Agenda item 4. Preparation of an international instrument

Statement by The Pew Charitable Trusts

INC3

13 November 2023
Plastic pollution is a rapidly increasing environmental crisis. Projections estimate the flow of plastic into the environment will nearly double by 2040, to 49 Tonnes per year, severely impacting human health, livelihoods and natural ecosystems while associated GHG emissions will increase to 3.1 Gigatonnes CO2.

Maintaining the status quo is not an option.

Achieving the goal of ending plastic pollution will require that the instrument take a full life cycle approach—encompassing its production, use, and end-of-life management – and should include environmental and human health considerations and ensure a just transition for impacted populations.

Fundamental to the success of the instrument will be ambitious, legally binding measures that provide clear obligations for contracting parties and a coherent, unified framework for businesses.

In particular, reducing the supply of primary plastic polymers needs to be a critical measure in the instrument, as it has been found to yield the biggest reduction in plastic pollution.

Additional ambitious upstream measures, such as preventing microplastic emissions, are also welcomed.

Overall, Pew strongly supports the options put forward in the zero draft where obligations are agreed at the international level, rather than options where parties’ contribution towards the agreed objectives would be determined at the national level.

This latter approach would create a patchwork of different national regulations rather than a coherent international framework and would significantly undermine the instruments' ability to deliver meaningful change and the goal of ending plastic pollution.

Pew would like to take this opportunity to offer our support to governments in your efforts to deliver on the objective of UNEA resolution 5/14 this week and over the coming months.

Thank you.