July 31, 2025

Statement from the Scientists' Coalition ahead of INC-5.2 to develop a global plastics treaty

Independent science reinforces the need to address plastic chemicals, production, and health

58 of our independent scientists from around the world will be present in Geneva, Switzerland from August 5-14, 2025 for the resumed fifth session of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee to develop an international legally binding instrument to end plastic pollution (INC-5.2). The Scientists' Coalition for an Effective Plastics Treaty supports negotiators by volunteering their time and expertise to synthesize, summarize, and present relevant science free of conflicts of interest.

As scientists, we are concerned that the treaty risks becoming ineffective if important evidence-based obligations are excluded. We are also concerned about a deliberate misrepresentation of the scientific evidence to manufacture doubt and undermine measures on chemicals of concern and plastic production. While these efforts may serve short-term business interests, they undermine the scientifically proven need to protect human health and the environment from plastic pollution. We recognize the importance of robust, evidence-based decision making and the calls from over 1000 independent scientists as laid out in the Scientists' Declaration. Evidence from international scientific experts highlights the importance of addressing chemicals of concern, plastic production, and developing essential use, transparency, safety and sustainability criteria for plastics.

To assist negotiators during INC-5.2, the Scientists' Coalition has developed many resources including six new policy briefs reflecting on specific articles in the Chair's Text in English, French, and Spanish. We invite INC delegates, observers, and the media to explore these and to subscribe to our free INC Science Update newsletter that will be published regularly during the negotiations.

Our scientists are available before, during, and after the INC meeting to answer questions as well as to share and discuss the scientific evidence with INC delegates, ministers, ambassadors, and the media. To arrange a confidential meeting under Chatham House rules, please speak with a member of our Coalition in Geneva or contact the Coalition's secretariat via email (scientists.coalition@ikhapp.org) or Signal/WhatsApp (+64 20 452 4556).

Please find below quotes from the Coalition's coordinators:

Bethanie Carney Almroth (University of Gothenburg, Sweden)

"The science is clear and tells us what the many threats of plastic pollution are across the full life cycle of plastics as well as the actions needed to address them. This includes the importance of addressing chemicals of concern and upstream plastic production. Efforts to undermine science threaten the health and safety of people and the planet."
Contact: bethanie.carney@bioenv.gu.se

Trisia Farrelly (Cawthron Institute and Massey University, New Zealand)

"*Countries that are serious about ending plastics pollution will ensure the treaty is well supported by essential-use, hazard-based safety, sustainability, and transparency criteria. These criteria are crucial in identifying the most harmful plastic chemicals and products, and to inform globally harmonised standards to minimise monitoring and reporting costs, enhance supply chain transparency, guide national plans, and drive down hazardous plastics hyperproduction - all while incentivising innovative, safer and more sustainable materials and markets. A broad range of experts including multidisciplinary scientists, frontline and fenceline communities, and Indigenous knowledge holders are needed to adequately inform the implementation of the treaty. Any expert group informing treaty implementation will require a robust conflict of interest mitigation policy and process."*
Contact: Trisia.Farrelly@cawthron.org.nz

Richard Thompson (University of Plymouth, United Kingdom)

"*It is clear that business as usual is neither safe nor sustainable. To achieve its goal, the scientific evidence shows that the new instrument needs to mandate development of essentiality, safety and sustainability criteria to ensure the plastics that are produced are essential to society and are far safer and more sustainable than they are today. Harmonized standards and labeling can support these criteria to enable safer and more sustainable plastics and alternatives to become the norm in international trade.*"
Contact: rcthompson@plymouth.ac.uk