

INC5.2:

Where do we go from here?

16th September 2025

Q&A Report

Below are the questions asked live during the webinar, through the Zoom Q&A function. Some logistical comments have been removed, and spelling has been corrected.

Global Plastics Treaty: reflecting on the process, progress and priorities

1. Do you think it would be more effective to secure a universally agreed treaty that may set a lower common denominator, or to pursue a higher-ambition agreement among a coalition of willing countries that could potentially drive faster progress but with less global coverage?
2. As industry is able to collaborate as part of the Business Coalition, how are you working together to implement the circular economy in your business models without waiting for a treaty? For example, Coca-Cola and PepsiCo could work together with shared infrastructure to have reusable glass bottles. This would make a huge difference to the amount of plastic pollution the world deals with.
3. What is the position of the beverages/water sector on including plastic bottles reduction targets at a global level in the treaty? Given that plastic bottles are a large source of pollution, and that safe tap water should be accessible to all in 2030 (SDG 6): what about more investments in tap water access for all?
4. Do you think the environmental organizations and the High Ambition Coalition spent too much effort attacking industry (i.e. cap production) rather than focusing on pollution (i.e. elimination of products that could enter the environment of toxic additives, etc.)? It seems that the countries blocking the treaty agreement can't politically or economically agree to capping a portion of their economy but could agree to focus on eliminating products that impact the environment and human health.
5. What are new arguments that could persuade petrochemical plastics production changes?
6. What is the reasoning behind the demand that fossils should become more expensive?
7. Thoughts on what the treaty can do to make plastic recycling and recycled content work economically? Plastic recycling companies are complaining today about difficult economics, can the treaty work quickly enough for that problem?
8. No policy is going to work if the industry continues over production of plastics without consequences. You are not addressing the health impacts. Your models are focused on economic gains. We cannot recycle our way out of this crisis. The conversations need to be transparent.
9. I'm curious about your level of optimism at this point: what and when will there be a breakthrough? What will it really take?

'We cannot recycle our way out of it': solutions and alternatives

10. Do Tomra sorting sensors detect arrays of organic contaminants in recycled plastics or just polymer type?
11. How is Norway, which recycles 95% of PET plastic using Tomra systems, addressing the inability to recycle plastic multiple times?
12. Even with highly circular systems, some plastic leakage is inevitable. What mechanisms do you see as most effective for addressing this residual leakage globally?
13. Some cleanup data indicate plastic bottles are as much as one-third of what is collected. The supply chains already exist for aluminium, why don't Pepsi, Coke, and other bottlers shift to aluminium or even glass to reduce plastic in the environment?

14. Low-value plastics that have already leaked into the environment are difficult to recover and recycle. While co-processing is currently the most widely viable solution, what alternatives do you see as other alternative in the future?
15. Considering that plastics can only be recycled a limited number of times, often requiring virgin plastic to keep the cycle going – why are big brands not adopting more reuse business models or even compostable solutions, when we the innovations are out there and possible?

Ensuring a just transition: the inclusion of waste pickers

16. Waste pickers are essential to plastic recovery, but their informal status poses challenges: companies may avoid engaging with them due to lack of official receipts, while some waste pickers hesitate to be formalized because of potential taxation. How can local governments support and include waste pickers effectively in waste management systems while addressing these barriers?
 - *Comment from viewer: In South Africa, they have introduced a national database (SAWPRS) where waste pickers are registered electronically. They are then provided a physical card, which adds to their legitimacy and enables them to receive a service fee for their time and effort. They are also working on various pilot projects where waste pickers are integrated with S@S projects.*
17. Great to hear about how brands are working together with waste pickers. What does the relationship between waste pickers and other actors in the waste management space, eg recyclers, look like?

The role of Extended Producer Responsibility

18. How will EPR address the legacy pollution in our environmental systems? What kind of financial instruments would be needed for that?
 - *Comment from viewer: EPR is primarily focused on current and future waste, but it can help address legacy pollution if paired with dedicated funding that can enable this. Off course there would need to be legislation to support this.*
19. Most EPR agreements do not include medical health and equity parts. That needs to be addressed.
 - *Comment from panellist: Absolutely agree, it's very difficult to find social protections requirements in EPR systems*
20. EPR is being hailed as the silver bullet for plastic pollution issue, but its implementation in many geographies, especially the developing world isn't resulting into a lot of benefits, and there are credibility and integrity concerns in those EPR schemes. Additionally, the EPR fee/EPR certificate price is extremely low for it to be meaningfully able to fund waste management. In the light of the above, should there not be other market-based mechanisms that should be explored in addition to EPR?
 - *Comment from viewer: EPR is not a silver bullet on its own, but when it is properly designed for local conditions and backed by legislation, necessary oversight and policing where the authorities are capacitated, it has proven to drive real impact. This is especially true when fees are cost reflective, the informal sector is integrated, and supportive policies and infrastructure are in place, its work-in-progress!*

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