Key messages ahead of INC-5 in November 2024

BUSINESS COALITION FOR A GLOBAL PLASTICS TREATY

Given the agreement among all governments that the plastic pollution challenge is a matter of urgency, we strongly encourage all UN Member States to work towards concrete outcomes at INC-5 in Busan, Republic of Korea, in November 2024.

We, 240+ companies, organisations and financial institutions of the Business Coalition for a Global Plastics Treaty, believe that global rules are good for business. There is unprecedented agreement across the plastics value chain on a number of realistic and achievable globally binding rules, which can and should underpin an effective treaty.

Businesses want a legally binding treaty that tackles the entire lifecycle of plastic products, underpinned by harmonised regulation. We know that a voluntary, fragmented and non-specific set of policy measures determined differently in each country will add significant barriers and costs to implement the necessary changes at scale.

To deliver on an ambitious treaty in line with the UNEA resolution 5/14, we need an initial agreement at INC-5 that the Global Plastics Treaty includes - *as a minimum* - the following critical elements:

1. **Strong provisions to restrict or phase out problematic & avoidable plastic products as well as chemicals of concern, and to improve product design,** defined through a global approach, and informed by clear criteria and possibly initial lists.
2. **An obligation to introduce or advance targets and systems for collection, reuse and recycling at the national level,** based on common definitions and key principles for Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) regulations, Deposit Return Systems (DRS) and other policy instruments.
3. **A comprehensive package to support the implementation of the treaty,** including through aligning financial flows with the objectives of the treaty and mobilising public and private support to ensure a just transition towards a circular economy that is fair and inclusive to everyone concerned – workers, enterprises & communities, especially by creating decent work opportunities in the plastics value chain, including for waste pickers.
4. **A mandate to develop sector-specific programmes of work to inform future decisions at the Conference of the Parties (COP)** on additional control measures needed and further guidance on their implementation, targeting plastic applications where there is sufficient alignment, such as packaging and fishing gear, to start with.
5. **A sound mechanism for reporting, monitoring of progress and evaluating the treaty's effectiveness on a regular basis,** with the possibility for the governing body of the treaty to further strengthen policy measures over time.

In addition, governments need to decide on the process going forward to develop further work on the immediate priorities and to prepare recommendations for adoption by the first Conference of the Parties.

About the Coalition

The Business Coalition for a Global Plastics Treaty – convened by the Ellen MacArthur Foundation and WWF in September 2022 – gives voice to more than 240 businesses from across the plastics value chain, financial institutions and NGO partners.

Together we are asking for an ambitious UN treaty that brings plastics into a circular economy, stopping them becoming waste or pollution.

About our ambition in the treaty

1) REDUCTION of plastic production and use through a circular economy approach

- Reduction is critical because recycling alone is not a viable solution to this crisis. **We must reduce our use of all virgin plastics** – with a particular focus on those produced from fossil fuels – if we are to play our part in seeking to stay within the 1.5 degree climate pathway.
- We must prioritise **eliminating problematic plastic applications** with a high probability of leaking into the environment and **reduce our demand for short-lived products** that cannot be circulated in practice and at scale.
- We must ensure **chemicals and pollutants that pose a significant risk to human health and nature are no longer put on the market**.

2) CIRCULATION of all plastic items that cannot be eliminated:

- **Establishing and enforcing globally harmonised standards** is key to ensuring all plastics are safe to be used, reused, and recycled.
- **Mandatory design for recycling requirements** must be coupled with **targets for scaling of systems and infrastructure** to keep plastics in circulation for longer at their highest value, and so reducing leakage into the environment.
- Establishing **Extended Producer Responsibility policies** that require all industry players who introduce packaging and other short-lived products to the market to fund their after-use collection and treatment is a crucial tool to help us tackle plastic pollution.
- About 60 per cent of all plastic recycled globally is collected by **waste pickers. The treaty must protect and respect their livelihoods, their health, and their human rights** as it enables a safe and just transition to a circular economy.

3) PREVENTION and REMEDIATION of remaining, hard-to-abate micro- and macro-plastic leakage into the environment:

- **Robust waste management practices are required**. Effective regulatory and financial incentives are needed to promote the uptake of circular economy solutions at the local level.
- **We should not ignore existing plastic pollution** – we need tools to tackle the micro and macro plastics that are already polluting our environment.

Additional Considerations

Furthermore, the treaty should pay attention to critical cross-cutting issues: **Economic Instruments** and **Financial Incentives**, as well as **Monitoring and Reporting**.

Building on the example of the Paris Climate Agreement, the treaty must require **making both public and private financial flows consistent with a pathway towards ending plastic pollution and promoting the safe circulation of plastics**.

The treaty must establish clear steps to **create an effective monitoring and reporting system** for governments to track progress towards national and global objectives. To support this, the treaty should also outline the principles for how **corporate information on risks, opportunities, and impacts related to plastic pollution** should be considered.

The treaty should **require plastic-related disclosures by large and/or transnational companies and financial institutions** and ensure that corporate reporting takes place in a harmonised and coherent way.