Decisive fifth session of negotiations on a global plastic pollution treaty opens in Busan

The fifth session of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee to develop an international legally binding instrument on plastic pollution, including in the marine environment (INC-5), opened today in Busan, Republic of Korea. The session aims to conclude negotiations and finalize the text of the agreement.

The session, which takes place from 25 November to 1 December, aims to finalize and approve the text of the instrument. On the opening day, the INC approved the use of the Chair's Non-Paper 3 as the foundation to facilitate negotiations in focused contact groups through the week.

"The excessive reliance of humanity on the convenience of plastics has resulted in an exponential increase in plastic waste. The waste accumulated in our oceans and rivers now jeopardizes the lives of future generations," H.E. Yoon Suk Yeol President of the Republic of Korea, said in a video message to the INC. "I sincerely hope that over the coming week all member states will stand together in solidarity – with a sense of responsibility for future generations – to open a new historic chapter by finalizing a treaty on plastic pollution."

INC-5 follows four earlier rounds of negotiations: INC-1, which took place in Punta del Este in November 2022, INC-2, which was held in Paris in June 2023, INC-3, which happened in Nairobi in November 2023, and INC-4, held in Ottawa in April 2024.

“The moment of truth is here to end plastic pollution. Not a single person on this planet wants to witness plastic in their communities or washing up on their shores. Not a single person wants chemical-laced plastic particles in their bloodstreams, organs, or their unborn babies,” said Inger Andersen, Executive Director of the UN Environment Programme (UNEP).

“We have a historic moment to end the world’s plastic pollution crisis and protect our environment, our health, and our future. Our job in Busan this week is clear: agree a treaty that puts us on the road to delivering a plastic pollution free future once and for all,” she added.

INC-5 was preceded by a series of ministerial meetings, regional consultations, and a conversation with Observers.

“The voices of the world are clear: we need healthy meals free from microplastics; we need clean air, oceans, and forests; we need safe, non-toxic plastic products; we need innovation, circularity, and collaboration to replace harmful plastics,” said Ambassador Luis Vayas Valdivieso, Chair of the INC. “Let us harness every tool of multilateralism, every ounce of creativity, and every moment of dialogue to overcome our differences and craft a treaty as ambitious as our collective will allows.”

More than 3,800 participants have registered to participate in INC-5 – the highest number of the five meetings – representing more than 170 countries and over 600 Observer organizations.

“The success of these negotiations will directly shape the world we live in – now and in the future -, because once the ink is dry, words must be followed by action, and we should all have our eyes on this instrument’s implementation.” said Jyoti Mathur-Filipp, Executive Secretary of the INC. “