

BAN Intervention on Plastic Waste Technical Guidelines

May 1, 2023

Thank you, Mr. President. Until very recently progress on the Technical Guidelines for the Environmentally Sound Management of Plastic Wastes has proceeded at a good pace. Today however BAN is very concerned about whether a useful document will ever be completed at this meeting or thereafter.

I say this due to the fact that in recent weeks the negotiation process at the SIWG, which has been heroically conducted by the co-chairs, has been slowed dramatically due to the very late interventions of a very small number of Parties seeking, only at these last stages, to reverse the progress made on the document and undercut the emerging consensus achieved over many months. The result is reflected in the text now presented at COP16 as is found in INF/11/Rev.1. This is a document which has regressed, and is now rife with new brackets, particularly on some of the most important sections of the document including the vital section on Prevention and Waste Avoidance.

This development, in our view is regrettable. We call on all Parties to work in good faith to reach consensus in order to not only complete the document but to ensure that the document is not watered down to the point where it becomes useless as true guidance.

Further, a new reference promoting a so-called "bottom up" approach has been introduced very suddenly into the Guidelines. This reference is to a terminology describing but one way for international law to be structured. It has no place in a technical guideline on the ESM of plastic waste, and prejudices and presupposes the outcome of the INC negotiations for a legally binding life-cycle treaty

Finally, BAN echoes the call by many others to remove all reference to Chemical Recycling in the present context of providing guidance on the ESM of plastic wastes. The jury is still out about chemical recycling and whether it presents a net benefit or risk to the environment and human health. In fact, there is considerable evidence that Chemical Recycling is not likely to be ESM when energy consumption, climate impacts, and all forms of residual pollution is taken into account. Therefore, if we must reference chemical recycling at this stage of its development and evaluation, we would recommend that it be placed in an Annex to the present Guidelines and referenced only as emerging technology.

I thank you.
