Opening statement

By Health and Environment Justice Support (HEJSupport), Swedish Society for Nature Conservation (SSNC), groundwork South Africa GroundWorkSA)

The future plastic treaty has a unique opportunity to become the first multilateral agreement with legally binding and globally harmonised requirements for transparency of information on chemicals and polymers in plastic materials and products and traceability of this information in individual products across the entire lifecycle of plastics and for all stakeholders in the value chain. If this opportunity is realised, the treaty will not duplicate but rather complement the existing agreements on chemicals and waste.

The need to control hazardous chemicals in plastics and include transparency of information about chemicals and polymers in plastics are among the critical requirements included in country submissions prepared for INC 2. To address countries’ concerns, the options paper for the plastic treaty now reflects countries‘ suggestions and includes options for increasing chemical transparency as part of possible core obligations.

To move this initiative forward it is essential to realize that a mandatory and globally harmonized chemical transparency mechanism should be developed and it should go hand in hand with traceability of chemicals in individual products. Both are a necessary preconditions for a toxic-free circular plastics economy and resource efficiency. In fact, chemical transparency and traceability are the foundation of the treaty as decision making on nearly all its elements depends on this information.

How should the transparency and traceability requirements be reflected in the Plastic Treaty?

• First of all, we suggest including an article or an overarching target on transparency and traceability of chemicals and polymers in plastics in the core text of the treaty that will ensure that the requirements for information transparency are

  o Globally harmonized
  o Legally binding
  o Address the full lifecycle of plastics
o **Make this information available and accessible to everyone in the value chain**

To ensure efficient implementation of an article/target on transparency and traceability of chemicals, it is important to set up control measures/means of implementation, including:

- An Annex on a globally harmonized transparency mechanism that includes thresholds for disclosure depending on how chemicals are considered, for example, based on grouping; The mechanism should also include criteria for the identification of chemicals/groups of chemicals of concern to disclose. In the case of full information disclosure of all chemicals in plastics, only thresholds are needed.
- A Database that includes data about chemicals in individual materials and products, to facilitate informed decision making for all life stages of plastic and for all stakeholders in the value chain. This necessitates traceability of chemicals in individual materials and products based on transparency requirements.
- An Annex describing the approach towards chemical disclosure in plastic materials and products should be developed. It should answer questions as, for example, WHO should disclose information (everyone along the supply chain)? HOW should it be done (using the mechanism with criteria already identified by the UNEP Chemicals in Products Programme, complemented by criteria to disclose information on polymers, and disclosure concentration thresholds)? WHERE and HOW will information be stored (online public database)? WHO will be the host of the data (The Secretariat of treaty, IOMC, OECD, etc.)?

Detailed information about harmonized transparency mechanism for chemicals in manufactured solid materials and products is available at [https://www.globalchemicaltransparency.org/](https://www.globalchemicaltransparency.org/)

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