

Interventions of the EU and its MS on agenda item 4-a

Timeline for INC meetings

- Having considered the options outlined in document UNEP/PP/OEWG/1/3, **the EU and its MS favor Option 1 and believe that 5 INC meetings in total would be realistic and necessary** to have the possibility to ensure sufficient negotiation time and to conclude negotiations within the ambitious timeframe mandated by the resolution.
- Still, the EU and its MS would like to provide a couple of comments on the proposed dates as outlined in Option 1.
- INC1 should, in accordance with the mandate of UNEA resolution 5/14, be organized during second half 2022, preferably not earlier than the end of November or beginning of December to allow Member States and UNEP to prepare well for the meeting and to allow for sufficient and effective regional coordination, also considering the busy international schedule this year (UNFCCC and CDB COPs for example).
- In addition, the EU and its MS would like to recommend that INC2, in such scenario, shall not be organized earlier than late April or Early May 2023. Early March 2023 is not an option as it would give only 4 months between the two sessions. It is imperative to anticipate sufficient intersessional time between INC1 and INC2 in order for the INC Secretariat and Bureau to effectively reflect on the strategic orientations given during INC1 and prepare the necessary documentation. This goes as well for Member states, regional groups and stakeholders who will need sufficient time to prepare themselves for the next phases of the negotiating process.
- The EU and its MS support the **Diplomatic Conference of Plenipotentiaries** to be held in 2025, once the text of the new instrument is agreed by the INC. The EU and its MS would be open to support either any host country that would be candidate.
- In general, the EU and its MS recommend to carefully consider the dates of each INC sessions in order to provide a balance between negotiating time and intersessional time needed for exploring technical issues and meeting preparation. Overlaps with other international environmental meetings should also be avoided.
- The EU and its MS are supportive of the **proposed duration** for INC1 and recommend that a five-day meeting is considered for all subsequent sessions, as it is the traditional format and length in United Nations best practices. The EU and its MS can also be supportive of longer INC meetings, but not longer than 7 or 8 days, if it helps to conclude negotiations within the timeframe.
- If the pandemic situation allows, the EU and its MS would encourage that **in-person meetings remain the rule, with the possibility of hybrid format**. In particular, negotiating meetings should be held in-person preferably, or in a hybrid format if the political or health situation does not enable to have a universal participation in the in-person INC meeting. **The EU and its MS further encourage in person representation from each participating UN MS, where possible.**

- The EU and its MS are flexible and supportive of some of the intersessional work without negotiating character (e.g. seminars/webinars) being fully **online** as long as principles of universality and inclusiveness are fulfilled.
- The EU and its MS request that the **meeting documents**, including a scenario note, are shared with Member States well in advance (at least 6 weeks) of each INC meeting in all UN languages.
- As for the **location of the meetings**, the INC process could benefit from **holding the meetings in several countries and regions**, and/or under the auspices of other international institutions dealing with relevant substance matter, to enhance ownership, visibility and credibility to the process. The EU and its MS favor that the INC meetings should be distributed across all regions to foster ownership.

Documentation to be requested to UNEP in view of INC1

- The EU and its MS are supportive of the Secretariat proposal to draft, ahead of INC1, a **document outlining options for the structure of the new instrument**. This could include a draft of standard provisions, typically from MEAs, and different options highlighting their advantages and disadvantages. However, these draft provisions should not include any substantive elements as the EU and its MS find important that substantive elements specific to this new instrument arise from the INC meetings. Therefore, the EU and its MS would not be in favor of a draft text prepared by the Chair following INC1 as more discussions will probably be needed during INC2 and onwards.
- The EU and its MS are thankful to the Secretariat for preparing the information note (UNEP/PP/OEWG/1/INF/3) entitled “Relevant information that might assist the work of the intergovernmental negotiating committee”. This note gives a comprehensive overview of existing information sources (including from relevant MEAs and previous documentation elaborated in relation to AHEG) that can inform the INC in the elaboration of the new instrument. This document also gives a landscape of existing MEAs and other processes whose mandates cover plastics-related issues.
- The EU and its MS would also find it useful to request the Secretariat to **prepare several substantive documents, building on previous work** to support the work of INC1:
 - A glossary of key terms, including the existing (range of) definitions thereof;
 - An overview of existing funding currently available for tackling plastic pollution through international funding arrangements, including from other processes, programs, multilateral funds, development banks and private sector initiatives. Based on the substantive discussions, a paper on options for the mobilization of resources from all sources could be developed for a later session of the INC.
 - An overview of the existing stakeholder engagement initiatives aiming to tackle plastic pollution, on which to build on.
- The EU and its MS would also suggest the Secretariat to prepare a **plan for outreach to receive inputs from Secretariats of relevant MEAs and other processes**, both global

and regional, in order to ensure coordination with relevant entities and to share a synthesis with the INC on the inputs received.