Fourth Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee on plastic pollution (INC)

23-29 April 2024

UNIDO written statement

The United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) welcomes the continued discussions on the revised draft text concerning a legally binding instrument on plastic pollution (UNEP/PP/INC.4/3).

With the mandate of inclusive and sustainable industrial development, UNIDO supports members states’ governments and industry to advance resource-efficient and circular economy practices across plastic value chains—from design, production, consumption, and recovery, to address plastic pollution.

The life cycle of plastics involves many stakeholders. Recognizing their various roles and needs should be the first step for a systematic shift of plastics' life cycle towards a just and sustainable circular economy. The instrument under negotiation has the potential to stimulate new demand, new business model, new design, or new production practices that promotes circularity. Industries will be an integral part of the implementation of the instrument. Starting with circular design of products and incorporating resource-efficient and circular economy practices at every stage of single-use plastics lifecycle is critical, prior to considering end-of-life strategies.

UNIDO’s circular economy projects recognize national specificities and capacities by member states and their industry in developing and executing initiatives tailored to their circumstances. This includes strengthening and harmonizing existing policies and regulations while boosting national and industry capacities through support for the establishment of enabling environment. This includes the provision of technical assistance, and the promoting best environmental practices and best available technologies to address plastic pollution.

UNIDO sees the design for circularity as essential as it optimizes the use of resources, maintaining value over time while eliminating hazardous substances and minimizing pollution.

In this context, UNIDO recently published an updated version of its working paper entitled “Addressing the challenges of plastic pollution, including in the marine environment, using circular economy methods”.
With this element in mind and with generous support from several donors, including Canada, EU, Japan, Norway, and the Global Environment Facility, UNIDO works with the Government of Bangladesh, Egypt, Ghana, India, Morocco, Nigeria, the Philippines, and South Africa to promote circular economy practices in industry. In a regional program in the Southern Mediterranean, successful business cases of design for circularity, including for food contact packaging, are ready to share.

Furthermore, UNIDO supports the Global Alliance on Circular Economy and Resource Efficiency (GACERE) and recently issued a policy brief that consolidates knowledge and best practices on circular design of plastic products, showcasing proven and successful examples from GACERE members and partners.

UNIDO believes that clear and ambitious goals, alongside a framework with common definitions, standards, and guidelines developed under the new instrument, are essential to encourage industries to innovate and adopt more inclusive, sustainable, and standardized practices across countries and industries.

UNIDO remains dedicated to supporting this transition and eliminating plastic pollution by collaborating closely with all relevant stakeholders, thereby directly contributing to the objectives of this INC process.