

Brussels, 9 December 2024  
(OR. en)

16705/24

ENV 1201

### INFORMATION NOTE

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From: General Secretariat of the Council  
To: Delegations  
Subject: Fifth session of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee to develop an international legally binding instrument on plastic pollution, including in the marine environment (INC-5) (Busan, Republic of Korea, 25 November - 1 December 2024)  
- Opening and closing statements

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Delegations will find in the [Annex](#) for information the opening and closing statements as delivered by the EU and its Member States during the abovementioned meeting.

**Opening Statement by the European Union and its 27 Member States at the 5<sup>th</sup> session of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee to develop an international legally binding instrument on plastic pollution, including in the marine environment**

**25 November – 1 December 2024, Busan, Republic of Korea**

*Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Moldova, Serbia, Ukraine align themselves with this statement*

**Opening statement**

Mr Chair, distinguished delegates,

First, the European Union and its 27 Member States thank you, Mr. Chair, for your efforts and commitment to concluding this process in Busan. We would also like to express our appreciation to the Republic of Korea for hosting us for the final and most decisive round of negotiations.

The world cannot live with plastic pollution, even though plastic brings benefits to our daily lives, our societies and economies. It has become a global crisis, threatening our environment, wildlife, and human health. As we open this session with the ambition to reach a truly historic agreement, the EU and its Member States consider it worthwhile to recall how we got here in the first place.

We have, Mr Chair, as a global community, been dealing with the plastic pollution plague for more than 10 years now. We are in dire need of a remedy, of an agreement, of an effective plastics treaty. Although differences between countries and perspectives are evident, we must prove to the global community that multilateralism can deliver and that finding compromises leads us towards the concluding of these negotiations.

The journey to this point has been long and challenging. In March 2022, the world witnessed a landmark moment when Member States, gathered at the United Nations Environment Assembly, agreed unanimously to create, by 2024, a legally binding treaty to end plastic pollution. But the work did not start here. We have been trying to identify a united pathway to tackle plastic pollution, resulting in marine litter, since UNEA-1 in 2014 and in every UNEA since then until the mandate adoption. Despite that, despite the increase in national and voluntary actions to tackle plastic pollution, the problem has continued to worsen, with pollution rates rising. This is because no nation can do it alone, and because the mere sum of our individual action has been proven insufficient time and over again. And let us be clear: plastics production is a global issue, not a North/South issue. In that context, the numbers both in production and consumption shows that responsibility of plastic pollution is much more complex. All of us have to take our share, while taking into account the needs of the most vulnerable.

Chair, distinguished delegates,

To achieve a successful treaty, compromises will be necessary. It is our task to find a common ground on provisions across the whole life cycle of plastics.

A treaty with solid and truly global upstream measures to complement strong waste management will be necessary to reduce the endless and increasing flow of global plastic pollution. The EU and its Member States are deeply convinced that we have to start closing the tap of plastic pollution, in order to tackle the problem we are here to solve. Provisions in the new treaty need to be tailored in a way that balances the need for global rules and a level playing field, and the need for flexibility for countries to implement and enforce the necessary measures. However, we emphasize that a treaty in which each Party would do *only* what they consider is necessary is not something we are ready to support. This is because, Mr Chair, it would mean the continuation of a business-as-usual scenario in which, as many studies have shown, we will collectively fail to save our planet, our health and our future.

As we move forward with the final negotiations this week, let us not forget that this treaty represents a once-in-a-generation opportunity to end plastic pollution. In the coming days, we need to agree on bold, binding global actions to protect nature and human health, especially of vulnerable communities. And we expect, and rely on you Mr Chair, to steer us towards boldness. Towards the end of plastic pollution.

The EU and its Member States will support you in these efforts.

### **Closing statement**

Chair, distinguished delegates, colleagues,

I deliver this statement on behalf of the EU and its 27 Member States and would ask that this statement is recorded in the report of this meeting.

We would like to thank you, Chair, and your team, the INC Secretariat, and UNEP as well as fellow delegates and observers and stakeholders for your hard work. Our special thanks and appreciation go to the Republic of Korea, for its commitment and hospitality. You made sure that delegates could work in the best possible conditions and that the organization ran smoothly. Korea, Busan, Kansammida.

We also align with the statement made by Rwanda on behalf of 85 members of this Committee as well as with the statement by Mexico on 95 members of this Committee. We share the unhappiness that can be felt in this room, with the limited amount of progress we were able to make this week. When we arrived in Busan, we had a clear purpose: to reach an agreement on decisive action to end plastic pollution by addressing the whole life cycle of plastics, as we were mandated to do by UNEA Resolution 5/14.

However, Mr. Chair, to the regret of many in the room, this did not happen, despite the tireless efforts of so many of us, including the stakeholders, who worked until the morning hours in the hopes of securing a successful result.

This said, we are not leaving Busan discouraged. To the contrary. We feel encouraged and empowered by the overwhelming support that joint initiatives on substantive provisions have received, some supported by more than 100 ambitious countries. And this support will continue to grow, as we saw it growing from one INC session to the next over the last two years.

Mr. Chair, we stand at a critical juncture. On substance and process. And we need both to work in synergy if we are to succeed.

On substance, our message in this room has been very clear:

We cannot support an agreement IF it would fail to efficiently address the core problems at hand. IF it doesn't have legally binding global measures.

So, what are those essential global measures, Mr. Chair?

A meaningful treaty must contain concrete measures to reduce the production levels of plastic to sustainable levels,

It must address problematic and avoidable plastic products, and chemicals of concern in plastic products – in addition to waste management and the implementation of Extended producer responsibility schemes.

It needs to allow the mobilization of resources at international and domestic levels, including an efficient financial mechanism to support the parties that need it the most.

It needs to foster consensus, but also allow for voting when consensus cannot be reached.

This is the bare minimum required for this treaty to make a real impact.

Rest assured, Mr. Chair, the European Union and its Member States will continue to strive for an effective agreement.

We will continue to build bridges and we pledge to work in good faith to make a significant leap towards ending plastic pollution.

Our vision is for a treaty that brings tangible change to the environment and benefits people and economies around the world. This is about right to health, a clean, healthy and sustainable environment for younger and future generations. The clear signal from Busan must therefore be that this chair's text needs to be the starting point and basis for the final sprint towards an ambitious treaty. We take note of your understanding that additions, deletions, changes and complements can still be made to the totality of the text, in accordance with the principle that nothing is agreed until everything is agreed.

To be very clear, Mr. Chair, this means we have a lot of homework in all aspects of the draft you have put before us to bring the ambition back into the text wherever it is currently missing.

You have the support of the EU and its Member States moving forward – but we are also asking you, Mr. Chair - to reflect on how we can better work together, including with ministerial involvement in the final stages of our negotiations at resumed sessions, which must see the conclusion of our negotiations.

I thank you.

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