

International Plastics Treaty: Surfrider Europe and Zero Waste France reject the new text proposed by the Chair, which fails to end plastic

Communiqué de Presse Pour diffusion immédiate

Press Release – For Immediate Release

Geneva, August 13, 2025

As negotiations on the international treaty to end plastic pollution are due to conclude tomorrow, August 14, 2025, in Geneva, and given the inability to reach a consensus agreement on the text, Chair Luis Vayas Valdivieso has proposed a new draft to serve as the basis for the final discussions. From the start of this negotiation session, the working text used as a basis mentioned reducing global production, included an annex listing problematic products and substances that could be banned, and referred to links between plastics and health. Although that text was already unsatisfactory, the new version represents an unprecedented step backward.

The proposed text:

- Fails to meet its objectives by ignoring the United Nations decision (UNEA 5/14) that defines its mandate: the text does not adopt a full life-cycle approach to products.
- Removes all binding measures in favor of voluntary ones.
- Weakens provisions on discharges and leakages (for example, deleting references to industrial plastic pellet and flake loss).
- Completely removes any mention of reducing plastic production.
- Fails to respect the waste hierarchy.
- Lacks any ambitious article on eco-design and keeps loopholes for false solutions.
- Deletes references to hazardous chemicals, despite numerous scientific studies warning about the dangers of many plastic additives.
- Eliminates the annex listing products and substances to be banned.

- Removes the standalone health article (formerly Article 19), leaving only minimal mention of health in the preamble.
- Ignores scientific recommendations and the demands of civil society, as well as Indigenous and frontline communities facing plastic pollution.
- Excludes any consideration of human rights or Indigenous peoples.
- Abandons the possibility of resorting to a vote when consensus is not reached, jeopardizing any progress at future COP meetings.

Our NGOs condemn this incomprehensible rollback, especially when a majority of countries support adopting an ambitious treaty. “This text is a gift to the blocking countries, which are in the minority. In its current form, it is far from matching the urgency of the situation. We have repeated many times: we do not need yet another waste management treaty. We are in Geneva to end plastic pollution, not to sign an empty, meaningless agreement at any cost!” says Lisa Pastor, Advocacy Officer at Surfrider Foundation Europe.

“The message sent by this new text is crystal clear: ‘Science, human rights, your future and that of your children don’t matter. The fossil fuel industry’s interests come first.’ In the midst of a heatwave, this text is a cold shower for citizens, especially in the Global South, who have been working tirelessly for over two years to build real environmental justice,” adds Manon Richert, Communications Manager at Zero Waste France.

They also regret that a small group of states with economic interests in plastic production, notably oil-producing states, are lowering the treaty’s ambition. In today’s plenary session, many countries — including Colombia, Panama, the European Union, and France — stressed its unacceptable and ineffective nature. To recall, more than 100 countries have reiterated their willingness to reach an ambitious and effective outcome, proposing articles matching the urgency of the crisis.

That is why Surfrider Foundation Europe and Zero Waste France call for the rejection of this text and for work to resume on an ambitious draft that reintegrates the proposals made by the coalition of over 100 countries throughout this negotiation session — otherwise, the Geneva talks will end in collective failure.

Editor’s note:

On March 2, 2022, during the United Nations Environment Assembly in Nairobi, Kenya, the 175 member states unanimously adopted Resolution 5/14, aiming to adopt a legally binding instrument to end plastic pollution. The UN mandate called for a text addressing the full life cycle of plastics.

After more than two years of negotiations, countries failed to adopt a treaty in Busan in December 2024, which was supposed to finalize the text. Despite the willingness of a majority of ambitious countries ready to include plastic production reduction in the treaty, a minority of states — most with economic interests tied to plastics — blocked the agreement. As a result, an additional session opened in Geneva on August 4 to finalize the text. According to CIEL,

more than 232 industry lobbyists were present in Geneva to influence the negotiations.

The Chair of the negotiations, Ecuadorian Luis Vayas Valdivieso, initially proposed a base text containing over 300 bracketed terms still up for negotiation. After six days, that number had jumped to 1,488, highlighting divisions between the High Ambition Coalition and the so-called “like-minded” countries (including Iran, Russia, and Saudi Arabia) that want a treaty focused solely on end-of-life plastics.

Among the contested articles were those referring to links between plastics and health, and particularly Article 6, which called for reducing production — a major sticking point.

To break the deadlock, and with only about 30 hours left to reach a consensus, the Chair proposed a new draft.

This new text has been overwhelmingly rejected by NGOs, scientists, affected communities, the most vulnerable populations, and nearly 100 countries.

Press contacts:

Surfrider Foundation Europe

Lionel Cheylus | Media Relations Manager | +33 6 08 10 58 02 |

lcheylus@surfrider.eu

Zero Waste France

Manon Richert | Communications Manager | +33 7 52 02 59 70 |

manon.richert@zerowasteFrance.org



The campaign “Break The Plastic Wave” of Surfrider Foundation Europe is supported by the LIFE program created by the European Commission. The European Commission's support for the production of this publication does not constitute an endorsement of the content, which reflects the views only of the authors, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.