

Meeting of the Bureau of the ad hoc open-ended expert group on marine litter and microplastics
Wednesday 25 March 2020, 15:30 to 16:30 (GMT+3)
Virtual meeting, organized from the United Nations Office in Nairobi

MEETING SUMMARY

Agenda and background documentation is available on the [meeting portal](#).

Agenda item 1: Opening of the meeting and adoption of the agenda.

1. The Chair welcomed Bureau members, the Secretariat and Mr. Carlos Garcia, Permanent Representative of Peru to the UN in Geneva to the meeting and the Bureau adopted the draft annotated Agenda.

Agenda item 2: Consideration of alternative dates for the 4th meeting of the expert group.

2. The Chair recalled the communication made by the Government of Peru on 18 March to the Secretariat requesting to postpone the fourth meeting of the expert group as a result of careful consideration of the current situation regarding the COVID19 pandemic, guidance provided by the UNEP Secretariat, and a COVID risk assessment conducted by the Peruvian authorities. In addition, the Chair explained that the decision was adopted by the Government of Peru considering the rapid increase of cases and countries affected worldwide, as well as the travel restrictions and quarantine measures imposed by numerous countries.
3. The Chair thanked the Government of Peru for their continued support and thanked the Government of Peru for their readiness to identify suitable dates to hold the meeting in the future, once the COVID19 situation has been stabilized.
4. The Chair invited the Secretariat to present a briefing prepared for Agenda Item 2: on consideration of alternative dates for the fourth meeting of the expert group and on suggestions on how to make best use of the intersessional period up until the next expert group meeting.
5. The Secretariat presented the briefing note and clarified that the briefing is to be used as an initial suggestion for further consideration, as the Bureau might need more time to make a decision on future dates for the expert group. The Secretariat highlighted the following points:
 - Dates presented take into consideration other meetings taking place in August and September.
 - Postponement of the fourth meeting of the expert group could potentially impact the dates for the fifth meeting.
 - For the intersessional period, the Chair may wish to develop a non-paper outlining potential elements of emerging consensus that could then be subject to written inputs by Member States experts, in preparation for the next expert group meeting.
 - The second option for the intersessional period, which is complementary to the first option, is to improve the quality and ownership of the working documents through a set of webinars and by encouraging additional member States submissions, in particular with

regards to stocktaking (subparagraph 7a of UNEA resolution 4/6) and inventory of technical and financial resources or mechanisms (subparagraph 7b) . As for the methodology for analysis of the effectiveness (subparagraph 7d) , additional webinars would offer an opportunity to discuss the pilot studies requested as part of the documentation. With regards to response options (subparagraph 10d), up to three webinars could be organized to offer an opportunity for submitters in different time zones to present their submissions.

6. The Chair thanked the Secretariat for the presentation on the briefing note and invited Mr. Carlos Garcia to provide additional information on behalf of the Government of Peru.
7. Mr. Garcia thanked the Chair and the Bureau for the opportunity to participate as host country representative and for the summary of their communication from the 18 of March with regards to postponing the fourth meeting of the expert group. Mr. Garcia also reiterated that the Government of Peru remains committed to the success of the process of the expert group and stands ready to identify with the Bureau possible dates to hold the fourth meeting of the expert group once the COVID19 situation has been stabilized. Mr. Garcia clarified that at more time was needed to identify such a date. Nevertheless, at this stage, a slight preference was expressed for the dates in September.
8. The Bureau agreed to notify member States on the decision to postpone the fourth meeting of the expert group as a result of the ongoing COVID19 pandemic, noted that at it will need more time to consider possible alternative dates.
9. The Bureau also agreed maintain a momentum and engagement among experts during the intersessional period, welcomed the suggestions made by the Secretariat in the background paper to this end.
10. The Chair requested the Secretariat to provide more information on the feasibility of holding the next expert group meeting online by virtual means, also considering the need to ensure equitable participation by participants from different regions and the necessary technological requirements.
11. The Secretariat informed the Bureau that:
 - It will currently not be possible to organize a 5 day expert meeting with interpretation online.
 - Online meetings do not necessarily contradict rules and procedures, but may undermine principles of openness, transparency and equity.
 - However, it would be possible to organize smaller meetings with the participation of technical experts (for example with regional groups with less than 100 participants) to consider draft working documents.
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 - If the Bureau supports the suggestion of organizing webinars, the Secretariat could provide a roadmap with concrete dates and timings to advance on the documentation during the intersessional period.
12. The Chair concluded that the fourth meeting of the expert group will be postponed until further notice and requested the Secretariat to develop a roadmap highlighting how experts can participate in webinars and other virtual means during the intersessional period. In addition, the Chair will consider the proposal to develop a balanced non-paper with potential elements

of emerging consensus. Finally, the Chair recommended that the Bureau will revert to the issue of possible dates for the fourth meeting of the expert group at a later stage.

Agenda item 3: Update on current status of preparations for the 4th meeting of the expert group.

13. The Chair congratulated the Secretariat for the hard work in providing draft working documents within the requested timeframe and invited the Secretariat to provide a brief update.
14. The Secretariat highlighted that a [one-stop-shop website](#) has been made available online, consolidating all relevant documentation and submissions from member States and stakeholders.
15. The Secretariat provided the following detailed update on the draft working documents:
 - Voluntary inputs to the report on **stocktaking** captures phase 1 from December 2019 to February 2020 and includes analysis from what was received through the survey as well as incorporation of the G20 template content . The submissions made through the survey will become available at a later stage through a “dashboard” which is yet to be developed. Lastly, submissions through the stocktaking survey remain open, and the planned webinars will encourage additional submissions.
 - **Technical and financial resources or mechanisms** incorporates submissions through the stocktaking survey in addition to interviews and desk reviews as requested in the AHEG-3 outcome document. The draft summarizes the findings and will be complemented later by analysis, recommendations and conclusions.
 - **Methodology for analysis of effectiveness** includes recommendations from a webinar held on 17 February and submissions made after the webinar. The way forward for this working document is to identify and carry out the pilot studies and continue working on indicators.
 - **Response options** is currently available as a draft outline, organized as a thematic summary.
16. The Secretariat invited the Bureau to provide guidance and feedback on the draft working documents, in particular with regard to the Response options outline, by **3 April**.
17. The Bureau appreciated that G20 inputs contributed to the stocktaking exercise asked for further clarity on how G20 countries could continue to support the AHEG and UNEA process.
18. The Secretariat clarified that there are two types of analysis, covering both the AHEG technical questionnaire and the more descriptive G20 template, and suggested that the submissions and initial results could be shared with the G20 Secretariat for possible feedback.
19. The Secretariat was requested to provide an overview on how the different working documents relate to each other as background documentation for the upcoming webinars.

Agenda item 4: Consideration of a revised agenda for the 4th meeting of the expert group.

20. The Chair presented a revised draft agenda for the fourth meeting of the expert group, for possible comments from the Bureau.
21. The Bureau endorsed the revised version of the agenda without further comments.

Agenda item 5. Any other matters.

22. The Chair opened Agenda item: Any other matters and the Secretariat recommended to review the roadmap, with particular focus on the proposed date for the next Bureau meeting.
23. The Bureau agreed that the next Bureau meeting should be tentatively scheduled for 6 May, bearing in mind the possibility of holding an additional meeting in advance of that date to consider a draft roadmap for the webinars.

Agenda item 6. Closing of the Meeting.

24. The Chair thanked the Bureau and the Secretariat for an informative and productive discussion and closed the meeting.