

UK National Statement

On behalf of the United Kingdom, I wish to congratulate the Chair on his appointment. To the Excellencies and Distinguished Delegates who have joined us today, whether in person or online, we greatly look forward to engaging with you over the coming days, weeks and years ahead.

The UK is delighted that the world came together at the UN Environment Assembly this year and made a commitment to begin negotiating a legally binding treaty to end Plastic Pollution.

It has been a long time coming and people *everywhere* want to see this *fixed*.

And in the United Kingdom we have started addressing it: by getting rid of the single-use plastics that litter our beaches and that most of us can do without – straws, drink stirrers, bags, cotton buds.

Our goal is to maximise resource efficiency and minimise plastic waste, by following the principles of the waste hierarchy: Reduce, Reuse, Recycle, and create a circular economy for plastic.

We will legislate to design avoidable plastic waste out of the way we do things and make producers more responsible for the plastic they produce.

And by introducing a tax on plastic packaging with less than 30% recycled content.

But with the rate of plastic pollution projected to increase threefold between 2016 and 2040 this is far from enough.

We need to take a global concerted approach that addresses the issue across the whole lifecycle of plastic, with the urgency that it demands.

The UK believes the treaty should restrain the demand for plastics and increase the supply of recycled plastics for use in new plastic products.

It should ensure plastics are designed to ensure durability, recyclability and safety, enabling a circular economy for plastics that protects the environment and human health.

And it should ensure the plastic waste that we do produce is collected, sorted and recycled so that we keep plastic in circulation as long as possible and avoid leakage to the environment.

And we are delighted to have joined the High Ambition Coalition to End Plastic Pollution by 2040 as founding members and invite others to join.

The negotiations this week will be critical to set us on the path to a new treaty by 2024.

And there is no doubt that the next two years will be challenging, but the eyes of the world are upon us: we are confident that everyone will bring the ideas, leadership and creativity required to solve this issue.

Thank you again, we look forward to engaging with all of you to turn the tide on plastic pollution and make the change that is so desperately needed a reality.

UK intervention under agenda item 4

1. We support the interventions made by a large number delegations regarding the need for a brief and clear objective that outlines the aim to end plastic pollution, protect the environment from plastic pollution and avoid risks to human health from the production, consumption, disposal of plastic as well as from plastic pollution.
2. Important that the scope is broad and should include the whole lifecycle of plastics, from the production and design of plastics to their consumption and disposal. It should address the environmental and health impacts of microplastics, including tyre wear, and the misinformation surrounding biodegradable and oxo-degradable plastics.
3. The UK recognises the importance of the treaty being flexible to allow each country to adopt measures best suited to their circumstances and so national action plans will be an important element of the treaty.
4. However, the evidence suggests that international-level measures will be needed to comprehensively address the transboundary issue of plastic pollution, to reach the system-change scenario we want to see.
5. A harmonised regulatory framework, will provide clarity and consistency on the direction of travel, enabling stakeholders across the plastic lifecycle to make their contribution to tackling this issue.
6. On format, the UK agrees that it is important that the format should be tailored to the one that is going to be the most effective at delivering the provisions of the treaty. We do support the option of using a specific convention format where the technical detail and control measures are contained in the annexes. This is to ensure the treaty can be updated easily in line with emerging evidence.
7. In order to make further progress on these issues at this meeting we agree with the proposals made by a number of delegations including the GRULAC members, that we should begin discussion in two contact groups at the earliest opportunity, including one on the core obligations and control measures, as well as one on the intersessional work that could consider the modalities of multistakeholder engagement.

- The UK supports the full consideration of a combination of international obligations and national measures across the whole lifecycle of plastic to ensure that the treaty can adequately address the transboundary nature of plastic pollution.
- The UK recognises the importance of the treaty taking into consideration different countries' circumstances and that national action plans will be an important element of the treaty.
- But whilst there are undoubtedly differences between countries, there are also many similarities
- As a member of the High Ambition Coalition to End Plastic Pollution, the UK believes the treaty should contain legally binding international obligations.
- These obligations should not only target problematic, unnecessary and avoidable plastic, but also ensure a more harmonised global regulatory framework that promotes transparency and can ensure that National Action Plans are as effective as possible, enable investment in technologies and provide long term certainty to businesses.
- To support the INC to make informed decisions about which obligations and control measures to include, we request that the Secretariat compiles a paper ahead of INC 2 outlining the different options available.
- The UK would also support scientific technical reporting and cooperation, effectiveness evaluation and national reporting, and provisions on compliance.

UK Intervention agenda item 4 - Capacity Building-technical and financial assistance

- The UK recognises that developing countries will require support to implement elements of the treaty and is eager to work with all members to identify the most effective and efficient way of providing this support.
- An approach that helps match funding to need, will be an effective and equitable way to build capacity and ensure all nations have the means to deliver on the aims of the treaty.
- We also need to recognise that setting a clear direction of travel, with the right obligations at an international level will be an important element of what this treaty can provide, to help mobilise funding
- There are huge amounts of private sector finance waiting to be unlocked. This treaty can act as an enabler to unleash that funding – for example by establishing common standards and waste management principles, the treaty can unlock private investment into waste management infrastructure and aid the development of technologies
- Understanding the existing funding gaps will enable us to tailor any funding mechanisms that are best suited to fill those gaps.
- The UK recognises that developing countries will require support to implement elements of the treaty and is eager to work with all members to identify the most effective and efficient way of providing this support.
- Consideration should be given to the full range of potential funding models, including existing funding mechanisms, a dedicated funding mechanism under the treaty, private sector financing and bilateral funding options.
- An approach that helps match funding to need, will be an effective and equitable way to build capacity and ensure all nations have the means to deliver on the aims of the treaty.
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- There is a variety of capacity building and technical assistance that can provide the guidance for provisions under the new treaty
- The UK stands ready to consider different potential funding mechanism that are able to deliver the best possible outcomes from the implementation of the treaty

UK Intervention Agenda 3c – Support to monitoring and evaluation of progress in, and effectiveness of implementation and national reporting

- The UK believes that uncertainty in existing information should not prevent us from taking action on plastic pollution. We need a pathway towards harmonised and comparable data that allows decisions under the future treaty to be made on the basis of robust evidence. This is needed to be able to assess the effectiveness of our interventions and measure progress against the treaty's objective.
- The UK believes monitoring should provide us with an assessment across the full life cycle. This might not be straightforward – after many years we still haven't found a solution to measuring progress against Sustainable Development Goal 14.1.1.b on plastic debris density on the sea surface, but we do believe that technological advancements such as remote sensing and satellite imagery, may support progress under the treaty.
- We should also have a clear reporting mechanism that provides information particularly at the upstream and mid-stream parts of the life-cycle. The UK has signed up to the New Plastics Economy Global Commitment. This Global Commitment has mobilised government and businesses to build a circular economy for plastics, but it has also set a positive example on how and what can be reported. The reporting should include national reporting as part of National Action Plans, but could also be supplemented by reporting from data available to international organisations that are more transboundary in nature.

UK Intervention Agenda 3d- Scientific and Technical Cooperation

- The UK sees the value in considering the need for a scientific subsidiary body that provides evidence for progressing action under the treaty and believe this should include social scientists and economists. When considering the activities and composition of this mechanism the UK believes it will be important to bear in mind the following points:
 - we should be mindful of the parallel negotiations that are ongoing on a Science-Policy Panel to contribute further to the sound management of chemicals and waste to prevent pollution, making sure that these are complementary and not duplicative
 - we should take account of country and regional differences in the provision of this knowledge and include region-specific expertise
 - we should ensure that traditional and indigenous knowledge is also included
- The UK also believes it is important that the Academic community is able to contribute meaningfully to the INC process itself and welcome a closer engagement with the academic community throughout these negotiations

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UK Intervention Agenda Item 4: Sequencing and further work

The UK would like to echo its support for the views expressed by many other delegations on the need for INC funding to be prioritised to enable attendance from 2 delegates for each developing country at INC2 and beyond. To that end, we also believe we should set up 2 contact groups focussed on the following:

The first one on : Objectives, core obligations, control measures and voluntary approaches

The second one on: Capacity Building technical assistance and finance as well as institutional arrangements.

We recognise how powerful it could be to have high level segments that function as a platform for major commitments towards the objectives of the treaty. However, we think it is important to time the high level segments at a later point in negotiations, as a way of giving momentum to completion of negotiations.

Stakeholders across the lifecycle of plastics, should be able to participate in and inform our negotiations through written submissions & virtual dialogues, at this early stage.

02/12/2022

UK intervention on Agenda item 5 on host countries for the INC process

The UK welcomes the decision which gives clarity on the location of INC2. We would like to extend our warmest thanks to France for this important undertaking. We recognise we cannot continue our valuable work to agree a legally binding treaty on plastic pollution without the generous contribution of host countries.

The UK would also like to recognise the generous offers from Kenya, Canada and Republic of Korea to host INCs 3, 4 and 5.

Finally, we wish to thank Uruguay for their generous hospitality and we look forward to working with all host nations and the distinguished delegates here today as we take the next steps on our shared path to end plastic pollution.

UK Intervention Agenda Item 3e - Stakeholder participation and action

Firstly, the UK would like to briefly re-iterate its position regarding stakeholder participation in the INC process. Like many others we recognise the importance of stakeholders being able to engage in a meaningful way.

For the UK, this means that intersessional engagement should be sequenced in such a way that they can inform country positions and written submissions.

Everyone has mentioned the importance of making sure stakeholders have an active role in the INC process and we expect the same to apply to the new treaty.

And it is important that everyone is able to participate, across different stakeholder groups, different communities and regions.

Front and foremost to this is to enable effective participation of the informal waste sector and marginalised communities, so that measures at the national and international level take due account of their needs and the effect of a treaty upon them.

Secondly, it will be essential to bring businesses into the engagements as, ultimately it will be businesses that will implement the treaty provisions. We need them all to work together in the same direction and united by the long term objective of the instrument.

Thirdly, we need investors. We truly believe that a treaty can provide that long term certainty to catalyse a wave of investment that is waiting to happen. So we need a process that will enable that investment to happen

And we would like to reiterate the importance of the academic community: to tell us what solutions work and give us early warning of issues that might arise in the road ahead.

And we need the active engagement of our NGOs who educate people around the world and hold us to account.

Finally, we need the active involvement of our youth. Not only are they going to bear the effects of decisions we make over the next few years, but they are also going to be the leaders of tomorrow who will end plastic pollution.

And it is this diversity of stakeholders that means they need to be consulted fully in shaping a multistakeholder action agenda. We have heard from many of those we have spoken to that they want this action agenda to be more than commitments made on a podium. They want to see transparency and accountability, and the UK agrees that these are essential for an action agenda that is truly able to shift the dial on tackling plastic pollution.

Given that the action agenda should help implement the treaty, we believe we need to make further progress during these negotiations on the path to launching an ambitious action agenda.