

The long-awaited fifth session of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee (INC-5.2), with the goal of developing an international legally binding instrument on plastic pollution was adjourned early on 15 August without consensus on a text of the instrument after the Committee agreed to resume negotiations at a future date to be announced.

The meeting adjourned with a clearly expressed desire by Member States to continue the process, recognizing the significant difference of views between states.

This resumed fifth session (INC-5.2) saw more than 2,600 participants gather at the Palais des Nations in Geneva, including over 1,400 Member delegates from 183 countries, and close to 1,000 Observers representing over 400 organizations. Some 70 Ministers and Vice Ministers, as well as 30 other high-level representatives, also held informal roundtables on the margins of the session.

“This has been a hard-fought 10 days against the backdrop of geopolitical complexities, economic challenges, and multilateral strains. However, one thing remains clear: despite these complexities, all countries clearly want to remain at the table.

“While we did not land the treaty text we hoped for, we at UNEP will continue the work against plastic pollution – pollution that is in our groundwater, in our soil, in our rivers, in our oceans and yes, in our bodies,” said Inger Andersen, Executive Director of the UN Environment Programme (UNEP).

The goal of INC-5.2 was to agree on the instrument’s text and highlight unresolved issues requiring further preparatory work ahead of a diplomatic conference. The session followed a structured approach—starting with an opening plenary, transitioning into four contact groups tackling key areas like plastic design, chemicals of concern, production caps, finance, and compliance, followed by a stocktake plenary, informal consultations, and ending with a closing plenary on 15 August.

A Chair’s Text from INC-5.1 in Busan served as the starting point for negotiations at INC-5.2, with the Chair releasing a Draft Text Proposal and a Revised Text Proposal over the course of the session. Despite intensive engagement, Members of the Committee were unable to reach consensus on the [proposed texts](#).

“Failing to reach the goal we set for ourselves may bring sadness, even frustration. Yet it should not lead to discouragement. On the contrary, it should spur us to regain our energy, renew our commitments, and unite our aspirations,” said INC Chair Ambassador Luis Vayas Valdivieso. “It has not happened yet in Geneva, but I have no doubt that the day will come when the international community will unite its will and join hands to protect our environment and safeguard the health of our people.”

This INC process kicked off in March 2022, at the [resumed fifth session of the UN Environment Assembly \(UNEA-5.2\)](#), when a historic [resolution](#) was adopted to develop an international legally binding instrument on plastic pollution, including in the marine environment.

“As this session concludes, we leave with an understanding of the challenges ahead and a renewed and shared commitment to address them,” said Jyoti Mathur-Filipp, Executive Secretary of the INC Secretariat. “Progress must now be our obligation.”

The session also involved the active [participation of civil society](#) – including Indigenous People, waste pickers, artists, young people, and scientists – who raised their voices through protests, art installations, press briefings and events at and around the Palais.

The Geneva session follows [INC 5.1](#), which took place in November/December 2024 in Busan, Republic of Korea. That meeting was preceded by four sessions: [INC-1](#) in Punta del Este in November 2022, [INC-2](#), held in Paris in June 2023, [INC-3](#) in Nairobi in November 2023, and [INC-4](#), which took place in Ottawa in April 2024.

United Nations Environment Assembly [resolution 5/14](#) requested the Executive Director of UNEP to convene an intergovernmental negotiating committee, to begin its work during the second half of 2022, with the ambition of completing its work by the end of 2024. The INC is tasked with developing an international legally binding instrument on plastic pollution, including in the marine environment, which could include both binding and voluntary approaches, based on a comprehensive approach that addresses the full life cycle of plastic.