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**UPDATE ON PLASTICS NEGOTIATIONS AND POTENTIAL
INSTRUMENT AMENDMENTS**

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Introduction

1. This document provides information on the progress of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee (INC) to develop an international legally binding instrument on plastic pollution, including in the marine environment (hereafter the plastic instrument), and potential steps to be taken for financial mechanism designation to the instrument.
2. The document covers the current progress of the negotiations, including the activities of the Global Environment Facility (GEF) in support of the process, the GEF's investments to address plastic pollution, and how the GEF-9 Programming Directions proposes continued investments. It also outlines steps to be taken for the financial mechanism designation and operationalization if the agreement is reached and if the GEF is designated as, or part of, the financial mechanism.

Progress in the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee on Plastic Pollution

3. In March 2022, the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA) resolution 5/14 requested the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) to convene an INC to develop a plastics instrument. The INC started its work in mid-2022, with the aim to complete negotiations by the end of 2024.
4. The first INC session (INC-1) took place in Punta del Este, Uruguay, from November 28 to December 2, 2022, followed by INC-2 in Paris, France from May 29 to June 2, 2023, INC-3 in Nairobi, Kenya from November 13 to 19, 2023, followed by INC-4 in Ottawa, Canada from April 23 to 29, 2024. The fifth session (INC-5.1) took place in Busan, Republic of Korea from November 25 to December 1, 2024. Member States did not reach an agreement by the end of 2024.
5. The resumed second part of the fifth session of the INC (INC-5.2) took place in Geneva, Switzerland from August 5 to 15, 2025. This was the second opportunity to reach an agreement, with discussions held on the basis of a Chair's text from the Busan meeting (INC-5.1).
6. The GEF is identified as one of the options to serve as financial mechanism for the new plastics instrument in the Chair's text¹ published on December 1, 2024, from INC-5.1. The GEF can also support the other options under consideration. The Chair's Text includes Article 11 on Financial [Resources and] Mechanisms, with the following presented as paragraph 7:

"The mechanism shall include [a new dedicated independent multilateral fund [and a remediation fund and GEF trust fund]] [an existing fund] [and any other funds or entities] [the Global Environment Facility Trust Fund] operating under [the authority of] the

¹ Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee to develop an international legally binding instrument on plastic pollution, including in the marine environment, 2024, [Chair's text 1 December 2024](#).

Conference of the Parties. [The Conference of the Parties shall provide guidance on policies, programme priorities [and eligibility criteria for access to] and utilization of financial resources.]”

7. The pending subjects among member States to be discussed at the next INC session include the scope of the treaty, upstream measures, including plastic production, the legal nature of the treaty, relationship to other multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs), and decision making. While some member States have expressed the need for upstream measures with legally binding measures, others have expressed preference for a voluntary agreement focusing on waste management. Other elements of divergence relate to the treaty decision-making, such as majority with voting or consensus based.

8. On financing, member States have expressed different views on arrangements for financing the implementation of the treaty and the designation of the financial mechanism.

9. At INC-5.2, some progress was made in the negotiations on the basis of the Chair’s text from INC-5.1. The Chair issued new texts towards the end of the session. However, they did not receive support from member States as the basis for negotiations. Member States were unable to agree on a new instrument. The session was adjourned on August 15, 2025.

10. After the resignation of the former Chair, a new Chair was elected at INC-5.3 on February 7, 2026. The one-day meeting was convened for organizational and administrative purposes with the focus on election of officers.

11. The new Chair has outlined a roadmap for the work of the Committee in the lead-up to the fourth part of its fifth session (INC-5.4), which includes informal virtual and in-person meetings of Heads of Delegation, a possible informal in-person meeting in the second semester of 2026 and INC-5.4 to take place at the end of 2026 or early 2027.²

Discussions on the Financial Mechanism

12. The GEF is one of the options under consideration to serve as the financial mechanism in the Chair’s text issued from INC-5.1 in December 2024. The discussions on the financial mechanism continued in INC-5.2, highlighting divergent views among member States, with some member States asking for a new independent fund while others supporting the designation of the GEF via the GEF Trust Fund. Other member States suggested to establish a new dedicated fund within the GEF Family of Funds.

² Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee to develop an international legally binding instrument on plastic pollution, including in the marine environment, 2026, [Second letter from the Chair of the INC on Plastic Pollution](#).

13. Perspectives shared in support of designating the GEF Trust Fund included the ability to allocate resources fast and in a cost-efficient manner, building on existing systems and synergies, and integrating benefits across MEAs. Concerns raised by some member States included challenges associated with governance, access, and lack of direct access and need to program through GEF agencies.

14. Some member States expressed support for a hybrid multi-entity financial mechanism, consisting of the GEF Trust Fund and another entity. Others also proposed adding a public-private coordination network to the financial mechanism, in addition to the GEF Trust Fund.

15. The Chair's revised text proposal at INC-5.2 included a hybrid multi-entity model as shown below.³ This proposal was, however, not agreed by member States to be used as a basis for further negotiations.

"A mechanism for the provision of adequate, accessible, new, predictable, and timely financial resources is hereby established. The mechanism shall include:

The Global Environment Facility Trust Fund; [and]

(a) A new dedicated multilateral fund[, hereby] established under this Convention[, hosted within an existing institution]; [and]

(c) a public-private coordination network to interface with the partnerships referred to in paragraph 8;

with [distinct] functions to be defined for each [entity] by the Conference of the Parties [at its first meeting]."

GEF Engagement in the INC Process

16. The GEF has been following the negotiations and attended all INC sessions except for INC-5.3. The GEF MEA and Funds Manager also participated in the open-ended technical group meetings as a technical expert in 2024.

17. The GEF has provided briefing documents on the potential role of the GEF in a future treaty, responded to questions, and addressed comments from member States. The GEF has raised visibility of its plastics portfolio, including by providing information documents, organized an information webinar "*GEF: Options for financing the plastics treaty*" on July 29, 2025, and held bilateral meetings with member States.

³ Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee to develop an international legally binding instrument on plastic pollution, including in the marine environment, 2025, [Chair's revised text proposal at 00h48](#).

18. The GEF delegation to INC-5.2, led by the GEF CEO and Chairperson, engaged actively to support member States in their deliberations on the financial mechanism. The GEF CEO participated in the high-level segment, and the delegation had a number of bilateral meetings and engagements with Ministers, delegates, and observers.

19. The GEF continues to be available to support member States in their deliberations on the negotiations. Efforts to raise the visibility of GEF investments to address plastic pollution will be maintained.

Steps for Financial Mechanism Designation and Operationalization

20. Should the INC reach an agreement, and decide to designate the GEF as, or part of, the financial mechanism, the GEF Council will deliberate on the designation and its operationalization. As this is a new treaty, the Council will discuss the amendment of the GEF Instrument, which will be recommended to the Assembly. The GEF Instrument, in its Basic Provisions section, references all MEAs that the GEF serves as the financial mechanism.⁴

21. Should the INC process conclude with an agreement, including the designation of the financial mechanism including the GEF, after June 2026 but well before the ninth GEF Assembly, which is expected to take place in 2030, the GEF Council will deliberate on its designation and operationalization, and the GEF Instrument amendment following the agreement.

22. As negotiations under the INC process are still ongoing, the Assembly is hereby informed that, once concluded, the proposed amendment to the GEF Instrument will be shared with the Representatives of the Participants for approval through a written non-objection procedure. Under the Assembly's Rules of Procedure, there is no prohibition on matters being approved by Representatives of the Participants through written consultations, and this would represent the most expedient pathway to put in place the amendments necessary to allow the GEF to serve as a financial mechanism under the treaty. Alternatively, should a written procedure not be pursued, the amendment to the GEF Instrument could be approved by the ninth GEF Assembly in 2030.

23. Programming support to address plastic pollution has been included as part of the GEF-9 Programming Directions,⁵ as described further in the section below. Resources to support the treaty may also be set aside to be made available, subject to the conclusion of the negotiations, the GEF being designated as part of the Financial Mechanism, and with the Council agreement.

24. Similar arrangements were made in the GEF-8 period for the Agreement under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea on the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Marine

⁴ GEF, 2025, [Instrument for the Establishment of the Restructured Global Environment Facility, January 2025](#).

⁵ GEF, 2025, [GEF- 9 Programming Directions](#), Replenishment Document GEF/R.9/12.

Biological Diversity of Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ), which was agreed in June 2023 with the GEF designated as part of the financial mechanism. Following the agreement, the Council agreed to release the resources set-aside for the ratification support and early implementation in June 2023, in line with the Programming Directions, and to recommend the GEF Instrument amendment.⁶

GEF Investments to Address Plastic Pollution

25. Since the GEF-6 period, the GEF has been supporting 142 countries to address plastics pollution. Since then, the GEF has programmed approximately \$1.2 billion of grant resources, which has leveraged \$8.4 billion in co-financing including \$1.4 billion from the private sector. The GEF addresses plastic pollution across the entire value chain through two main tracks:

- i. Primary support from the Chemicals and Waste focal area through work to implement the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants to eliminate chemicals listed under the Convention that are intentionally added to plastics as well as the reduction of the emissions of unintentionally produced persistent organic pollutants (UPOPs) from combustion of plastics in waste streams. Recent examples include Circular & POPs-Free Plastics in Africa, the Integrated Program on Eliminating Hazardous Chemicals from Supply Chains, Integrated Collaborative Approaches for Sustainable Tourism (iCOAST), Financing Agrochemical Reduction and Management (FARM and FARM+), and Life Cycle Management Project in Plastic Industry in China.
- ii. Dedicated GEF-8 “Plastic Reboot” Integrated Program which specifically targets single-use plastics in the food and beverage value chain in 15 countries, with \$108 million GEF grant mobilizing \$509 million co-financing.

26. These investments have reduced 43.6 million tons of plastics entering the waste stream, as well as other global environmental concerns.

Support to Address Plastic Pollution in the GEF-9 Programming Directions

27. The Programming Directions for GEF-9,⁵ to be endorsed at the 71st GEF Council, proposes to continue investments to address plastic pollution, primarily through the Chemicals and Waste Focal Area and a new Integrated Program on circular solutions that expands the range of plastics to be covered by the program to address plastic pollution. It aligns with emerging international momentum, including the negotiation of a new global plastics treaty and several new POPs that

⁶ GEF, 2023, [*Preparing the GEF to serve as part of the Financial Mechanism of the international legally binding instrument under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction \(BBNJ\)*](#), Council Document GEF/C.64/12/Rev.01.

are plastic additives that were recently added to the chemicals controlled by the Stockholm Convention, to catalyze an ambitious and comprehensive response to the plastic pollution crisis.

28. The GEF-9 Programming Directions also proposes to support Convention obligations for a potential plastics instrument should member States decide to designate the GEF as or part of the financial mechanism.

29. To better track results for plastics investments in GEF-9, a dedicated core indicator has been developed and captures data from four categories:

- i. Single Use Plastics not containing or contaminated with hazardous chemicals
- ii. Single Use Plastics containing or contaminated with hazardous chemicals
- iii. Durable plastics that can be recycled
- iv. Durable plastics that contain, or are contaminated with, hazardous chemicals.