Submission part B
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Group 1 proposed intersessional work:

Contact Group 1:

A. Objective(s):

Accelerate the management and utilization of plastics while protecting human health and the environment and continue contributing to the sustainable development.

B. Core Obligations:

- Primary plastic polymers have become a cornerstone of modern society, driving innovation in many industries. Phasing out their supply or demand would not only stifle technological advancements but also risk economic growth and stability, as they have proven to be versatile, durable and cost effective. Therefore, focusing on responsible production, consumption, and recycling should be our priority, rather than eliminating a material that has proven indispensable for countless applications.

- Implementing bans on specific plastic types could yield adverse consequences for the global recycling sector:

  A. Reduce in demand for recycled materials: If banned plastics were previously recycled and used as raw material in new products, the ban would reduce the value of demand for these recycled materials, leading to a drop in the value of recyclable waste and negatively impacting the recycling industry.

  B. Loss of recycling capacity: If a significant portion of the recycling industry relies on the recycling of said banned plastics, the ban would lead to loss in recycling capacity, jobs, and large-scale reconstruction of the industry resulting to economic and environmental setback.

  C. Increased demand for alternative materials: A ban on certain plastics may result in an increased demand for alternative materials, some of which are not easily recyclable. This could lead to new waste management challenges and potentially hinder recycling efforts.
- Saudi Arabia advocates for a systematic reliance on scientific evidence when evaluating potentially harmful chemicals or polymers. Several Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs) address the issue of hazardous chemicals and polymers, such as the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs), the Basel Convention on the technical guidelines for sound management of plastics waste. These agreements aim to protect human health and the environment from the harmful effects of these substances by promoting their reduction which has led to positive outcomes in reducing the impacts of chemicals and polymers of concern. Synergies and coordination among MEAs can enhance the effectiveness of measures to reduce the production, consumption, and use of chemicals and polymers of concern.

- Microfibers and microplastics are two different types of small particles that can have negative impacts on the environment.

- Microfibers are tiny strands of synthetic materials, such as polyester or nylon, that are commonly found in clothing, textiles, and household items like carpets and upholstery. When these items are washed or used, microfibers can shed and enter the water system. They are so small that they can pass through wastewater treatment plants and end up in rivers, lakes, and oceans. These microfibers can be ingested by aquatic organisms and potentially work their way up the food chain, causing harm to marine life. On the other hand, microplastics are small plastic particles, typically measuring less than 5 millimeters in size. They can come from a variety of sources, including the breakdown of larger plastic items, microbeads in personal care products, and industrial processes. Microplastics are pervasive in the environment and have been found in oceans, rivers, soil, and even in the air we breathe. They can have harmful effects on marine life and ecosystems when ingested or when they accumulate in the environment.

- Both microfibers and microplastics pose environmental concerns due to their persistence, potential for ingestion by wildlife, and their ability to transport harmful substances. Efforts are being made to mitigate their release into the environment, improve wastewater treatment processes, and develop more sustainable materials and practices to minimize their impact.

- Enhancing waste management capacity and promoting innovation requires access to advanced recycling technologies and the setting of ambitious national targets for managing and reducing plastic waste generation. Recycling technologies improve waste collection rates, recycling efficiency, and reduce environmental pollution. National targets drive innovation, promote a circular economy, and establish a sense of urgency for collective action. Together, these measures contribute to a sustainable future with effective waste management and environmental protection.
- We support the options for regulating plastic waste, however we think Chemical recycling shall not be Prohibited. Chemical Recycling is an evolving field, and a complementary technology to mechanical recycling for certain plastic waste types. therefore, we DO NOT prohibiting any recycling options for members.

- We reject the notion of imposing obligations directly on producers, as this is a process steered by the involved parties. Instead, the emphasis should remain on individual parties formulating plans that align with the National determined Plans by each party.

- Requirement for polymer producers: While requiring polymer producers to invest in recycling facilities is a commendable idea, it would be more effective to encourage a broader range of stakeholders to contribute to the development of recycling infrastructure.

- Establishing best available technologies for recycling is essential, but linking them directly to the Paris Agreement or principles of sustainable banking and investment might create confusion. Instead, it is crucial to set clear, specific criteria for sustainable waste management technologies.

- Saudi Arabia emphasizes the importance of productive and efficient designs that enable the circularity of plastic waste. We support establishing national requirements for design criteria. However, the proposed global harmonized system and methodologies may not effectively accommodate the diverse needs and contexts of individual countries, potentially leading to subpar waste management outcomes and unintended consequences. A global harmonized system will not adequately address the diverse needs and contexts of different countries, and implementing tailored national design strategies for circularity will ensure more effective and sustainable outcomes in managing plastic waste.

- Saudi Arabia, recognize the benefits of promoting the circularity of plastic waste, we believe that it is crucial for each member state to establish their own reasonable targets, while considering their unique circumstances and capacities.

- Saudi Arabia supports the need for design criteria to enable circularity under national circumstances, which includes efforts to investigate means to reuse and repair plastic products and prioritizes for the reduction of environmental harms, including the marine life.

- Saudi Arabia requests further clarification on the governing body that will develop and adopt the guidelines, as efforts to produce a legally binding instrument is compromised by all member states, and the vagueness of the “governing body” hinder individual sovereignty.
- Saudi Arabia would like to note that plastic products continue to provide durable, cost-effective, and efficient options to global delivery services compared to other alternatives, including but not limited to large scale shipments and movement of goods and food. Saudi reiterates its commitment to exploring sustainable means to reuse plastic products.

- Harmonized product design standards, certifications and requirements, including for certain plastic products and packaging should be nationally determined.

- With relation to encourage reduction and reuse of plastic products, including fees, tariffs or tax incentives, EPR schemes, deposit refund schemes and product take-back, right-to-repair requirements and remove trade barriers.” Saudi Arabia does not support a standardized utilization of tariffs or tax incentive, EPR schemes as each member state must assess its own capacity and circumstance through individual plans.

- Plastic pollution drives mainly from mismanagement of plastic products when its turn to waste. This can be achieved by Reduction of plastic leakage through waste minimization. Waste minimization measures based on national circumstances should reduce the leakage of plastics from the waste phase. In addition, special care should be taken to reduce the release of plastics to the environment from the unintended loss of plastic products, such as fishing gear, plastic pellets and artificial turf. Most of these losses occur in the use phase of products, the loss of pellets may also occur in the production, transport, and storage phases. The leakage of plastics from the production, transport and use phase can be addressed through various regulatory measures based on national circumstances.

- Informal Sectors: The informal sector, including individuals and small enterprises, is involved in the collection of plastic wastes. Collection of recyclables takes place from all possible places where access is possible. Informal sector plays an important rule in many countries. Saudi Arabia does not support establishing any requirements to use fees specifically from EPR schemes to fund an upgrade of infrastructure and technical and management skills for informal waste pickers to function as waste collection and sorting companies as depends on national circumstances and national strategy.

- Plastic plays a significant role in safeguarding human health, and the entire world has seen a clear example during the COVID-19 pandemic. Plastics also play a major role in medical equipment, food safety, protective gear, temporary and permanent housing, and even in reducing greenhouse gas emissions through insulation.

- Evaluation and research on risks must take into account the positive impact of plastics, and through a scientific approach, which also compares it to proposed alternatives.
We support Promoting cooperation, collaboration and exchange of information with the World Health Organization, the International Labour Organization and other intergovernmental organizations.

**Polymers and chemicals of concern and on possibly problematic plastics:**

*Recalling the UNEA resolution 5/14 Para.3. (K) To promote cooperation and coordination with relevant regional and international conventions, instruments and organizations, while recognizing their respective mandates, avoiding duplication, and promoting complementarity of action.*

On this regard, Basel convention has work intensively on developing a detailed document on technical guidelines on the environmentally sound management of plastic wastes which has been recently updated and adopted by parties in COP16 that discussed the topics of Polymers and chemicals of concern and on problematic plastics in details including but not limited to the following related topics:

- Types of plastics, additives and processing ads.
- Guidance on environmentally sound management (ESM) of plastic wastes
- Identification and inventories, examples:
  - Identification of plastic wastes sources
  - Identification of hazardous [and non-hazardous] plastic wastes

In order to achieve the ambitious timeline in resolution 5/14 for completing the INC’s mandate, there should be utilization of current work without duplication of the effort's mandates of the other conventions and bodies.

**Additional Matters**

1. Identification of core obligations that have not worked in some countries and works well with others, based on the principle of the importance of national circumstances and capacity.

2. Identifications of the positive of primary plastic to become a cornerstone of modern society and meeting sustainable development goals.

3. Identification of the links between responsible production, consumption and the needs for primary plastic

4. Identification of negative social, economic, and environmental impacts of shifting to alternative materials

5. Identification of existing multilateral environmental agreement (MEAs) that addresses chemicals, polymers of concern, additives.

7. Identification of scientific based evidence gaps as well as gaps in MEAs addressing chemicals, polymers of concern, additives.

8. Identification of all scientific evidence approach of all aspects related to microplastic and microfibers that reflects its importance as well as environmental, social and economic aspects.

9. Identification the reasons why plastic pollutions derives mainly.

10. Identification of advanced recycling technologies, such as chemical recycling to advanced recycling technologies and the setting of ambitious national targets for managing and reducing plastic waste generation.

11. Identification of side effects and negative sides if inclusion of core obligations that does not meet the national circumstances, capacity and national action plan of parties.

12. Acknowledging the importance to work on the new technical guidelines for environmentally sounds management of plastic waste and its role to strengthening waste management for plastic.

13. Identification of legacy plastic waste and sources of these sites.

14. Identification the importance of productive and efficient designs that enable the circularity of plastic waste to ends plastic pollution in a way to establishing national requirements for design criteria.

15. Exploring means to reuse plastic products acknowledging that plastic products continue to provide durable, cost-effective, and efficient options to global delivery services compared to other alternatives, including but not limited to large scale shipments and movement of goods and food.

16. Identification of means to legalize informal sectors and pickers during plastic ends of life cycle.

17. Saudi Arabia believes that Plastic pollution drives mainly from mismanagement of plastic products when its turn to waste, identify the measures based on national circumstances and capacity to avoid that.

18. Identification the main causes of leakage of plastic to the environment.

19. Evaluation of positive impact of plastic when conducting lifecycle and takes into account the social and economic aspects.
Inclusion of Microplastics in intersessional Work:

The issue of microplastics is still underrepresented in academic literature, demands attention and inclusion in our inter-sessional work. As we strive to understand the multifaceted impact of these micro-particles, we must investigate into their origins, the levels of exposure in various environments, and the potential risks associated with them. A crucial aspect of this endeavor is quantifying their actual impact on the environment. This is a necessary step towards identifying viable and practical solutions. One such approach could be the redesign of plastic products to enhance their durability and resistance to fragmentation, thereby reducing the generation of microplastics. This, however, is just one potential solution out of many we need to explore and evaluate. By integrating the study of microplastics into our inter-sessional work, we are not only positioning ourselves to better understand this pervasive pollutant but also equipping ourselves to develop effective solutions. This initiative underscores our commitment to address complex environmental challenges and our dedication to stewarding a sustainable future.

Contact group 2 intersessional work:

Means of Implementation:

1- National Action Plans (NAPs):
National Action Plans shall serve as the main obligation and the backbone for all parties involved, providing a roadmap for each party to contribute towards achieving the objectives of the instrument. Many Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs) depend on actions determined at the National level; hence this bottom-up approach is necessary in achieving the intended goal of minimizing plastic pollution.

These plans should be developed with consideration to the national circumstances of each nation. In the process of developing these policies, it is recommended that states take into account the potential 12 core obligations list proposed by the secretariat, treating them as a valuable policy toolkit that can be tailored to their specific circumstances, recognizing no one size fits all. The primary focus of these plans should be to promote sustainable production and consumption of plastic, enhance plastic’s design for circularity in a way that safeguards human health and the environment, and strengthen the environmentally sound management of plastic waste.

2- Awareness-raising, education, and exchange of information:
Saudi Arabia believes that the most effective way to introduce a robust solution to address plastic waste pollution is by enabling end-users to garner further knowledge on their waste management practices. Therefore, the Kingdom also supports the notion of awareness-raising, education, and the exchange of information as part of the legally binding instrument.

The INC may also consider the role of unbiased, scientifically based entities to act as a buffer and raise awareness on plastic pollution at a grander scale. We recognize the role stakeholder engagement may play in awareness-raising as they can demonstrate advancements in waste management technologies, and developments in research that allow for more sustainable uses of plastic products. Furthermore, the instrument should encourage Parties and other relevant stakeholders to prioritize exchanging of information (including but not limited to: waste management solutions, technologies, and policies) to foster an international community that can utilize technology and innovation collectively.
3- **Stakeholder engagement:**
Saudi Arabia believes that in order to create a holistic mechanism to address plastic waste pollution, stakeholders from across the value chain (including, packaging, food & Beverages (F&B) industry and informal sector workers) must be involved in the creation of an internationally binding instrument. In that regard, the Kingdom urges that stakeholders involved in the treaty vary in background, geography, and industrial expertise to allow for a holistic approach to address plastic waste pollution.

In order for us to carefully address the concerns of all affected communities, we support the accreditation of stakeholders at the UNEP to allow for a platform to assist in the articulation of the scope and/or implementation of the instrument. Further, we recognize the importance of stakeholders’ views as to provide crucial context, knowledge, and experiences to the instrument that would lead to a more balanced outcome that considers the potential trade-offs that the global community would face.

The instrument should support the inclusion of a proactive and innovative agenda for multi-stakeholder engagement, to allow for greater mobilization by the Parties and global community to address the challenge. The agenda could potentially include:

- Promote the exchange of knowledge, technology, and expertise.
- Raising awareness across a wide variety of audiences
- Promote stakeholder involvement in subsidiary bodies articulating the instrument.
- Enable existing stakeholder initiatives aiming to address plastic waste pollution.
- Promote the exchange of reliable and factual data concerning plastics, including alternatives.

4- **Research and Analysis.**
Research is one of the key elements of the treaty and its future application, the below list are some topics that Saudi Arabia is interested in exploring:

- Conduct comprehensive research to understand the unique challenges and characteristics of downstream plastic pollution.
- Analyze the potential of various innovative technologies to address downstream plastic pollution.
- Review existing national action plans related to plastic pollution and identify best practices.
- Use nationally specific customized modeling tools and methodologies to identify and monitor plastic pollution hotspots and use it to measure socio-economic variables to project/forecast locations where reliable data is not available.
- Utilizing modeling tools to identify plastic pollution hotspots to provide precise data about the accumulation of plastic waste, enabling more focused and effective clean-up operations, ultimately contributing to the protection of our environment and marine life.

5- **Capacity building:**
Identification of all aspects related to capacity building needed for developing countries as well as vulnerable countries from developed countries,

**Compliance:**
Compliance on implementation can better be designed after there is clarity on the obligations set in the treaty, compliance must be effective and efficient, with a clear process.

**Reporting:**
Reporting will be an important part of the treaty to help reach the objective of the treaty, but the details of reporting are too early to be given and can designed by the governing bodies. Important elements of reporting should be:

- Non-intrusive
- Does not create burden on developing countries.
- Designed by the countries to be catered to each set of actions.

**Plastic Waste Management:**
Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee (INC) will have a key in advancing the agenda and implementing actions towards effective plastic waste management. Some of the areas where intercessional work can have substantial impact:

1. **Policy Development and Review:** INC members have the authority to review, revise, and develop new policies related to plastic waste management. This process should incorporate the latest scientific findings, align with international best practices, and consider diverse stakeholder input.

2. **International Cooperation:** Facilitate intergovernmental dialogues and collaborations to explore regulations, share successful strategies, and initiate joint actions for plastic waste management.

3. **Advanced Pyrolysis Technology:** Advocate for the research, development, and implementation of advanced pyrolysis technology in plastic waste management. Pyrolysis, a thermochemical process, can convert plastic waste into valuable resources like fuel, electricity, and heat. This technology, while promising, requires regulatory support, financial investment, and public-private partnerships to be effectively integrated into waste management systems.

4. **Sustainable Design Advocacy:** Promote the redesign of products to minimize plastic waste, increase recyclability, or replace plastics with more environmentally friendly materials. This can be achieved through regulations, incentives, or industry collaborations.

5. **Public Engagement:** Develop strategies for public involvement in policy-making and increase awareness about plastic waste management, including the benefits of advanced pyrolysis technology. This can entail public consultations, educational campaigns, or community initiatives.

6. **Capacity Building:** Support the strengthening of institutional capacities for plastic waste management, including the technical skills needed to operate and maintain advanced pyrolysis facilities. This could involve facilitating training sessions, providing resources, or assisting in the implementation of best practices.

7. **Stakeholder Collaboration:** Foster strong collaborations between governments, the private sector, NGOs, and academia to pool resources and expertise in tackling plastic waste. This collaboration is especially critical in advancing new technologies like pyrolysis.
By focusing on these areas, INC committee members can significantly contribute to global plastic waste management strategies and the promotion of innovative recycling technologies, advancing our journey towards a more sustainable future.

**Extended producer responsibility:**

Our proposition entails empowering local authorities within each nation with the responsibility of formulating suitable EPR regulations in line with their available resources, while also taking into account the complete value chain. This approach offers several benefits such as:

1. **Customized Solutions:** Local authorities possess a heightened understanding of the specific requirements, obstacles, and assets of their respective regions. Enabling them to craft EPR frameworks tailored to their circumstances can result in more efficient and effective solutions.

2. **Adaptability:** Given the diversity in development levels, industrial landscapes, waste management practices, and available resources across different countries, allowing local authorities to shape appropriate legislation can accommodate these variations.

3. **Flexibility to Evolve:** Local authorities can adjust EPR systems over time to accommodate shifting circumstances, technological progress, and changes in waste streams.

4. **Enhanced Engagement:** Collaboration with local authorities can foster broader involvement from stakeholders such as industries, consumer collectives, and environmental non-governmental organizations. This inclusivity can lead to well-rounded and equitable policies.