

IPEN's Opening Statement at INC-1

Dr. Tadesse Amera, IPEN Co-Chair

Thank you, Mr. President, Distinguished Delegates,

I am speaking on behalf of IPEN, the International Pollutants Elimination Network, a network of 600 Health & Environmental Organisations in 126 countries largely based in the Global South. Our goal and mission is a toxics-free future for all and plastics threaten our health.

The INC process should guarantee the broadest possible participation of all involved stakeholders, as stipulated in Resolution 5/14 and in line with the practice from the Minamata Convention INC. As observers, we would like to highlight that references to the UNEP UNEA Major Groups structures should be deleted going forward as the INC is a country led process and not a subsidiary body of UNEA.

IPEN believes the Plastics Treaty is a vital step to make significant progress on the protection of human health, the health of other living beings, and the environment from the toxic impacts of plastics throughout their full lifecycle.

The Treaty should focus on plastic pollution throughout the full lifecycle of plastics and address both the visible and the invisible impacts of plastic materials

In order to do so, the delegates should consider building the Treaty on three basic principles:

- First: To best understand what plastics pollution is, one must understand what plastic is: a material made from carbon (mainly fossil fuels) and chemicals. a complex group of mixtures of tens of thousands of chemicals, many of which are toxic.
- Second: The treaty should address the harmful health effects from plastics throughout their lifecycle, including improving the transparency on their composition
- Third: Plastics contain toxic chemicals, we must recognize that toxic chemicals make plastics incompatible with a circular economy.

We look forward to an ambitious and protective Treaty

Our future is in your hands.

Thank you!!

Thank you, Mr. President,

We are convened here because of the urgency of the global health and environmental crisis caused by plastics. IPEN believes that a specific treaty with control measures would be the best approach to face the challenge ahead. The specific treaty should primarily seek to reduce the amounts of plastics produced and to drive the transition to a toxic-free circular economy. The treaty should facilitate the enjoyment of the right to a clean, healthy, and sustainable environment.

In order to do so IPEN believes that:

- The objective of the future treaty should be to protect human health and the environment from all adverse impacts of plastics and lead to sustainable production and consumption of plastics with a focus on reduction and minimization.
- The treaty should be based on the precautionary principle and be informed by science generated by scientists free from corporate interests.
- The scope should encompass the sourcing, production, design, use, and disposal of all plastic materials.

Furthermore, to eliminate or minimise the adverse impacts of plastics on human health and the environment, the INC should consider developing design criteria to transition towards a toxic-free economy for plastic materials and uses that are deemed essential. Such criteria should seek to:

- Eliminate groups of chemicals, including polymers, of concern throughout the lifecycle of plastics;
- Develop transparency requirements, allowing for the traceability of chemical ingredients throughout the full lifecycle of plastic materials and products
- Establish measures to address the plastic pollution legacy

Finally, the treaty should ensure the application of the “**polluter pays principle**” requiring that the petrochemical industry is held accountable for impacts on human health, society, and the environment caused by the production, use, dumping, import and export of plastics.

INTERVENTION FROM IPEN – the international pollutants elimination network

Thank you, Mr Chair,

We are convened here because of the urgency of the global health and environmental crisis caused by plastics. The science about the health and environmental impacts of plastics are clear and they happen at every step of the lifecycle of plastics. Most importantly, these impacts affect the most vulnerable and at risk:

- Frontline communities and Communities in developing countries,
- women, children and youth, and workers, particularly in the informal sector
- Environmental justice communities around the world, including Indigenous Peoples and their communities.

The harmful impacts happen globally and plastic feedstock, materials travel around the world, and finally continue to travel when they become waste and when they end up polluting the environment.

The core of this treaty will be in its control measures that should facilitate a steep reduction in the amounts of plastics produced and to drive the transition to a safe, toxic-free circular economy, respectful of the human right to a clean, healthy, and sustainable environment.

In order to do so, IPEN believes that preventive and precautionary control measures should be informed by the following considerations:

- Adopting sustainable design criteria can avoid chemical hazards from plastic additives, polymers and components.
- Providing information on plastics' composition can lead to producers' awareness, consumer confidence, and safer recycling and disposal.
- Regulating toxic plastics and promoting alternative materials can avoid harmful wastes

We would therefore foresee the treaty to include:

- Measures to prohibit plastics that are made with toxic polymers and additives
- Design criteria for plastics that would aim at waste minimization and free from hazardous chemicals
- The obligation to allow transparency and traceability on the types and amounts of plastics produced, imported, and exported, as well as plastic waste generation, collection, and end-of-life management
- A scientific body should be established to review and update the relevant treaty element so that it is updated with current scientific knowledge.

Thank you.

Delivered by Siddika Sultana

Agenda 3.D. "Other aspects, including scientific and technical cooperation and coordination, research and awareness raising"

Thank you, Mr Chair,

This week we have heard scientific experts confirm that the science clearly shows that plastics, especially chemicals in plastics, have global consequences for human health and the environment throughout their lifecycle.

IPEN would therefore urge the INC to adopt the precautionary principle in making decisions to prevent the harms of plastics and their associated chemicals.

It is also important that this INC, as well as the Plastics Treaty, work with the independent scientific community and have access to the best available science, free from the influence of corporate interests.

The scientific community will be a crucial stakeholder to support the INC in its work, including by providing scientific evidence on how to best:

- Reduce the amounts of plastics produced;
- Substitute and eliminate plastics containing hazardous polymers and additives, and;
- Assess technologies that are currently, without any scientific basis or independent evaluations, promoted as quick fixes to plastic pollution.

There are many different types of knowledge that need to be taken into account, including traditional and indigenous knowledge. It is important to listen to impacted communities, as they have a wealth of knowledge that can be beneficial for the plastics treaty. IPEN works globally with impacted communities and we have together shown that plastics with toxic chemicals are often recycled into toys, plastic dumpsites are contaminating local food chains and that plastic waste is threatening communities in countries where there is limited plastic production and consumption.

We believe that it is very important that a mechanism to provide scientific support is included in the Plastics Treaty, with strong conflict of interest controls

-Thank You-

IPEN Intervention on Agenda Item 3C: Monitoring and Evaluation

Dr. Tadesse Amera, IPEN Co-Chair

Dec. 1, 2022

Thank you, Mr Chair,

We are convened here because of the urgent transboundary global health and environmental crisis caused by plastic pollution throughout the lifecycle. Plastic pollution is a transboundary problem and plastics and their associated chemicals move globally at every stage of their lifecycle. National action plans are a powerful tool for monitoring the effectiveness of the treaty, but this is a problem with no borders, that cannot be solved by countries individually.

The harmful impacts happen globally and plastic feedstock, materials, and their chemicals travel around the world, and finally continue to travel when they become waste and when they end up polluting the environment. Microplastics cross oceans and air, travelling thousands of kilometres in a matter of days to weeks.

A global approach would require reducing the amounts of plastics produced and driving the transition to a safe, toxic-free circular economy, respectful of the human right to a clean, healthy, and sustainable environment.

In order to do so, IPEN believes that parties to the treaty should apply preventive and precautionary control measures should be informed by the following considerations:

- Adopting global sustainable design criteria can avoid chemical hazards from plastic additives, polymers and components.
- Providing information on plastics' composition can lead to producers' awareness, consumer confidence, and safer recycling and disposal.
- Regulating toxic plastics and promoting alternative materials can avoid harmful wastes

We would therefore foresee the treaty to include reporting and monitoring requirements on:

- The implementation of measures that prohibit plastics that are made with toxic polymers and additives
- On the implementation and effectiveness of design criteria for plastics that would aim at waste minimization and be free of hazardous chemicals
- The obligation to allow transparency and traceability on the types and amounts of plastics produced, imported, and exported, as well as plastic waste generation, collection, and end-of-life management

Thank you.

IPEN Closing Statement
Dr. Tadesse Amera, IPEN Co-Chair
Dec. 2, 2022

Good evening Mr. Chair and Distinguished Delegates. We would like to offer some reflections on the first session of the INC.

Tomorrow, we will return to the communities in which we live and work and where children, our families, workers, and communities are exposed to dangerous chemicals in their everyday lives from plastics. This is not an abstract issue. We continue to see people suffering from the effects of plastic pollution. As we come to a close, we would like to reflect on our collective moral responsibility. It is our ultimate responsibility to protect the health of the most vulnerable among us through the negotiation of a strong treaty on plastics that drastically reduces the plastics produced.

We heard many delegates express the need for addressing both the environmental and health impacts of plastics, by addressing harmful polymers and chemicals and calling for transparency of chemical ingredients. Toxic chemicals are incompatible with a circular economy.

We look forward to having the opportunity to continue to work with you in the same constructive and collaborative manner through the upcoming negotiating sessions.

Thank you, Chair, delegates and colleagues; we thank the hospitality of the Republic of Uruguay and we wish for a safe journey home to all.

THANK YOU!!