

Youth Plastic Action Network (YPAN)

Reflections on the Chair's Guiding Questions for the Second Informal In-Person Heads of Delegation Meeting, 27 to 30 September 2026, Bangkok

23 September 2026

This is being submitted by Waves of Change on behalf of the Youth Plastic Action Network (YPAN). The [Youth Plastic Action Network \(YPAN\)](#) is a youth-led network supporting sustained, meaningful, and inclusive youth engagement in the negotiations toward an international legally binding instrument on plastic pollution under the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee (INC) process. Launched during INC-5.2 in August 2025, YPAN brings together young people from more than 170 countries and operates as an affiliated network of the Children and Youth Major Group (CYMG) to UNEP, which provides its administrative support.

Methodology. The positions in this document are drawn from YPAN's structured consultations with young people across more than 170 countries, our submission to the Human Rights Council Advisory Committee questionnaire on plastic pollution and human rights,¹ our published youth priorities for INC-5.2,² the Reflections³ and Textual Insertions⁴ we shared with Members ahead of the Nairobi meeting in June 2026, and our Statement on the Aid to Negotiations of 10 August 2026.⁵ The responses below were reviewed by YPAN's coordination team in September 2026. A second round of textual insertions, developed through an internal consultative process in collaboration with the CYMG Chemicals and Waste Working Group, accompanies this document and is available [here](#).

These reflections respond to the Chair's Guiding Questions of 9 September 2026 and follow the structure of the Aid to Negotiations of 8 August 2026.⁶ In line with the Chair's request, we have tried not to restate positions set out in our June documents, which remain our reference. For each question we address the three elements the Chair asked Members to consider: what belongs in the text of the instrument and what can be left to the Conference of the Parties (COP); what could be

¹YPAN submission to the Human Rights Council Advisory Committee questionnaire on plastic pollution and human rights (2026).

²Children and Youth Priorities for INC-5.2, July 2025,

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1EJ8NZfB6_p6Nd0l32NnYu6EhXhH-ANpB42Oa78o66pM/edit?usp=sharing

³Youth Plastic Action Network, Reflections on the Chair's Guiding Questions for the Informal In-Person Heads of Delegation Meeting, 29 June 2026,

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1axeFKOCFbsE5AluoQ2ngm27WaIYjL_n6B5WAh9Ugr4k/edit?usp=sharing

⁴Youth Plastic Action Network, Textual Insertions Suggestions in Preparation for the New Informal Draft Paper, 29 June 2026, https://docs.google.com/document/d/1dqFbF1H9UaFxFJT7atQ-nz8JPnFgLG-BugrmE2uI_0pI/edit?usp=sharing

⁵Youth Plastic Action Network, Statement on the Aid to Negotiations, 10 August 2026.

⁶Aid to Negotiations, informal reference document by the Chair of the INC, 8 August 2026, and the accompanying Explanatory Note.

mandated for the interim period by the Diplomatic Conference; and the linkages between articles. Article numbers refer to the Aid to Negotiations.

Cross-Cutting Reflections

- **Children, youth, and present and future generations must be written into the text.** The Aid to Negotiations contains no reference to children, youth, young people, or present and future generations, in the Preamble or in any Article. Not one. Many Members have said in their interventions that this treaty is a duty owed to young people and to the generations that follow them. That has not been translated into a single line of text, and YPAN will not treat it as an oversight to be corrected quietly. Consistent with UNEA Resolution 5/14,⁷ we ask that the language be introduced in the Preamble, in Article 2 (Principles and Approaches) through the principle of intergenerational equity, and in the operative provisions on just transition (Article 9), participation (Articles 13.3 and 18.8), and public information and education (Article 17). Our Textual Insertions provide specific language.⁸
- **The current situation is unacceptable, and a treaty adopted on this text would be devastating for young people and future generations.** YPAN engages with the Chair's process in good faith and has said so before. We will not repeat here what we welcomed in August; that has been said, and it has not moved the text. What matters now is where the text stands. The obligations that determine ambition remain bracketed between "shall" and "should." Legacy pollution, just transition, and national plans are drafted as "should," which binds no one. Production, chemicals of concern, and microplastics are absent from the operative text. An instrument adopted on these terms would lock in a rising volume of plastic and its chemicals for the lifetimes of everyone under thirty today, with no obligation on anyone to reverse it. It would fall short of the mandate in UNEA Resolution 5/14, and it would be weaker than the most recent multilateral environmental agreements on the points that matter most. Present and future generations will live with that outcome longest, and they have not consented to it.
- **Observers must be in the room where the text is negotiated.** Decisions in this process are increasingly taken in informal settings from which observers are excluded. YPAN supports, in principle, observer access to informals, and is ready to work with the Chair and the Secretariat on modalities that make it workable, including self-organized stakeholder arrangements that respect the space Members need. Young people are asked to inherit this instrument; they should be able to watch it being written. The admission of

⁷UNEP/EA.5/Res.14, End plastic pollution: towards an international legally binding instrument, 2 March 2022.

⁸Youth Plastic Action Network, Statement on the Aid to Negotiations, 10 August 2026.

observers under COP rules of procedure (Article 18.8) rather than ECOSOC status is the right model for the treaty; the same logic applies to the negotiations that produce it.⁹

- **Omission is not an agreement.** The absence of production, chemicals of concern, and microplastics from the guiding questions does not signal consensus on their removal. The Chair's explanatory note confirms that language without brackets is not agreed and that Members may continue to raise issues they consider important. YPAN's positions on binding upstream reduction, phase-out of fossil fuel and polymer subsidies, and elimination of chemicals of concern across the lifecycle stand.¹⁰
- **Human rights and intergenerational equity belong in the operative text.** The Preamble now recalls the relevant instruments.¹¹ Recalling them is not the same as applying them. A human rights-based approach and intergenerational equity must sit in Article 2 so that they guide obligations rather than decorate them.
- **Global South equity and informal workers remain central.** The heaviest and most systematic burdens of plastic pollution fall on the Global South, SIDS, LDCs, and on informal waste workers, frontline communities, children, and youth. Means of implementation must reach them directly, not only through large intermediaries.¹²

Scope, decision-making, long-term goals, and subsidiary bodies are addressed in the Annex for the Chair's dedicated consultations.

Cluster A

National plans (Article 13); reporting (Article 14); implementation and compliance (Article 12); information exchange (Article 16); effectiveness evaluation (Article 15)

1. What purposes are National Plans expected to serve as a contribution to the achievement of the objectives of the instrument?

- **National Plans should implement internationally agreed obligations, not substitute for them.** Their purpose is to show how each Party will meet common obligations, including on problematic and avoidable products and chemicals of concern, with timelines, milestones, and indicators, and to make visible the support needed to do so.

⁹Youth Plastic Action Network, Statement on the Aid to Negotiations, 10 August 2026.

¹⁰Children and Youth Priorities for INC-5.2, July 2025,
https://docs.google.com/document/d/1EJ8NZfB6_p6Nd0l32NnYu6EhXhH-ANpB42Oa78o66pM/edit?usp=sharing

¹¹Human Rights Council resolution 48/13 (2021) and General Assembly resolution 76/300 (2022) on the human right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment.

¹²Youth Plastic Action Network, Reflections on the Chair's Guiding Questions for the Informal In-Person Heads of Delegation Meeting, 29 June 2026,
https://docs.google.com/document/d/1axeFKOCFbsE5AluoQ2ngm27WaIYjL_n6B5WAh9Ugr4k/edit?usp=sharing

- **Plans are where needs become legible to the financial mechanism.** A plan that identifies implementation, financing, and capacity gaps is what allows support under Articles 10 and 11 to follow identified needs. This is the primary linkage for Article 13.
- **Plans must be built through inclusive processes, and regional cooperation should be strengthened.** Article 13.3 already requires consultation of national stakeholders. YPAN asks that children and youth, Indigenous Peoples, local authorities, and waste pickers be named, and that plans include a rights-based assessment of who bears the harm. Sub-regional and regional plans under Article 13.4 should be more than an encouragement; shared plans are how smaller and less-resourced Parties pool capacity.

In the text: "shall" in Article 13.1, the three-year submission window, the link to reporting, and the stakeholder consultation requirement. By COP decision: the common format, indicators, and guidance under Article 13.6. Interim mandate: preparation of that guidance so plans can be submitted within the window.

2. How could provisions on reporting, implementation and compliance, information exchange, and effectiveness evaluation support the overall implementation of the instrument, and what is the relationship between these articles?

- **The five articles should form one implementation cycle.** Planning (Article 13), reporting (Article 14), review (Article 12), evaluation (Article 15), and updating should operate as a continuous process rather than parallel obligations, with each measure tied to indicators and data sources.
- **The compliance committee needs more than a Party's own account of itself.** Article 12.2 currently limits the committee to a Party's own submissions and COP requests, with Secretariat information from national reports in brackets. YPAN supports unbracketing Article 12.2(c) and allowing the committee to receive information from stakeholders and rights-holders. It also supports retaining "and systemic" in Article 12.3: an implementation gap shared across many Parties is a signal about the instrument, not only about one Party.
- **Reporting should feed compliance and evaluation directly.** Article 15.2 already lists national reports and compliance committee recommendations as inputs to effectiveness evaluation. YPAN supports keeping that chain explicit and adding disaggregated data on human health and human rights outcomes, including for the most exposed groups.
- **What reporting reveals should trigger support.** Reporting and review should surface gaps and capacity needs that lead to targeted financial and technical support, closing the loop between information and action. This is the link between Cluster A and Cluster C.
- **The cycle should strengthen the instrument over time,** with evaluation findings feeding updated plans and future COP decisions, a no-backsliding logic, and an intergenerational lens.

In the text: mandatory reporting, the inputs the compliance committee may use, and the evaluation cycle. By COP decision: formats, periodicity, and modalities under Articles 14.3,

15.3, and 12.4. *Interim mandate: developing reporting formats and evaluation modalities together so COP1 can adopt them as one package.*

3. What will be the role of information exchange in the overall implementation of the instrument and how can it contribute to its effectiveness?

- **Information exchange must reach affected communities, not only States.** The right to information underpins every other plastics-related right. Workers, communities, and rights-holders need access to information on chemical content, exposure pathways, and disposal hazards in local languages and accessible formats.
- **Citizen science and community-generated data should feed the system.** Youth-led mapping of plastic hotspots in drainage channels in Kampala is one example of evidence produced by communities that supports accountability and the identification of accumulation zones under Article 8.¹³ The Article 16 platform should be open to it.
- **Harmonized disclosure of chemical composition belongs in the system.** Shared registers covering production, consumption, and chemicals of concern reduce duplication and support Articles 4, 5, and 17.
- **Transparency should be the default, and health data cannot be a trade secret.** Information relevant to the protection of human health and the environment should not be treated as confidential. Confidentiality provisions should be narrowly defined and consistent with the Stockholm and Rotterdam Conventions, and any guidance should state explicitly that human health and ecotoxicity data cannot be protected as trade secrets.

In the text: a mandatory national focal point and a Secretariat-maintained platform ("shall" in Articles 16.2 and 16.3, currently "encouraged") and a transparency default. By COP decision: platform design and data standards. Interim mandate: platform design so it is operational at entry into force. Article 16 is the connective tissue between Articles 4.5, 5(b), 8, 14, 15, and 17, which is the interconnection the Chair's explanatory note invites Members to develop.

Cluster B

Releases and leakages (Article 6); existing and legacy plastic pollution (Article 8); plastic waste management (Article 7); plastic product design (Article 5); plastic products (Article 4)

1. What considerations should guide decisions on determining which plastic products will require possible global measures, actions or cooperation?

- **Global criteria should lead to internationally agreed lists.** Criteria applied only through voluntary national approaches risk fragmentation and market distortion. Common criteria combined with agreed lists and phase-out timelines reduce divergence while preserving

¹³Drawn from YPAN's structured consultations with young people, 2025 to 2026.

flexibility on implementation. The criteria in Article 4.1 are a sound basis. YPAN supports "one or more of" rather than cumulative application, and retaining criteria (e) on chemicals of concern and (f) on intentionally added microplastics, both currently bracketed.¹⁴

- **The considerations in Article 4.2 are broadly right and should add a rights-based lens.** Necessity, availability of alternatives, best available science, socio-economic impacts, and Indigenous and local knowledge are the correct filters. Impacts on affected communities and rights-holders, including children and youth, should be an explicit consideration.
- **Flexibility should attach to implementation, not to whether to act.** Parties can apply common criteria nationally with provision for essential-use exemptions or extended timeframes, while those ready to move further do so together. "Shall" and "reduce or, where possible, phase out or not allow" are the ambitious options in Article 4.1; "manage" would not deliver the mandate.
- **Design provisions must serve reduction and reuse first, and screen out false solutions.** YPAN's position is reduction, not substitution. Article 5.1(c) on alternatives and non-plastic substitutes should carry a safeguard against bioplastics and oxo-degradables that do not degrade in real conditions, require composting infrastructure that does not exist, or compete with food production.¹⁵

In the text: the criteria, the "shall" obligation, the proposal and listing process in Articles 4.3 and 4.4, and an Annex X with an initial list at adoption. By COP decision: additions to the annex and guidance under Articles 4.6 and 4.7. Interim mandate: the scientific and technical work to prepare the initial Annex X list and the methodology for applying the criteria. Article 4 links to 5 (design), 6 (releases), 7 (waste), 16 (the online platform in Article 4.5), and 14 (reporting).

2. What type of enabling factors should be considered to address existing and legacy plastic pollution, including the process to identify and evaluate the locations or accumulation zones and subsequent remediation efforts?

- **Prevention is the most effective response to legacy pollution.** Reducing future inflows through upstream measures and sound product design must come first, complemented by remediation rather than the reverse. Article 8 only works if Articles 4, 5, and 6 are strong.
- **Identification and evaluation must be transparent, and open to decentralized evidence.** The process for identifying accumulation zones should be public, with methodology and results available through the Article 16 platform, and it should draw on citizen science and community monitoring alongside official data. Communities living

¹⁴Children and Youth Priorities for INC-5.2, July 2025,
https://docs.google.com/document/d/1EJ8NZfB6_p6Nd0l32NnYu6EhXHh-ANpB42Oa78o66pM/edit?usp=sharing

¹⁵Youth Plastic Action Network, Reflections on the Chair's Guiding Questions for the Informal In-Person Heads of Delegation Meeting, 29 June 2026,
https://docs.google.com/document/d/1axeFKOCFbsE5AluoQ2ngm27WaIYjL_n6B5WAh9Ugr4k/edit?usp=sharing

beside accumulation zones usually know where they are before any survey does. YPAN does not ask for a formal recognition regime for community data, which would generate disagreement; it asks that the process not exclude it.

- **Remediation should be rights-based and community-led.** Clean-up and ecosystem restoration should be undertaken in partnership with affected communities, with safeguards so that clean-up does not become a distraction from systemic solutions or a reliance on unproven technological fixes.¹⁶
- **Disaster-resilient infrastructure is now in the text and should be kept.** YPAN welcomes Article 7.2(a). Floods routinely overflow dumping sites and carry plastic into rivers; resilience should apply to waste infrastructure itself, not only to residential areas.
- **Adequate means of implementation are an enabling condition.** Legacy pollution falls hardest on the Global South, SIDS, and LDCs. Predictable financial, technical, and capacity-building support, accessible to community and youth-led organizations, should accompany any legacy provision.

In the text: "shall" in Article 8.1 (currently "should") and the obligations to identify, evaluate, and remediate. By COP decision: guidance under Article 8.2. Interim mandate: a common, transparent methodology for identifying and evaluating accumulation zones. Article 8 links to 16 (data), 10 (finance), and 17 (research).

3. How can Parties cooperate in the implementation of effective waste management policies, taking into account the different national circumstances and needs?

- **Effective waste management starts upstream.** Systems are constrained by the volume and composition of products placed on the market. Phasing out problematic products and chemicals of concern that hinder recycling is a precondition for system-wide effectiveness, which is why Article 7 depends on Article 4. Only 9% of plastic ever produced has been recycled in practice.¹⁷
- **Cooperation should run North-South, South-South, and triangular, through regional hubs.** Article 7.5 programmes of work should be delivered through regional and sub-regional arrangements that pair technical partnerships with finance, so that cooperation is not limited to guidance documents. The regional delivery language already in Article 11.3 should be mirrored here.
- **Plastic waste should not be exported to Parties without the capacity to manage it soundly.** Where the Basel Convention does not apply, Article 7.3 should go beyond "taking

¹⁶Youth Plastic Action Network, Reflections on the Chair's Guiding Questions for the Informal In-Person Heads of Delegation Meeting, 29 June 2026, https://docs.google.com/document/d/1axeFKOCFbsE5AluoQ2ngm27WaIYjL_n6B5WAh9Ugr4k/edit?usp=sharing

¹⁷OECD, Global Plastics Outlook: Economic Drivers, Environmental Impacts and Policy Options (2022); UNEP, Single-Use Plastics: A Roadmap for Sustainability (2018). Both draw on Geyer, Jambeck and Law, "Production, use, and fate of all plastics ever made," Science Advances 3(7), 2017.

into account" international rules and prohibit transboundary movement of plastic waste to Parties lacking environmentally sound management capacity. Cross-border waste trade shifts harm onto those least responsible for it.

- **Informal waste workers must be at the center.** Legal recognition, safe working conditions, fair wages, healthcare access, and inclusion are non-negotiable. Article 7.4 refers to "the different roles of relevant stakeholders"; waste pickers should be named, consistent with the Preamble and Article 9. The ILO estimates more than 15 million people work as waste pickers globally.¹⁸
- **Mandatory, eco-modulated EPR with social safeguards should be required.** Producers should bear financial and operational responsibility for end-of-life management, consistent with the polluter pays principle, including recovery in countries that did not produce the original plastic. Article 7.4 should read "shall establish," not "establish or promote."
- **Harmful treatment technologies should be avoided.** YPAN welcomes the prohibition of open dumping, open burning, and ocean dumping in Article 7.2(d). Cooperation should also steer away from incineration and waste-to-energy approaches that sustain waste generation over prevention and harm human health, including that of waste pickers. Product-specific gaps such as sanitary products and diapers, roughly 90% plastic and without rural disposal infrastructure, need dedicated attention.

In the text: the obligations in Articles 7.1 to 7.4, the waste hierarchy unbracketed in Article 7.2(a), mandatory EPR, and the export limitation. By COP decision: programmes of work and guidance under Article 7.5. Interim mandate: alignment with Basel Convention guidance and preparation of the Article 7.5 programme. Article 7 links to 4, 9 (just transition for waste workers), 10, and 11.

Cluster C

Capacity-building, technical assistance, technology transfer, including international cooperation (Article 11); financial resources and mechanism (Article 10)

On the detailed architecture of the financial mechanism, YPAN aligns with the broad direction expressed by many delegations and observers. Our distinct contribution is to insist that means of implementation reach the youth-led and community-based organizations already implementing solutions on the ground, and that finance be grounded in the polluter pays principle.

¹⁸International Labour Organization, estimates of the global waste picker workforce; see also the International Alliance of Waste Pickers.

1. What elements must be considered to ensure that all available financial sources, including public finance, are effectively mobilized for the implementation of the instrument?

- **Public finance is the foundation, and it should be grant-based and concessional.** Developed country Parties should take the lead ("shall" and "shall take the lead in contributing" in Article 10.7), with high-income producing and consuming countries contributing within their capabilities. Support should not take the form of debt-generating instruments.¹⁹
- **Adequacy should be measured against real implementation and protection.** UNEP's Turning off the Tap report estimates that the systemic shift would require roughly USD 65 billion per year through 2040, against roughly USD 113 billion per year under business as usual.²⁰
- **The problem is direction as much as scale.** Official development finance for solid waste management was only about USD 1.8 billion in 2021, under a tenth of estimated need, while more than 80% of private investment flowed to downstream solutions and emerging markets received only about 6%.²¹ Direct-access windows and simplified modalities should be built in so finance reaches the Global South, upstream action, and youth-led and community organizations.
- **Subsidy reform is a source of finance.** Fossil fuel and polymer subsidies make it cheaper to pollute than to prevent. Repurposing them, alongside EPR revenues, aligns public finance with the objective.²²
- **Whatever structure Members agree for the mechanism, four conditions are non-negotiable.** Resources must be adequate, predictable, and grant-based or concessional (Article 10.5); the mechanism must operate under the guidance of and be accountable to the COP (Article 10.10); its adequacy must be reviewed against an updated needs assessment (Article 10.11); and it must include direct-access modalities that youth-led and community-based organizations can actually use. YPAN takes no position here on the choice between the entities listed in Article 10.4; a mechanism that meets these conditions serves the objective, and one that does not will fail regardless of its architecture.

In the text: the mechanism, grant and concessional terms, the developed country lead, direct access, and COP authority. By COP decision: arrangements between the COP and the entities, the functions of each, and direct-access modalities. Interim mandate: a global needs

¹⁹Youth Plastic Action Network, Reflections on the Chair's Guiding Questions for the Informal In-Person Heads of Delegation Meeting, 29 June 2026,
https://docs.google.com/document/d/1axeFKOCFbsE5AluoQ2ngm27WaIYjL_n6B5WAh9Ugr4k/edit?usp=sharing

²⁰UNEP, Turning off the Tap: How the world can end plastic pollution and create a circular economy (2023).

²¹UNEP, financing analysis on plastic pollution and solid waste management (2026), reporting official development finance for solid waste management of approximately USD 1.8 billion in 2021.

²²Children and Youth Priorities for INC-5.2, July 2025,
https://docs.google.com/document/d/1EJ8NZfB6_p6Nd0l32NnYu6EhXHH-ANpB42Oa78o66pM/edit?usp=sharing

assessment and interim financial arrangements so resources are available at entry into force. Article 10 links to 13 (plans identify need), 14 (reporting reveals gaps), and 11.

2. What role should the private sector have in facilitating the mobilization of financial resources, capacity building and technical assistance, and what elements could be considered under the financial mechanism to promote such a role?

- **The obligations of Member States come first, and private sector language must not dilute them.** YPAN's concern is that the more the instrument says about the private sector as a source of finance, the more room Parties will find to do less themselves. Private contributions are welcome as a complement; they are not a substitute for public obligations and must not be counted against them. YPAN supports the words "complementary and additional" in Article 10.9 and asks that they be unbracketed.
- **Binding rules, not voluntary commitments, are how the private sector is mobilized.** Voluntary corporate action is fragile and easily reversed. Major quick-commerce platforms in India that had shifted to paper packaging reverted entirely to plastic in March 2026.²³ Clear, predictable, legally binding rules provide regulatory certainty and a level playing field, and they remove the first-mover penalty that punishes companies who reduce plastic or invest in take-back systems while competitors use cheaper, non-compliant material.
- **Mandatory due diligence and disclosure should be required.** Human rights due diligence across the full plastics value chain, and corporate disclosure of plastics-related risks, chemical composition, recyclability in practice, and lobbying activities, consistent with the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights.
- **Polluter pays is the element under the mechanism that promotes the right role.** Producer contributions through EPR revenues and polymer fees, channeled to the mechanism, give the private sector a defined financial responsibility rather than an optional one.

In the text: the complementary and additional character of private finance, and the polluter pays basis for producer contributions. By COP decision: any rules for partnerships. Article 10 links to 7.4 (EPR revenues) and 17 (disclosure).

3. What provisions related to technology transfer could foster international cooperation, considering the capacity differences between countries?

- **Transfer should be on concessional and preferential terms.** Of the two bracketed options in Article 11, "on concessional and preferential terms" is the one that benefits developing economies and those most affected by the plastic crisis. "Voluntary and mutually agreed terms" leaves transfer to the market and has not been delivered under other

²³Drawn from YPAN's structured consultations with young people, 2025 to 2026.

instruments. YPAN supports "developing country Parties and Parties with economies in transition" as the beneficiary formulation.

- **Open-source and locally adapted technologies should be a priority.** Transfer should cover the technical knowledge and the conditions for uptake, including affordability and licensing, so that implementation is not constrained by cost. Open-source and low-cost solutions adapted to local conditions reach further than proprietary systems.
- **Capacity-building should be demand-driven and multi-level,** responding to needs identified in national plans, combining global oversight with regional and sub-regional hubs (Article 11.3), and including reskilling and green skills for a just transition rather than regulatory and technical capacity alone.
- **Youth-led and community-based capacity-building has demonstrated reach.** YPAN's MEA Bootcamp, co-created with Dr. Alexandra R. Harrington, has engaged more than 10,000 participants across over 130 countries, including representatives from more than 40 government delegations.²⁴ Articles 11.3 and 11.4 could recognize partnerships with youth-led and community-based organizations as delivery channels. This adds reach at low cost without changing the obligations.
- **Transfer should not export harmful technologies.** Technology transfer under Article 11 should prioritize reduction, reuse, and safe design, and should not be used to export incineration or waste-to-energy capacity.

In the text: the obligation to provide support ("shall" in Article 11.2) and the terms on which it is provided. By COP decision: recommendations on enhancement under Article 11.5. Interim mandate: mapping of needs and of existing initiatives to avoid duplication. Article 11 links to 10, 13, 9, and 16.

Cluster D

Preamble; objective (Article 1); principles and approaches (Article 2); definitions (Article 3); just transition (Article 9); public information, awareness, education and research (Article 17); Secretariat (Article 20); final provisions (Articles 21 to 31)

1. Which principles and approaches could be useful in guiding the effective implementation of the instrument, and how could these be best reflected in the instrument?

- **A core set of principles should guide the whole instrument.** The precautionary principle, the polluter pays principle, the waste hierarchy, a human rights-based approach, and intergenerational equity, together with lifecycle thinking and nature-positive approaches. Article 2(b) currently places precaution and polluter pays inside a bracketed Rio Declaration clause. YPAN supports unbracketing it and adding intergenerational equity, a human rights-based approach, and the waste hierarchy as standalone subparagraphs.

²⁴Children and Youth Major Group to UNEP, MEA Bootcamp, <https://www.cymgenv.net/mea-bootcamp>

Intergenerational equity is already an operative principle in the Escazú Agreement and appears in the Paris Agreement preamble; Members will recognize the pattern.²⁵

- **Principles should be signposted in the Preamble and embedded operatively.** The Preamble sets the interpretive frame. Principles, being operative in nature, belong in Article 2 and within substantive provisions so they guide obligations rather than remain declaratory. This division reduces repetition and enhances coherence.
- **The Preamble should characterize plastic accurately.** YPAN supports unbracketing the recital recognizing that current levels of production and consumption are unsustainable and exceed waste management capacities, and asks that the Preamble recognize plastic as a pollutant rather than framing it only by its utility.
- **Health belongs in the Objective.** YPAN supports retaining "[human health and]" and "[based on a comprehensive approach that addresses the full life cycle of plastics]" in Article 1, consistent with UNEA Resolution 5/14. Micro and nanoplastics have been found in human blood and in the placenta.²⁶
- **Just transition should be an obligation, plural, and lifecycle-wide.** YPAN welcomes the recognition of informal workers, waste pickers, and small-scale fishers in Article 9. The article should read "shall" rather than "should," extend to communities and workers affected by primary polymer production, and anchor to the ILO just transition framework and the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, with direct access to finance including micro-finance for those most affected. Children and youth should be named among the disproportionately impacted groups.
- **The precautionary principle should reverse the burden of proof.** Industry should be required to demonstrate safety before a product or chemical reaches the market, rather than communities having to demonstrate harm after exposure. In practice this means rigorous, independent toxicological assessment and lifecycle environmental impact analysis at the product design stage, under Articles 4 and 5.

In the text: the principles in Article 2, health in Article 1, and a mandatory just transition in Article 9. By COP decision: guidance on just transition implementation and on assessment methodologies. Article 2 governs the reading of every other article; Article 9 links directly to 7, 10, and 11.

²⁵Intergenerational equity appears as an operative principle in Article 3 of the Escazú Agreement (2018) and in the preamble of the Paris Agreement (2015); UNFCCC Article 3.1 refers to the benefit of present and future generations.

²⁶Leslie et al., "Discovery and quantification of plastic particle pollution in human blood," *Environment International* 163 (2022); Ragusa et al., "Plasticenta: First evidence of microplastics in human placenta," *Environment International* 146 (2021).

2. How can actions related to public information, awareness, education, and research support implementation?

- **Plastics must be framed as a human rights and health issue, not a cleanliness issue.** Framing determines whether behavioral change occurs. India's Swachh Bharat Abhiyan shifted attitudes on general waste but had limited impact on plastic because it was framed around cleanliness.²⁷ YPAN supports retaining "[and facilitates access to information]" and "[including risks to human health]" in Article 17.1.
- **Awareness, education, and research should be eligible for finance.** These are enabling activities to be resourced through the financial mechanism and the polluter pays principle, including EPR revenues, so that the cost of communicating risk falls on producers rather than exposed communities.
- **Education should be embedded in curricula.** Member States should embed environmental education on plastics in school curricula, consistent with UNEA Resolution 7/6 on the meaningful participation of youth in environmental processes and on environmental education.²⁸ Children and youth should be named in Article 17 as both audiences and implementers.
- **Trusted local structures and community data should anchor delivery.** Community leaders, women's groups, youth networks, and informal workers are effective entry points, and community-generated data strengthens advocacy and local accountability.
- **The right to know should be operationalized through disclosure.** Harmonized disclosure of material composition and chemical content along the full lifecycle, supported by accessible databases, enables informed choice at scale.

In the text: the obligations in Articles 17.1 and 17.2, health, and access to information. By COP decision: programmes and cooperation arrangements. Article 17 links to 16 (platform), 5(b) (information on materials and additives), and 10 (finance for enabling activities).

3. Considering the progress achieved so far in the discussions related to issues such as the Secretariat and definitions, does the current formulation in the Aid to Negotiations reflect the level of detail required?

- **Definitions: the current formulation does not reflect the level of detail required.** Article 3 defines only "Party" and "regional economic integration organization." Terms that determine the reach of obligations require definition in the text for legal clarity and predictability, while technical terms can be elaborated by COP decision. From YPAN's priorities, the terms that determine reach include the full life cycle of plastics, chemicals of

²⁷Drawn from YPAN's structured consultations with young people, 2025 to 2026.

²⁸UNEP/EA.7/Res.6 on the meaningful participation of youth in environmental processes and on environmental education (2025).

concern, and problematic and avoidable plastic products. If children and youth are written into the operative text, as YPAN asks, the instrument will also need to say whom it means.

- **Secretariat: the functions are broadly standard, and the participation link matters most to YPAN.** YPAN welcomes observer admission through the Secretariat under COP rules of procedure (Article 18.8).²⁹ Article 20.2 could facilitate the participation of stakeholders and rights-holders, including children and youth, among the Secretariat's functions.

Annex: Issues for the Chair's Dedicated Consultations

Scope; decision-making; long-term goals; subsidiary body or bodies

- **Scope.** Consistent with UNEA Resolution 5/14, the instrument should address the full lifecycle of plastics from extraction and polymer production onward, including legacy pollution. Of the four options in the scope placeholder, YPAN supports a combination: a short standalone article confirming full lifecycle scope, reflected through the operative provisions, without a negative list. A negative list would turn scope into a carve-out exercise.³⁰
- **Decision-making.** Consensus should remain the preferred approach, but voting procedures are necessary when consensus is exhausted so that the instrument can function, evolve, and avoid lowest-common-denominator outcomes. YPAN supports retaining the bracketed paragraph in Article 18.5 providing for a three-fourths majority as a last resort.³¹
- **Long-term goals.** YPAN supports a global, binding reduction target for primary plastic polymer production, consistent with our published priorities, and a date-bound objective against which effectiveness evaluation under Article 15 can measure progress.³²
- **Subsidiary body or bodies.** The body established under Article 19 should rest on independent science with clear conflict-of-interest safeguards, integrate Indigenous, traditional, and local knowledge, and be able to advise on listings under Article 4 and on evaluation under Article 15.

For more information or questions about this document, contact admin@ypanplastics.com or YPAN Interim Chair Shellan Saling at ssaling2013@gmail.com.

To learn more about YPAN, visit <https://www.cymgenv.net/ypan> or <https://linktr.ee/ypanplastics>

²⁹Youth Plastic Action Network, Statement on the Aid to Negotiations, 10 August 2026.

³⁰Children and Youth Priorities for INC-5.2, July 2025,

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1EJ8NZfB6_p6Nd0l32NnYu6EhXHh-ANpB42Oa78o66pM/edit?usp=sharing

³¹Youth Plastic Action Network, Reflections on the Chair's Guiding Questions for the Informal In-Person Heads of Delegation Meeting, 29 June 2026,

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1axeFKOCFbsE5AluoQ2ngm27WaIYjL_n6B5WAh9Ugr4k/edit?usp=sharing

³²Children and Youth Priorities for INC-5.2, July 2025,

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1EJ8NZfB6_p6Nd0l32NnYu6EhXHh-ANpB42Oa78o66pM/edit?usp=sharing