



Republic of Rwanda

RWANDA ENVIRONMENT MANAGEMENT AUTHORITY (REMA)



Sequencing of Work of the INC: Written Submission by Rwanda

Rwanda believes that the sequencing of work and clustering of the issues is paramount to a successful intergovernmental negotiating committee (INC). To this end, the following recommendations are provided on the thematic groupings of the issues and subparagraphs in the mandate:

Thematic 1: Objectives and Scope

Initial discussions at INC-1 should focus on developing a common understanding of scope, objectives and other horizontal matters. **Subparagraph OP3(a)** on specifying the objectives of the agreement is a natural starting point for discussions, though following initial exchanges, should then should only be revisited following substantive discussions on the other subparagraphs in the mandate. The **OP3 chapeau** of the mandate also raises the issue of scope, namely that the instrument address plastic pollution in all environments, including in the marine environment. The sources of plastic pollution are varied and include such things as single-use plastics and packaging, other plastic products, fishing gear, agricultural plastics and several different microplastics, among others, with each requiring dedicated global strategies and programs of work tailored to the nature of the plastic pollutant and its value chain.

Thematic 2: Lifecycle of Plastic

Resolution 5/14 sets out a mandate to the intergovernmental negotiating committee (INC) to develop an international legally binding instrument on plastic pollution based on a comprehensive approach that addresses the full lifecycle of plastic. This is most squarely captured in **subparagraph OP3(b)** and Rwanda recommends separate thematic discussions in distinct technical working groups to obligations, commitments, measures and approaches discuss approaches for each main stage of the lifecycle:

- (1) sustainable production and consumption of plastic;
- (2) product design;
- (3) environmentally sound waste management.¹

Although interlinkages certainly exist among the different stages of the lifecycle of plastic, particularly as it relates to promoting a circular economy for plastic, Rwanda recommends a clear delineation of the discussion of each stage. For example, the INC should separate out into distinct technical working groups the discussion on sustainable production and consumption of plastic, which could entail exchanges on baselines, licensing and controls to limit virgin plastic production and consumption of certain polymers, from the discussion on product design, which could entail exchanges on eco-design, recycled content targets, standards, chemical and additive restrictions and restrictions on certain uses. Likewise, a technical working group should be formed to discuss the environmentally sound waste management, which raises its own unique issues. In recognition that the INC is mandated to address all stages, this delineation of each stage into distinct technical working groups

¹ To assist negotiations, a common understanding among INC participants is required on the meaning of upstream, midstream and downstream measures within the lifecycle of plastic. In subparagraph OP3(b), Resolution 5/14 outlines three main stages that should frame our common understanding: production and consumption of plastic (upstream), product design (midstream) and waste management (downstream).



would enable the development of obligations, commitments, measures and approaches for each stage, and facilitate the transposition of our discussions into article text. Additional stages of the lifecycle of plastic that merit consideration, coming before and after the three identified above and in subparagraph OP3(b), include the sourcing of raw materials and plastic pollution once found in the environment.

Resolution 5/14 also contains **subparagraph OP3(f)** on the specifying national reporting, as appropriate, which is a topic relevant to each stage of the lifecycle and should therefore form a part of the distinct discussions on sustainable production and consumption of plastic, product design and environmentally sound waste management.

Thematic 3: National Action Plans

Resolution 5/14 sets out two subparagraphs that speak to the process and substance of national action plans, namely **subparagraph OP3(d)** on developing, implementing and updating national action plans reflecting country-driven approaches to contribute to the objectives of the agreement and **subparagraph OP3(e)** on ensuring they work towards prevention, reduction and elimination of plastic pollution.

Rwanda believes national action plans merit a separate discussion in its own technical working group distinct from the discussions on the development of obligations, commitments, measures and approaches to address each stage of the lifecycle of plastic, as discussed above.

Thematic 4: Means of Implementation

Resolution 5/14 contains provisions relevant to providing the means of implementation to developing countries and countries with economies in transition to meet their commitments under the instrument.

This includes: **subparagraph OP3(n)** on specifying arrangements for capacity-building and technical assistance, technology transfer on mutually agreed terms, and financial assistance, recognizing that the effective implementation of some legal obligations under the instrument will depend on the availability of capacity-building and adequate financial and technical assistance. It also includes **subparagraph OP4(b)** on the need for a financial mechanism to support implementation of the instrument, including the option of a dedicated multilateral fund, such as the one that supports the implementation of the Montreal Protocol. Rwanda believes that “means of Implementation” should be its own thematic cluster and include discussions on:

- (1) financial assistance and mechanism, including a dedicated multilateral fund
- (2) technical assistance, including technology transfer
- (3) capacity-building and training

In addition, the potential role of implementing and bilateral agencies could form part of this discussion. Means of implementation should be discussed at each INC.

These discussions should comprise their own thematic grouping to give them full effect, recognizing their interlinkages and relationship to institutional structure.