

CAPws Submission on the Guiding Questions for the Second Informal In-person HODs Meeting, Bangkok, 27–30 September 2026

Community Action Against Plastic Waste (CAPws), is a grassroots environmental research not-for-profit and non-governmental organisation headquartered in Nigeria with community networks across 71 communities in 21 countries. We welcome the opportunity to contribute to the Chair's guiding questions. Drawing on community-based research, Community Environmental Intelligence (CEI) and grassroots-informed risk assessment across plastic-pollution-affected communities, CAPws recommends the following:

Cluster A – National Plans, Reporting, Implementation and Compliance

National Plans should establish measurable, time-bound and adequately financed actions across the plastics lifecycle, with clearly assigned responsibilities and meaningful participation of affected communities. Drawing on CAPws community-based work across LMICs, implementation should recognise grassroots knowledge systems, community environmental intelligence, citizen science and locally generated evidence as complementary to official monitoring and reporting.

Reporting should capture not only legal and policy measures, but also actual reductions in plastic production, releases, leakages, chemical exposure, pollution burdens and environmental-health impacts, using harmonised indicators that remain accessible to communities, informal waste pickers, women, youth, PWDs and frontline populations.

Implementation and compliance should provide accessible grievance, accountability and information-exchange mechanisms, including participation by vulnerable groups in monitoring, review and decision-making. Periodic effectiveness evaluations should identify and address structural implementation gaps in LMICs, including limitations in finance, data, infrastructure, institutional capacity and enforcement.

Cluster B – Releases, Chemicals of Concern, Legacy Pollution, Waste Management and Products

Global measures should prioritise plastic products and applications that contribute disproportionately to releases, leakage, hazardous chemical exposure and avoidable waste, while accelerating prevention, reuse, refill and safe circularity.

The future instrument should establish effective identification, traceability and transparency of chemicals of concern throughout the plastic lifecycle. This should include information on chemical composition and additives, disclosure across supply chains, interoperable information systems and mechanisms enabling authorities, recyclers, waste workers and communities to identify hazardous plastics.

Chemicals of concern that are unnecessary, avoidable or suitable safer alternatives exist should be progressively eliminated or phased out, with particular attention to substances that are persistent, bioaccumulative, toxic, carcinogenic, mutagenic, endocrine-disrupting or otherwise hazardous to human health and the environment.

Chemical information must follow plastics through production, placing on the market, use, reuse, recycling, export and disposal, preventing hazardous chemicals from being unintentionally perpetuated through recycling and circular-economy pathways.

The treaty should promote credible standards and safeguards for reuse and refill systems, including durability, repairability, hygiene, safety, accessibility, return systems, refill infrastructure, tracking and end-of-use management. National standards bodies should be supported to develop and implement context-appropriate standards aligned with international and global standardisation mechanisms.

For legacy pollution, Parties should support the identification and evaluation of accumulation zones through community-based mapping, grassroots knowledge and community-informed risk assessment, followed by remediation financing, long-term monitoring and environmental-health surveillance, including chemical exposures associated with degraded and mismanaged plastics.

International cooperation on waste management should be accompanied by finance, appropriate technology, chemical traceability, information exchange and institutional capacity-building. It must not transfer hazardous plastics, chemical risks or residual waste burdens to LMICs and frontline communities without adequate resources, safeguards and accountability.

Cluster C – Capacity-building, Finance and Technology Transfer

Capacity-building and technical assistance should be demand-driven, long-term, locally appropriate, accessible and co-designed with affected communities. Support should reach public institutions, national standards bodies, local authorities, research organisations, community-based organisations, informal waste pickers, women, youth, PWDs and other frontline actors who are often excluded from formal implementation processes.

CAPws proposes consideration of a Primary Polymer Fee (PPF) on virgin primary polymer production as an innovative mechanism to mobilise predictable private-sector resources for treaty implementation. Such resources should be additional to public and international finance, transparently collected and governed through the treaty's financial mechanism, with equitable access for LMICs and community-led initiatives.

The financial mechanism should support grassroots monitoring, reuse and refill systems, local circular-economy infrastructure, safer alternatives, worker protection, community remediation and environmental-health interventions, not only large-scale technological solutions.

Technology transfer should include access to appropriate technologies, knowledge, skills, standards, data systems and institutional capacity, with attention to affordability, maintenance, local repairability, accessibility, gender and disability inclusion, local conditions and avoidance of technology lock-in. Technology cooperation should strengthen, rather than displace, existing community-based recovery, reuse and livelihood systems.

Cluster D – Principles, Just Transition, Information and Research

The instrument should be guided by environmental justice, precaution, polluter pays, prevention, transparency, intergenerational equity, inclusiveness and a just transition, while recognising national circumstances and the differentiated capacities and vulnerabilities of LMICs.

Definitions should support effective implementation and prevent loopholes, particularly where products, reusable items, secondary materials and wastes may shift between classifications. Definitions and standards should not enable hazardous materials to be exported or marketed as reusable, recyclable or circular without verifiable evidence.

National standards organisations should be recognised as important actors in translating treaty obligations into national standards, conformity-assessment systems and market oversight. The treaty should encourage coordination among national, regional and international standardisation mechanisms to support interoperable standards for reuse, refill, product design, chemical transparency, recycled content, traceability and environmentally sound management. Such processes should include meaningful participation by civil society, technical experts, informal-sector representatives and affected communities.

Public information, education and research should recognise community knowledge, citizen science, Community Environmental Intelligence and other grassroots knowledge systems as complementary evidence, particularly where conventional monitoring is limited or inaccessible. Research programmes should support co-production of knowledge with communities and improve public access to relevant information on plastic products, additives, exposure pathways, releases, risks and available safeguards.

Decision-making structures should provide meaningful and accessible participation for informal waste pickers, frontline communities, women, youth, PWDs and community-based organisations, including through accessible consultation formats, representation, financial support for participation and feedback mechanisms.

A just transition should protect and strengthen the rights, safety, dignity and livelihoods of informal waste workers and other affected groups. It should recognise their existing contributions to recovery, reuse, repair and resource management, and ensure that new standards, formalisation measures and technologies do not displace them without consultation, social protection, alternative livelihoods and participation in governance.

CAPws Overarching Recommendation

The second iteration of the Aid to Negotiations should ensure that ambition is matched by implementation capacity, predictable and equitable finance, appropriate technology, inclusive standards and enforceable accountability. Drawing on CAPws' community-based work across LMICs, the future instrument should advance grassroots knowledge systems and ensure that vulnerable groups are not merely consulted but are recognised as rights-holders, knowledge-holders and implementation partners.

For communities experiencing the greatest impacts of plastic pollution, the effectiveness of the future instrument will ultimately be measured not by commitments on paper, but by reduced releases and exposure, safer reuse and refill systems, improved livelihoods, stronger local capacity, meaningful participation and demonstrable environmental-health outcomes.