

27th meeting of the Working Group of the Parties to the Aarhus Convention Geneva, 26-28 June 2023

Thematic session on the promotion of the principles of the Aarhus Convention in international forums

### **Stakeholder engagement in the negotiation process under the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee on Plastic Pollution (INC)**

#### Information note by the INC secretariat

The INC secretariat allocates significant importance to active engagement of all stakeholders in the negotiation process under the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee on Plastic Pollution. It fully appreciates the essential role different stakeholders play in enriching the discussion and informing the negotiations process as well the crucial role they play in enabling practical efforts in addressing plastic pollution.

With this in mind, the following measures to enable stakeholders' participation were put in place.

The **first session of the INC** (November-December 2022) was attended by 389 non-governmental organizations. Information on the participating non-governmental organizations is included in the official [List of Participants](#) of the 1<sup>st</sup> session of the INC. The provisional list of participants for INC-2 (planned for 29 May-4 June 2023) will be published shortly before the session and the final list of participants – after the session, including information on participating non-governmental organizations.

Prior to INC-1, a [multistakeholder forum](#) was organized pursuant to resolution 5/14. In addition, a [stakeholder dialogue](#) was held during the session.

Following the call for submissions at INC-1, the secretariat organized a series of [webinars](#) where stakeholders could present their [submissions](#) on options for potential elements of the legally-binding instrument and inform submissions to be prepared by Members. Later in the intersessional period, the secretariat also organized a number of **webinars** where pre-session documentation for INC-2 and logistical and procedural issues related to INC-2 were presented, including with regard to arrangements made for access to the venue. These are also available on the [INC website](#).

Detailed **explanations on the registration** procedure for INC2, the venue limitations, the badging procedure, and information on access to the UNESCO venue and access to the plenary which are contained in the following notes available online:

[Information on registration for stakeholders](#)

[Information note for participants](#) (see, in particular, pages 3 and 4 of the note)

[Information on issuance of secondary access cards for INC2](#)

Within the funding available, the Secretariat was also able to provide **financial support** to some non-governmental [observer organizations from developing countries](#) (see list on the link) to facilitate participation of stakeholders from such countries.

Fire and safety regulations do not allow for more than 1500 participants of the INC to be on the premises of the only available venue at the same time during regular working days. To ensure that delegates could take these limitations into account in planning their participation, the venue limitations and the need to implement secondary access badges was **notified to all the potential participants before registration for the session was opened**. In addition to being available on the INC-2 website, this information was also included in the [letter by the Executive Secretary of the INC of 21 February 2023](#) inviting observer organizations to register for the session.

Within the aforementioned capacity of the venue, the secretariat endeavored to enable maximum civil society participation possible under the logistical limitations we find ourselves in, while also providing for adequate access of the negotiating Member States to the negotiations.

In making arrangements for access by observers, we attempted to ensure fair and equal treatment for all non-governmental organizations that registered for the meeting. As on 24 May 2023, 612 non-governmental organizations (a total of 1712 delegates) were registered and each of organization will receive up to two secondary access badges to enter the premises (1224 potential floating badges) during Sunday, 29 May, and Monday, 29 May. This higher numbers are possible on these two days because they are official public

holidays at the UNESCO Headquarters where the meeting is being held and the overall venue access for the INC delegates can be increased. From Tuesday, 30 May 2023, only one secondary access badge per registered organization will be implemented because the total number of INC delegates cannot exceed 1500. Secondary access badges can be used by representatives of each registered organization to access the venue. 20 UN agencies and 12 IGOs also registered and will also receive secondary access badges. The number means that **at least 45% of the participants on-site at any given time can be from observers** and 55% from government delegations. Secondary access badges with limitation on a number of delegates on site will also apply to government delegations as of 30 May. The limitations imposed are in no way aimed to hamper participation of any stakeholder or organization. They are in place because this is the maximum capacity of the only available venue.

Plenary sessions of the INC will be **webcast**. In addition, given the limited capacity of the venue, special arrangements were made that if any contact groups are established all registered participants will be provided links to **broadcast of public meetings of contact groups**.

Furthermore, non-governmental organizations are among organizers of each of the 12 thematic side events held during the session. Lists of events and lists of [selected organizers](#) are available on the session [website](#).

NGOs raised their concerns regarding stakeholders' participation in INC-2 with the secretariat, including through the open letter dated 28 April 2023 circulated by the Aarhus Convention secretariat on 18 May 2023. The letter of response by the Executive Secretary of the INC of 12 May 2023 to that open letter is available on the [INC website](#).

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