

Reference: UNE-2022-00644

4 April 2022

Dear Minister,

I wish to extend my sincere gratitude and appreciation for your effort in achieving agreement on key resolutions during the resumed fifth session of the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA-5.2) that took place in Nairobi from 28 February – 2 March 2022.

The UNEA-5.2 resolution entitled 'End plastic pollution: Towards an international legally binding instrument' (advance copy enclosed) requests the following:

- i. Convening of an Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee (INC), commencing its work during the second half of 2022, with the ambition of completing its work by the end of 2024;
- ii. Convening of an ad hoc open-ended working group (OEWG) to have one meeting during the first half of 2022 to prepare for the work of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee;
- iii. Convening of a forum in conjunction with the first session of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee, building upon existing initiatives, that is open to all stakeholders to exchange information and activities related to plastic pollution;
- iv. Convening a diplomatic conference of plenipotentiaries upon completion of negotiations in the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee, for the purpose of adopting the instrument and opening it for signature;
- v. Continued actions to address plastic pollution, including in the marine environment.

The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) invites governments and other stakeholders in a position to do so to provide extra-budgetary resources at the earliest to support the implementation of the resolution to 'End plastic pollution: Towards an international legally binding instrument'. Please see Annex 1 attached to this letter for a detailed overview of the areas for funding support. In order to support the process most efficiently, our request is for resources for the INC to be received without specific area of support to the INC process. Should an earmarking within the INC process be necessary, we ask for maximum flexibility in the earmarking.

Furthermore, I am delighted to inform you that the OEWG will take place from 30 May – 1 June 2022 in Dakar, Senegal. The outcome of the OEWG will include recommendations on the timetable and the organization of work of the INC, taking into account the provisions and elements identified in paragraphs 3 and 4 of the resolution. Further details on the OEWG, including an official invitation letter, will be sent in due course.

An OEWG Bureau will be established to support the work of the OEWG. In accordance with rule 63, paragraph 3, of the rules of procedure of the United Nations Environment Assembly, as well as past practice, the OEWG shall elect a Bureau composed of a Chairperson, three Vice-Chairpersons and a Rapporteur, taking into account the principle of equitable geographical representation as well as gender balance. Member States wishing to nominate a candidate for the Bureau of the OEWG are invited to do so through their respective regional groups by providing the name and title of the candidate, at the earliest but no later than 30 April 2022.

To: Ministers responsible for the Environment
cc: Permanent Representatives to UNEP

Beyond the OEWG Bureau, it is anticipated that a Bureau for the INC will be established at the first meeting of the INC, consisting of ten members (two per region). I would encourage regional groups to be ready to announce their nominations at the OEWG, or before, in order to have the INC Bureau in place at the start of the first INC meeting.

Moreover, Member States are kindly requested to nominate a designated national focal point for the INC process, as a contact point for further communications with the Secretariat. The focal point would be responsible for dissemination of INC-related information in their country.

Finally, I have the pleasure to invite Member States that are in a position to do so to express their interest to host one of the INC meetings.

I would be grateful if the nominations for OEWG Bureau and national focal point for the INC as well as the expressions of interest for hosting meetings could be sent to Ms. Leticia Reis de Carvalho (UNEP-INCplastic.secretariat@un.org) by 30 April 2022. Ms. Reis de Carvalho also stands ready to provide any further clarifications that your teams may require on the provision of financial support for the implementation of the resolution or logistical requirements to host one of the INC meetings.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Inger Andersen', followed by a period.

Inger Andersen
UNEP Executive Director

Enclosed:

Annex 1: Areas for funding support

UNEA-5.2 resolution 'End plastic pollution: Towards an international legally binding instrument'

Annex 1. Areas for funding support

Support to implement the UNEA 5.2 resolution '*End plastic pollution: Towards an international legally binding instrument*' is sought in the following areas:

1. **Convening of (a) the ad hoc open-ended working group meeting, (b) meetings of the intergovernmental negotiating committee and related regional meetings, and (c) the diplomatic conference of plenipotentiaries (paragraphs 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 9, 12).**

It is envisaged in the resolution that one (1) open-ended working group meeting (*paragraph 5*), five (5) intergovernmental negotiating committee meetings (*paragraph 1*) and one (1) diplomatic conference of plenipotentiaries (*paragraph 12*) will be convened.

While costs may vary depending on length, location and modality (in-person or hybrid), the estimates for the global intergovernmental meetings is **US\$ 1.5 million** per global meeting. This includes preparation and translation of documentation, conference services including interpretation in all UN languages, venue and related costs, as well as support for travel and per diem as per UN rules and regulations.

Paragraph 6 stresses the need to ensure the widest possible and effective participation in the ad hoc open-ended working group meeting and the intergovernmental negotiating committee. Paragraph 7 requests the Executive Director as a priority to provide the necessary support to developing countries and countries with economies in transition to allow for effective participation in the work of the ad hoc open-ended working group meeting and the intergovernmental negotiating committee. Support for travel would ensure meeting these considerations. Support for regional meetings (with interpretation in relevant languages) would further ensure effective participation in the process.

2. Staffing (paragraph 8)

Costs of dedicated staffing (professional and support staff) for the INC secretariat is estimated at **US\$ 7 million**. Adequate staffing would ensure that UNEP can provide the necessary support to the intergovernmental negotiating committee and the ad hoc open-ended working group as requested in paragraph 8.

Staffing support could also be provided to the Junior Professional Officer (JPO) programme. JPO applications for specific positions submitted to UNEP through respective governments, who then finance their assignment, usually provide support for a period of two or three years. Countries in a position to do so are encouraged to sponsor positions for nationals from developing countries. Estimated costs for a Nairobi-based JPO for 2-year period are **US\$ 250,000**.

3. Multistakeholder forum (paragraph 16)

The resolution requests the Executive Director to convene a forum in conjunction with the first session of the intergovernmental negotiating committee to exchange information on activities related to plastic pollution. Estimated costs are **US\$ 395,000** to organize and convene forums around the meetings of the intergovernmental negotiating committee.

4. Other activities (paragraph 14 and 15)

The resolution calls for the work of the Global Partnership on Marine Litter to be continued and advanced, while strengthening scientific, technical and technological knowledge with regard to plastic pollution, including in the marine environment, *inter alia*, on methodologies for monitoring, and sharing available scientific and other relevant data and information.

Furthermore, support could be provided to help Member States to continue and step up activities and adopt voluntary measures to combat plastic pollution, including measures related to sustainable consumption and production, which may include circular economy approaches, and to develop and implement national action plans, while fostering international action and initiatives under national regulatory frameworks, and, on a voluntary basis, to provide statistical information on the environmentally sound management of plastic waste, as appropriate, taking into account national circumstances.