

Friends of Ocean Action Statement on INC-5.2

No Plastics Treaty, But No Retreat from Ambition

On 15 August 2025, delegates concluded the Geneva session of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee (INC-5.2) without agreement on a global plastics treaty. Despite nearly three years of talks, strong scientific evidence, and overwhelming public support, the negotiations failed to deliver on the mandate established by the UN Environment Assembly (UNEA Resolution 5/14, 2022) to negotiate a legally binding instrument to end plastic pollution across its full life cycle.

As [Friends of Ocean Action](#), we share the disappointment of high-ambition countries, Big Ocean States, civil society, and frontline communities who invested precious resources and trust in this process. The outcome reflects not a lack of commitment from the majority, but the complexity of addressing plastic pollution as a global challenge requiring scaled solutions and collective resolve.

Better no treaty than a bad treaty. The global majority's resistance to weak outcomes signals that negotiations are focused on the right elements: A legally binding plastics treaty must include measures to curb plastic at the source, address chemicals of concern, and secure financing for a just transition. These are essential to safeguard human health, protect vulnerable communities, and strengthen the resilience of the ocean.

The INC Chair has announced that negotiations will resume at a later date. This pause cannot be a pause in action. Until global talks deliver, we urge progressive governments to drive forward at the national level—legislating the same targets they championed in Geneva and coordinating action across regions. National leadership and continued example-setting for global efforts is more important now than ever as a guarantee of credibility and momentum.

Friends of Ocean Action remain committed to the treaty process and we will continue to mobilize our network of leaders and partnerships to support an ambitious outcome on curbing plastic pollution at the source.

Since our inception in 2018, the Friends have identified plastic pollution as a global priority that must be meaningfully addressed. Alongside the [Global Plastic Action Partnership](#) (GPAP) we have worked hard to catalyze positive action. Since its launch, GPAP has grown into the world's largest multi-stakeholder initiative on tackling plastic pollution, with 25 national country partnerships advancing solutions on the ground. We commend all other partners and local actors who are striving to deliver on-the-ground circular solutions, and are committed to ensuring mobilization and delivery continue until the day a robust treaty is secured.

The failure of INC5.2 to agree on a treaty comes at a critical juncture for ocean health. Marine biodiversity is in steep decline: climate change is warming and acidifying the seas, one-third of fish stocks are overexploited, and plastic pollution is suffocating marine life and reappearing on our plates in the food we eat. The international community has been advancing on major frameworks to address these pressures—from the High Seas Treaty (BBNJ), to WTO's Harmful Fisheries Subsidies Agreement, from SDG14's drive to conserve and only sustainably use the ocean's resources, to the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework 30x30 targets. But without a Plastics Treaty, one of the most pervasive threats to marine ecosystems—and to human health—will remain unaddressed.

A strong agreement curbing plastic pollution and harmful chemicals at the source is essential to close governance gaps. Regardless of adoption, action cannot be delayed: governments committed to ending plastic pollution should continue leading the way with ambition. By advancing national measures and coordinating regionally, we can ensure that when a treaty is agreed, it locks in and amplifies progress already achieved. Friends of Ocean Action will work to ensure global ambitions to conserve and restore nature, translate into attaining the healthy ocean required for human well-being.

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