

## General statement by Norway

Thank you, Mr. Chair. Let me first give my sincere thanks to Uruguay for hosting us in beautiful Punta Del Este.

Mr. Chair, let me also congratulate you on your appointment, we very much look forward to your leadership in this process.

Excellencies, distinguished delegates, we are using more plastics than we can sustainably manage globally. This is causing more and more plastic to leak into our water, air and soil with dire consequences for the environment and our health.

Norway is committed to develop an ambitious and effective internationally legally binding instrument to protect human health and the environment from plastic pollution and with a view to end plastic pollution by 2040.

Ending plastic pollution will require a system-change. We must develop an instrument that will build trust in a collective effort that will be sustained over time.

This is why we need to establish global rules throughout the lifecycle in this instrument, and why we need governments to take on legally-binding commitments to follow them.

This should include commitments to:

- eliminate problematic plastics and chemicals of concern,
- establish sustainability criteria and standards as well as targets that promote reuse and recycling,
- mandate transparency measures throughout the life cycle of plastics,

We also need commitments to ensure environmentally sound management and disposal of plastics:

- to close leakage points, with a particular attention to microplastics
- and to provide support to enable change

By agreeing to a legally binding instrument, governments will demonstrate to other Parties, to businesses and other stakeholders, that my country is prepared to stay the course, and willing develop concrete measures to end plastic pollution.

There is no one-size-fits-all approach. We need national flexibility to develop the most effective measures in our own country. But all countries will benefit from common standards and approaches. It would help even small businesses reach over the border to the neighbouring country

Norway looks forward to engaging with all of you in developing a truly effective international legally-binding instrument that will end plastic pollution.

## **Statement by Norway on agenda item 4, sub-item 2: Scope, objective(s) and options for the structure of the instrument**

Thank you, Chair,

Let me start by thanking the secretariat for the comprehensive set of documents prepared for this meeting.

On the STRUCTURE,

Norway seeks a traditional treaty to end plastic pollution which is legally binding upon ratification. It should contain general and specific commitments for all parties. Different national circumstances and capabilities may be reflected in the design of the measures and mechanisms to support implementation.

An essential outcome of the treaty would be that it enables parties to achieve more than states may achieve individually. The treaty must be dynamic and able to respond to developments in knowledge, and increased ambitions.

On the OBJECTIVE,

The first part of the title of UNEA resolution 5/14, End Plastic Pollution, has already settled as the ultimate goal of our work. However, we also see merit in specifying the primary motivation for ending plastic pollution.

Plastic pollution contributes to the triple planetary crises and has significant adverse effects on human health. Norway proposes that the objective of this treaty be “to protect the environment and human health from plastic pollution, and ultimately end plastic pollution”.

The SCOPE,

must allow for a comprehensive approach that addresses the full life cycle of plastics. The scope should be wide enough to enable us to address all drivers and sources of plastic pollution as well as the full breadth of materials, products, chemical substances including additives, uses and processes applied in the value chain of plastic from the time of polymerization.

As our knowledge on plastic pollution will develop further, the scope cannot be defined in a way that constrains our future work under the treaty to only what we now know about drivers and sources of plastic pollution. The scope may be further defined in the core obligations, control measures and voluntary approaches of the treaty, including annexes.

Norway reiterates the importance of cooperation, coordination and complementarity between the treaty and other relevant conventions, for example the Basel and Stockholm Conventions.

## **Statement by Norway on agenda item 4, sub-item 3a: Core obligations, control measures and voluntary approaches as well as national action plans**

Thank you, Mr. Chair,

The core of this instrument will be the obligations Parties will take on, and the control measures Parties will implement. This is what will build trust in a collective effort that will be sustained over time.

We see the need to restrain consumption and production of plastics to sustainable levels and enable a circular economy that protects the environment and human health, while closing leakage points and reducing other sources of pollution.

Our first priority should be to determine the types of plastic products, polymers and chemical additives that should be phased-out of the economy to quickly reduce plastic pollution.

We see the need for a provision that commits Parties to reduce and phase-out **problematic plastics**, as identified by a number of criteria and listed in an annex to this instrument.

While minimizing the overall demand for plastics, we must maximise the circularity of the plastics put on the global market.

The instrument should identify a set of international **sustainability criteria**, and Parties should commit to take appropriate measures, and meet targets, to promote plastics adhering to these criteria,

This will catalyse better design of plastics, focused on **reusability** and **recyclability** while using **recycled content** free from **chemicals and polymers of concern** to enable the safe circulation of plastic materials. More sustainable design of plastics products will also spur innovation to avoid leakage of macro- and **microplastics** during the use-phase.

**Transparency** in the value chain of plastics, including in the production of polymers, is necessary to gain sufficient information about plastic products. Disclosure of polymer productions volumes, types of polymers produced, their content of hazardous chemicals as well as content of recycled material is required.

Parties should commit to take measures, and meet targets, to enable environmentally sound **collection** and **sorting** and to maximise **reuse** and **recycling** rates.

The plastics that cannot be reused or recycled should be treated in the most environmentally sound manner, in line with the waste hierarchy, to close leakage points and reduce other sources of pollution.

**Statement by Norway on agenda item 4, sub-item 3b: Means of implementation, including capacity building, technical assistance, and finance;**

Thank you, chair.

Many countries will need assistance to help set in motion the measures that we agree in this process. We are encouraged by the strong interest and creativity in this regard that is represented in this meeting. We also note a different inclination in established actors to cooperate better with each other, to serve the needs for support more effectively.

Like Switzerland we see that the integrated approach to financing of chemicals and waste as adopted by UNEA in its resolution 1/5, applies also for plastics.

We are in some ways in a favorable situation as the issue of plastics lends itself to applying the Polluter Pays Principle committing and stimulating private solutions.

The development of EPR schemes will be particularly important.

But the new treaty will need a financial mechanism. Dedicated external financing should be prioritized to those countries most in need and have a focus on developing institutional capacity and an enabling framework.

We must keep exploring innovative sources of finance. We should closely follow the developments under parallel processes such as for biodiversity and climate change.

Finally, we must follow all the the new developments in the financial market entails for this sector. New techniques to mitigate financial risk could become key to unlocking investments that are larger than public finance can ever cover.

At future INCs Norway expects the discussion on means of implementation to develop in parallel with our discussions on general obligations, control measures and voluntary measures. Norway sees this as a helpful dynamic as we learn more about what we need to finance.

## **Statement by Norway on agenda item 4, sub-item 3c: Support to monitoring and evaluation of progress in, and effectiveness of implementation and national reporting;**

The treaty must include the obligation to report at regular intervals. The reporting format should include all relevant aspects of the implementation of the treaty, including of the general obligations, control measures and voluntary approaches, as well as available data on the impact of plastic pollution on the environment and health.

While reporting requirements should be sufficient to inform the Conference of the Parties and the global community, we must make the most to streamline the reporting process to lessen the administrative burden. We should learn from other agreements that have a high reporting rate, such as the Minamata Convention.

The Conference of the Parties should also have access to monitoring data and continuously consider this data in the further development of the treaty.

Transparency in the value chain of plastics, including in the production of polymers, is necessary to gain sufficient information about plastics products. Disclosure of polymer production volumes, including the content of hazardous chemicals and of recycled material, is required.

Norway supports the comments made by the United States on an effectiveness evaluation.

Norway would like to see Parties commit to developing, implementing and reporting on National Action Plans, and we consider this a core obligation of the treaty.

National Action plans should provide a vehicle for progress by empowering countries to set targets and develop and implement national policies, tailored to meet specific national circumstances and capabilities and addressing the full life cycle of plastics. All sources and relevant sectors should be included.

## **Statement by Norway on agenda item 4, sub-item 3d: Other aspects, including scientific and technical cooperation and coordination, research and awareness raising**

Thank you, Mr. Chair,

It is clear that science must guide us, both in our discussions in the INC, as well as in our decision-making within the new treaty. We have seen science continually expand and deepen on the topic of plastic pollution. A key feature for the scientific and technical cooperation within the new treaty should be that we build on existing sources and continually expand our knowledge.

There are already a number of existing sources of information, research programs, and platforms for knowledge-sharing and scientific cooperation - as listed in the meeting documents prepared by the secretariat. We expect these existing information sources to be of great importance in our negotiations.

Our negotiations take place simultaneously with those on the new science-policy panel for chemicals, waste and to prevent pollution. Although the outcome of those negotiations is not settled, Norway expects the panel to be able to play an important role for the new treaty once established. We equally see that IPBES for biodiversity and IPCC for climate change, will provide relevant information.

Norway is ready to discuss the establishment of a treaty-specific science-policy instrument with limited and defined tasks.

## **Statement by Norway on agenda item 4, sub-item 5: Sequencing and recommended further work to be undertaken**

Thank you, Mr. Chair,

Norway is of the opinion that it is important to move quickly into treaty-making at INC2 in order to enable the necessary progress towards our 2024 goal.

In our view this necessitates the organisation of work into two separate contact groups, alternatively two separate work streams with one or several contact groups organised within each work stream.

Norway reiterates that the first group or work stream should be organised around the issues of objectives, general obligations, control measures, voluntary approaches and implementation measures, including NAPs, in line with section B, C & D in the Potential elements paper, UNEP/PP/INC.1/5.

The second group or work stream should concentrate on means of implementation, including capacity building; institutional arrangements; and other elements including stakeholder involvement, in line with section E, F, & G in the Potential elements paper, UNEP/PP/INC.1/5.

We recognize Delegations with funded participants may require that two delegates be funded per country in order to participate. Like others, Norway is ready to prioritise funding this.

Co-chair or facilitators for the contact groups should be identified well in advance of INC2 to enable their preparation for the work.

## Statement by Norway on Agenda 4 sub-item 3(e)

Thank you Mr. Chair,

Norway welcomes and supports engagement with all stakeholders. A key to success in modern treaty-making is early and effective involvement of all stakeholders.

We are seeking the best modalities for stakeholder involvement that support an active and two-way dialogue between stakeholders and delegations without taking up valuable time for negotiations.

In our view, the most important point of stakeholder input would be the in intersessional period, where they can provide more targeted written inputs that could be better absorbed by Member States before the meeting as well as contributing to the secretariat's preparations for the next meeting.

We believe the main objective of stakeholder involvement should be to enable stakeholders to share their views and to inform negotiations for the legally binding instrument on specific agenda items, including in writing and during the intersessional period.

Any in-person meetings for stakeholder engagement would require dedicated financial resources, as this would not be formally part of the INC, and should therefore not take away resources from the core operations of this process, such as financing additional funded delegates. This is a clear priority for Norway.

Regarding the development of a Multistakeholder Action Agenda, as referenced in the UNEA 5/14 resolution we are interested in hearing other parties views and we are ready to engage on this basis. As of now, we have some general reflections.

Firstly, we believe an action agenda should be guided by some general principles such as on transparency, accountability, measurability and zero tolerance for greenwashing.

Secondly, the action agenda must deliver concrete actions to support the implementation of objectives and measures of the instrument.

Thirdly, this Action Agenda should learn from the experiences of other action agendas and be complimentary to existing initiatives, coalitions, platforms and partnerships related to plastic pollution, or replace existing ones to avoid duplicative efforts.

Thank you Mr. Chair