

Plastic Pollution OEWG: Written Submission and Recommendations on the Organizational and Substantive work of the INC

July 13, 2022

Thank you for the opportunity to submit a statement.

There is no more time for incremental change if we want to prevent further human and environmental harm stemming from damaging extractive practices reliant on fossil fuels. The climate science is clear and the mandate is in front of us as the INC-1 commences later this year and sets the real work of UNEA Resolution 5/14 in motion.

The size of the solution must match the size of the problem, and the problem of plastic pollution is a global, systemwide issue that we've been incrementally chipping away at for decades. We must now go together in this very short but achievable timeframe to design an instrument that will be implementable, measurable, and impactful if we want to prevent further negative climate and pollution effects.

As countries continue to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic, we must all keep in mind that capacity building and finance will be the crux of implementation for this global instrument. The principles of a circular economy must underpin the solutions set forth in order to effectively reduce plastic pollution. And we must all insist that the transition to a circular economy is just and equitable so that place-based solutions are relevant and accessible to all people and economies when implementing this instrument at the country level.

The entire plastic value chain must be present for each and every conversation related to the design and implementation of this instrument. Broad stakeholder engagement will require the INC and Bureau to rely on real-time data from research and academic institutions, as well as government agencies, and mission driven NGOs. Producers, manufacturers, converters, haulers, materials recovery facilities, governments, retailers, brands, industry groups, NGOs, and consumers all have a strong role to play in the reduction of plastic pollution.

We need organized, measurable, scalable action, driven toward system change. To achieve this systemwide action, we must take three steps: build, operate, and design for the system of the future.

In building the system of the future, we must lean into blended capital, but that blended capital has to be based on grants. We cannot loan our way out of part-and-parceled temporary fixes to waste management as we have done for too many years. Recycling alone will not deliver a circular economy; however, we will never have a circular economy unless we first fix recycling. Achieving circularity means the future waste system must be braced by targeted, multilevel funding that unlocks and dramatically scales private and public dollars, de-risking and shifting supply chains across the globe.

Operating this new system of the future will require extended producer responsibility because it is expensive and burdensome for communities to shoulder alone. Simultaneously, policy and finance must come along together and support innovation.

We need to design the system of the future to be evolving and resilient, one that relies heavily on data, transparency, and tools to hold companies and governments accountable. Resilience built into this circular system of the future will enable easier navigation as new technologies are proven and scaled so that companies and countries can pivot to execute the most impactful solutions quickly.

This instrument is an unprecedented opportunity for these elements- building, operating, and designing for change- to converge with the speed and scale of solutions necessary within this decade to significantly reduce the problem of plastic waste across the globe.

For each INC meetings to be as efficient as possible, we offer the following recommendations:

- *Objectives, scope, and definitions* should be clarified early on and solidified during INC-1 with input from Member States and Stakeholders ahead of the convening to set a clear path of work for the timetable of the five INC meetings. However, it is also critical that the INC maintain a flexible structure of work that allows equal consideration of the key elements: sustainable production and consumption, product design and circular economy, waste management, and resource efficiency.
 - The objectives of the instrument should be broad enough to include perspectives from across the plastics value chain, which will likely each present its own suite of challenges, solutions, needs, and metrics. These broad objectives should address a variety of topics but not be limited to: the lifecycle of plastic and plastic pollution, impacts on terrestrial and marine environments, human and environmental health, waste management, and circular economy principles.
 - Agreeing on these objectives and definitions at the outset of the INC meetings will save valuable meeting time and ensure the instrument's scope is clear with the appropriate scientific and socioeconomic data informing decision-making each step of the way.
 - This level of clarity early on will also encourage and consider multi-faceted stakeholder engagement across the plastics value chain.
- *Technical working groups* will likely be required in between INC meetings to encourage broad stakeholder participation and ensure that the instrument maintains flexibility for future implementation of national action plans.
 - A standing data and metrics working group comprised of academic, research, government, private, and NGO partners could provide a balanced and realistic voice to the Bureau and INC to maintain scope and provide real-time information as new climate science or technology emerges during the process.



20 F Street
7th floor
Washington, D.C. 20001
recyclingpartnership.org

- *National action plans* should include specific parameters and mechanisms for data gathering and reporting, consistent with existing plastics reporting platforms to prevent double counting of reduction efforts by companies, NGOs, and governments.
 - Cross-collaboration between the public and private sectors is essential to drive actionable policies and provide access to funding in a timely and manageable manner once national action plans are in place.

[The Recycling Partnership](#) is pleased to continue engaging with our domestic partners and looks forward to supporting and collaborating with others abroad as we work together to end plastic pollution.

Keefe Harrison, CEO

[Rachel Kipar](#), Circular Ventures Manager