International Science Council
The global voice for science

ISC statement at the informal webinar ahead of INC-5

18 November from 20:00 – 21:30 East African Time

Presenter: Anda Popovici

Thank you Mr. Chair,

On behalf of the International Science Council (ISC), federating over 250 national, regional and international scientific organizations, I warmly congratulate you Ambassador Vayas-Valdivieso for your dedicated leadership in fostering constructive discussions among Member States towards an international instrument on plastic pollution. This effort is a vital step in tackling a complex global threat to both human and ecosystem health, while supporting climate-resilient sustainable development.

The ISC would therefore like to highlight the following priorities to ensure a robust, scientifically grounded instrument:

The instrument should comprehensively address the full plastic life cycle to effectively tackle plastic pollution. Evidence indicates that mid- and downstream measures alone cannot offset the significant environmental and health burden of rising plastic production. Upstream, supply-side measures to reduce primary plastic production are critical. A full life cycle approach not only mitigates environmental and health impacts, but also helps reduce inequities across countries, easing the burden on vulnerable nations.

The treaty requires a **science-based approach to problematic plastic products and chemicals of concern**. Existing evidence and scientific consensus can inform the identification of products and chemicals of concern for elimination, while avoiding regrettable substitutions with equally harmful, unregulated alternatives. Any criteria and lists in the instrument will require ongoing review and updating, which could be supported by an expert or subsidiary body established by the Conference of the Parties.

A robust monitoring framework is key for evidence-based decision-making and assessing treaty effectiveness. Progress should be measured through economic, environmental and health indicators, supported by national reporting including on plastic production, recycling rates, and bioplastics. The scientific community can contribute to enhancing existing data systems to track plastic pollution, assess health impacts, and inform effective implementation efforts.

A strong science-policy-society interface is key for effective implementation. It should integrate diverse knowledge sources, including Indigenous and local knowledge, the latest scientific insights across natural and social sciences, and account for the diverse implementation contexts at local, national and regional levels to ensure practical and inclusive application. Lessons from existing science advisory models in MEAs can help design an effective, fit for purpose mechanism. The interim period before the first COP could focus on identifying the specific needs for expert and scientific input and considering suitable models for engaging relevant expertise.

The ISC is committed to continue leveraging the latest scientific evidence to provide Member States with science-based advice and policy options for a robust, evidence-based treaty and implementation.

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