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Written Statement on the Organization of Work for the Intergovernmental Negotiating
Committee (INC) to end plastic pollution
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The amount of plastic waste entering the ocean is projected to nearly triple by 2040. According to [‘Breaking the Plastic Wave, A Comprehensive Assessment of Pathways Towards Stopping Ocean Plastic Pollution’](#) a report by The Pew Charitable Trusts and SYSTEMIQ, the technology and solutions to reduce annual plastic pollution flows into the ocean by more than 80% by 2040 exist, but only if decision-makers are willing to make system-wide changes. Pew welcomes the landmark decision at the resumed fifth session of the UN Environment Assembly (UNEA 5.2) to launch negotiations on an international legally binding instrument to end plastic pollution. Additionally, we appreciate the opportunity to provide comments following the ad-hoc open-ended working group (OEWG) to prepare for the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee (INC) to end plastic pollution.

Sequencing and organization of INC

As noted in ‘Breaking the Plastic Wave,’ a single solution will not end plastic pollution. Rather, upstream solutions, such as reducing the production and use of virgin plastic in the first place and redesigning material and products, and downstream solutions, including recycling and responsible disposal, must be deployed together to achieve a system-wide change. Operative paragraph 3 in Resolution 5.14 “End plastic pollution: towards an international legally binding instrument” specifies that the instrument will aim to address the full life cycle of plastic. The following clusters could be considered for different stages in the plastics lifecycle:

- **Reducing plastic production and consumption**
 - Through the elimination of avoidable plastic and a shift towards products and services based on reuse, there could be a 30% reduction in plastic production, according to ‘Breaking the Plastic Wave’.
- **Sustainable design of products and materials**
 - This should begin with product design to evaluate the use of materials – whether it is necessary, or which plastic polymer or substitute material to be used, to maximize reusability, and to align with the end-of-life technologies, such as recycling or composting, that facilitate a circular economy.
- **Improving and creating new waste management services**
 - This would include expanding waste collection, sorting, and recycling capacities, particularly in middle-/low-income countries, and supporting the informal collection sector, who currently collects more plastic for recycling than the formal sector.

- **Tackling microplastic pollution**
 - This would include eliminating microplastic ingredients in products or using alternative materials, where feasible, and developing standards and capture technologies to reduce microplastic release from tires, textiles, and pellet loss.

We wanted to take the opportunity to highlight a “[Joint Statement on Preventing Ocean Plastic](#)”, a set of policy recommendations – including the above-mentioned suggested clusters – which are endorsed by 16 diverse stakeholders (including Pew) representing multinational companies, multilateral institutions, international non-profits and academia. Furthermore, as noted in detail within the joint statement, increasing funding for collecting and sorting infrastructure as well as investments in innovation, raising the ambition level of corporate commitments and strengthening their accountability, applying standards to labeling, and implementing ambitious policies at each level of government are all necessary actions to reverse the trajectory of plastic pollution into the ocean and on land.

We would also suggest beginning as early as INC1 with a cluster that includes definitions and objectives of the instrument. The institutional structure could be another cluster, which could draw on previous multilateral agreements and lessons learned, including establishing flexibility to allow for future innovation and advances in scientific knowledge.

Recognizing that every country has a role to play and that there are geographic differences for prioritizing solutions, national action plans will play an important role in the implementation of the instrument. At the same time, plastic pollution is an international problem, and we expect the instrument to provide a global framework that will establish national obligations, fill gaps, and provide technical and financial assistance to developing countries. Furthermore, the instrument can offer more transparency through reporting and disclosure, including in the private sector, which will further aid monitoring and implementation of the instrument. Finally, the agreement should include a mechanism to review and strengthen it over time.

Preparation of the forum

We welcome the preparations for the forum in advance of INC1 as incorporating lessons from stakeholders engaged at different stages of the life cycle of plastics will be key to an effective agreement. Pew welcomes the opportunity to engage in the forum as appropriate.

We thank you for the opportunity to provide comments. We are available to answer any questions or provide further information as requested.

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