf of more than 100 countries and an accompanying draft Diplomatic Conference (DipCon) resolution that address key elements on plastic production. This will allow us to leave Busan with both the necessary treaty text and the pathway for finalising the details prior to entry into force.

**\* Note:** *The purpose of this document is not to identify those interventions required at other stages of the lifecycle of plastics, such as extraction, processing chemicals, products, reuse or waste management.*

## Treaty text

The key elements in treaty text include:

- national data reporting on production
- a global target on production or a target-setting process
- national targets or measures across the lifecycle of plastics, including on production, as part of the legally binding obligations and policies for inclusion in national plans
- a review clause that enables the periodic review of the global target and production reduction
- reference to production in the articles on monitoring progress and effectiveness evaluation.

It should be noted that there is sufficient scientific and technical evidence to include a global target in the treaty text itself. For example, see reports by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development ([Towards Eliminating Plastic Pollution by 2040](#)) and [Policy Scenarios for Eliminating Plastic Pollution by 2040](#)), the Nordic Council of Ministers ([Towards Ending Plastic Pollution by 2040](#)) and the Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratories ([Climate Impact of Primary Plastic Production](#)).

A [proposal](#) was made at INC-4 to start with a 40 per cent reduction of production by 2040 (40x40) against a 2025 baseline, which matches the year the treaty is expected to be opened for signature (2025) and the timeframe for which countries and stakeholders have sought to end plastic pollution (2040).

## Draft DipCon resolution

In addition to the treaty text, a draft DipCon resolution should be developed in parallel, identifying the areas of work to be advanced in the period between the DipCon and the first Conference of the Parties (CoP-1).

This resolution should ensure that decisions required for effective implementation of the treaty are prepared for adoption at CoP-1 once the treaty enters into force. Although the exact content of the draft DipCon resolution will depend on the outcome of the treaty text, some areas of work are independent of that outcome. The treaty text and draft DipCon resolution should be considered together as negotiations take shape.

The key elements in the draft DipCon resolution include:

- national data reporting format for adoption at CoP-1, including types and quantities as well as production, imports, exports and subsidies
- if the treaty text includes a target-setting process rather than specifying a target in Busan, the resolution should define the parameters for that process, including identifying the baseline year and target date, if possible, and the relevant considerations such as environmental, climate and health, as well as the establishment of a group of technical experts and stakeholders to support the selection of a global target (or target options) for adoption at CoP-1
- implementation aspects for adoption at CoP-1, such as updates to annexes or guidance on attaining national targets as defined in the agreement, or measures across the lifecycle of plastics, including a potential freeze of production or expansion in capacity.

## Other aspects

Plastics production itself has additional direct negative impacts, including the release of toxic emissions, wastewater and plastic pellets into the environment.

These pollutants must also be prevented and minimised to the maximum extent possible using the best practices and best available technologies, in order to protect fenceline communities and the environment.

## For more information:

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