UK Intervention in sub group 1.2 on 5a to 5d.

Thank you,

The United Kingdom believes that provisions under this article are important to achieve circularity. Indeed, UNEA resolution 5/14 underlines the importance of the sustainable design of products and materials, and that this can significantly contribute to the sustainable production and consumption of plastics.

We have made some progress to streamline the text but there is still substantial work to do with regards to developing sustainability criteria, reuse and recycled content targets. Therefore, the United Kingdom would strongly support a formal mandate for intersessional work between INC4 and 5 on product design.

In terms of further streamlining, we note the duplication of targets on recycling in both this provision and also in provision 9a on waste management. We believe the reference should be deleted under product design and should remain in 9a, as suggested by the EU.

On 5a, the United Kingdom supports option 1 with some amendments. The United Kingdom believes it is essential that the waste hierarchy is always kept in mind when looking at product design provisions. Therefore, we would like to include a reference to the waste hierarchy. We agree with the European Union’s suggestion that intentionally added microplastics could be addressed here.

On 5b, we recognise it is currently a very complex provision – covering reuse, refill, repair, repurposing, and refurbishment. We broadly agree with the European Union of the need to consider reuse in more detail. To provide focus, we believe this provision should focus on reuse and refill, which we believe are crucial elements of this treaty. This could include the development of national targets to contribute to a global target, minimum harmonized standards for reuse and refill systems that provide for flexibility, and guidance on implementation. Consideration of future targets for repair, repurposing, and refurbishment could take place under Article 4bis – dedicated programmes of work. We will submit text with our suggestions.

On 5c, the United Kingdom supports an obligation for all parties to introduce minimum percentages of recycled content, within an agreed time frame and set out in Part III of Annex C. However, as suggested by the European Union, this could be addressed under design criteria in 5a.

On 5d, the United Kingdom strongly agrees with the concerns raised by the European Union. The United Kingdom believes alternative plastics are still plastics; therefore, when they are mismanaged and escape into the natural environment, they will still cause plastic pollution. Therefore, they should be subject to all obligations across the treaty, and this provision should be deleted.