



Written Submission from the International Council of Beverages Associations on Recommendations of Elements Towards An International Legally Binding Instrument

The International Council of Beverages Associations (ICBA) represents the global non-alcoholic beverage industry, including multinational beverage companies as well as national and regional beverage associations, with operations in more than 200 countries and territories. Established in 1995, ICBA is a non-profit business organization in special consultative status with the UN's Economic and Social Committee (ECOSOC) and holds UNEP accreditation. **We offer our full support for an international treaty that addresses the major environmental challenge of ending plastic pollution by establishing ambitious global goals and commitments that will achieve real, tangible outcomes. To that end, our members, The Coca-Cola Company and PepsiCo, have joined the Business Coalition for a Global Plastics Treaty, convened by the Ellen MacArthur Foundation and WWF.**

As Member States undertake the momentous task of negotiating this international treaty¹ addressing the major environmental challenge of ending plastic pollution, the global beverage industry commends UNEP for the opportunities it is providing for multistakeholder engagement. ICBA was pleased to participate in INC-1 as well as the multistakeholder dialogue, and we look forward to ongoing opportunities for engagement both intersessionally and at future INCs. We believe that hearing from a diverse set of stakeholders, including civil society, NGOs and the private sector will help develop a thoughtful, well-considered legally binding instrument. We encourage the continued recognition of workers in informal and cooperative systems as key stakeholders in policy discussions at all levels, as we strive for fair and inclusive discussions. Our industry recognizes and respects the livelihoods, health and human rights of all workers involved in the plastics value chain. We furthermore note our willingness to share the breadth and depth of our packaging expertise throughout the process.

I. Substantive Elements of the Global Plastics Treaty

At the highest level, we believe the overarching **Objective for the Treaty** should be to create a world where packaging never becomes waste by operating on a global, coordinated level with harmonized policy levers to ensure that all countries have access to, the ability to, and are incentivized to implement best practices, adapted to their national context. The Treaty can help spur investments in packaging recyclability, collection and recycling infrastructure and lead to more efficient and better waste management systems around the world. It could further reduce overall emissions in countries based on National Action Plans and reduce the negative impact of plastic pollution on the environment. It could

¹ We use the term “treaty” generally but understand that the final outcome of the multi-year negotiation process could be another form of legally binding instrument.

encourage innovation of packaging materials, increase the use and supply of rPET for food-grade applications (as more countries understand the importance of regulatory authorization), end-of-life solutions and technologies, and alternative delivery systems that take a range of environmental impacts into account. The Treaty's workstreams could help achieve a better understanding of the plastic pollution challenge by establishing data assessments, life cycle analyses, and distinctions between polymer types for reporting and other obligations (which can help drive higher efficacy rates than reliance on a generic plastic definition). Perhaps most importantly, it can act as a catalyst on an issue so badly in need of a global attention driver – starting now. We recognize this is the moment to take historic action and that getting it to the finish line will require all stakeholders – including the private sector – to join in calling upon policymakers to back an ambitious form of a treaty or other instrument.

We encourage Member States to deliver against a high ambition. While we should work to allow flexibility for countries to adopt specific policies and practices that will be successful locally, we believe that real progress on tackling plastic pollution can only happen if Member States are encouraged to set ambitious targets for overall improvement.

A key obligation of the Treaty is to address the full life-cycle of all plastics, including ambitious and clear objectives with targets related to up-stream and down-stream measures. It should cover both land-based plastic pollution and plastic pollution that ends up in the marine environment. The Treaty should include provisions on control measures that specify what Member States must do in a harmonized manner to tackle plastic pollution across the plastic life cycle, including the following **core obligations**, while recognizing the importance of national context and capabilities:

- **Measures to enable a circular economy**, through policies such as rPET authorization, incentives for incorporating recycled content, pre-aligned design for recycling standards and prioritization of bottle-to-bottle recycling. We recognize that there is a critical need to increase the volume of recycled plastics to support the circular economy, and that products and systems need to be designed for the reuse, recycling and composting of all plastics.
- **Focus on reduction of certain types of problematic plastics**, such as those that have high leakage rates, are short-lived, and/or are virgin plastics from non-renewable materials.
- **Encourage and incentivize continuing innovation** around alternative materials, packaging solutions, and delivery mechanisms, using current reuse and other industry models as a reference. Stakeholders should support and invest in those solutions and technologies that are scalable across the plastics economy.
- **Support and leverage voluntary commitments**, both existing and new, from all stakeholders. While we recognize that certain top-down measures are necessary to drive alignment and progress, we believe it is equally important to recognize and nurture commitments from all

segments of society, including the private sector, to truly accelerate efforts on ending plastic pollution.

- **Strengthen waste management governance and infrastructure** to prevent and enable remediation of macro- and micro-plastics to protect both environmental and human health.
- **Address legacy plastic pollution** to the greatest extent practicable and coordinate global efforts from all stakeholders on this front.
- **Ensure the continuing development, dissemination and leveraging of scientific knowledge and advances to inform all work and implementation measures related to the Treaty.** It is critical for policymakers and stakeholders to rely on all reliable sources of knowledge related to plastics and plastics pollution, including peer-reviewed scientific literature, reports, metrics and data, as well as the use of lifecycle assessments. As all are aware, there are tradeoffs in approaches, and it is imperative that efforts are made to avoid unintended negative consequences when substituting one policy approach for another.

With regard to potential control measures, the objectives described above must be based on common definitions as well as harmonised standards and metrics on products and processes. The current lack of common standards is a significant factor that currently hinders progress in global coordination on the plastic pollution challenge. Our industry is supportive of setting scientifically-validated global targets, and it is essential that a shared understanding of definitions and standards underpin any global targets. We also recommend including a review mechanism to gradually adjust and strengthen them over time, recognizing that continuing innovations in this space means that it is important that metrics not remain static in the face of technological advances.

One important control measure would be the use of **common metrics and reporting frameworks for monitoring and compliance purposes,** which will improve global data flows. These transparent monitoring and reporting mechanisms are necessary so that progress toward a circular economy can be appropriately tracked and linked to the overarching Treaty goals.

II. Implementation Elements of the Global Plastics Treaty

Recognizing that the success of any written instrument relies on its actual implementation, we propose the following implementation measures and means:

- **Establish a clear common policy framework for National Action Plans** that align on policy principles that can inform national regulations and are designed considering local circumstances to obtain a successful implementation. While flexibility is an important element in these National

Action Plans, we believe it is essential that these Plans oblige Member States to all work toward relevant and appropriate targets, while further research is underway to identify a science-based global target for plastic pollution. There should be clear governance, accountability, and reporting mechanisms for the ongoing review of these National Action Plans.

- **Leverage and scale-up existing best practices.** Importantly, we believe there are existing collection and recycling programs and other circular economy initiatives that can be used as the foundation for future progress. Beverage industry packaging in some markets is some of the most recyclable, collected, and recycled packaging. We have proven that a viable circular economy can exist for our packaging, and our goal is to make that happen everywhere. Existing reuse and recycling program best practices, and broader multi-stakeholder initiatives (such as the Ellen MacArthur Foundation/UN Environment Global Commitment, and the World Economic Forum Global Plastic Action Partnership), should be leveraged as part of the learning, building and developing of a global circular economy.
- **Ensure effective participation of all Member States** by including a capacity-building, technology transfer and development, and financial support mechanism. This is a particularly important element to support the implementation and development of achievable National Action Plans. We note that financial support and the appropriate means for it may vary from country to country. For developing countries, we encourage the adoption of policies that incentivize and enable the appropriate private sector investments. We encourage the continued adoption of public-private partnerships in Member States and at a global level around the world.
- **Inclusion of workers in informal and cooperative systems** as key stakeholders in the national capacity building strategy, with just transition as a goal, and as one important partner of the growth of collection and recycling capacity to achieve Treaty goals.
- **Ensure coordination and alignment with existing trade policies and measures,** and specific ongoing coordination with the World Trade Organization to support the transition to a circular economy.
- **Consider creation of an UN scientific advisory body across disciplines** to provide expertise on areas of developing knowledge (e.g., microplastics), assess impacts and tradeoffs of proposed policies, and propose updates as needed to any harmonized standards and metrics.

In all instances, implementation should support and align with the UN's Sustainable Development Goals.

III. Concluding Thoughts

We believe tangible accomplishments are within reach. The progress that our industry has made with beverage packaging in many markets proves that a circular economy is possible, and that ambitious targets with the appropriate support systems can be met for recyclability, the use of recycled materials, collection rates for recycling of packaging, reuse and the development of alternative materials.

The Treaty can achieve short and medium-term goals at the outset, with its longer-term goal of ending plastic pollution always in mind. For example, in the first run, the Treaty can accomplish the establishment of harmonized definitions, reporting metrics and design standards. Over the medium term, it will increase recycling rates, use of recycled content, reduction of virgin fossil-based plastics, and lead to a stronger circular economy infrastructure for plastics.

As an accredited stakeholder at UNEP, the global beverage industry is committed to doing its part to help move an ambitious, binding Treaty forward. We are willing to constructively engage and share our first-hand expertise across all areas and geographies of the supply chain, from packaging, transportation, recycling and waste management and policy development. We stand ready and willing to be part of the solution.

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