
Towards effective management of plastics and their chemicals in the Western Indian Ocean region: preparing countries for the implementation of the legally binding instrument on plastics
Seychelles, 11–12 December 2023

Report of the meeting “Towards effective management of plastics and their chemicals in the Western Indian Ocean region: preparing countries for the implementation of the legally binding instrument on plastics”

I. Introduction

1. The meeting titled “Towards effective management of plastics and their chemicals in the Western Indian Ocean (WIO) region: preparing countries for the implementation of the legally binding instrument on plastics” was jointly hosted by the Convention for the Protection, Management and Development of the Marine and Coastal Environments of the Western Indian Ocean Region (Nairobi Convention), the Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and Their Disposal, the Rotterdam Convention on the Prior Informed Consent Procedure for Certain Hazardous Chemicals and Pesticides in International Trade, and the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants (BRS conventions). The meeting was hosted by the Government of Seychelles from the 11th to the 12th of December 2023. The WIO Marine Science Association (WIOMSA), currently overseeing the WIO Technical Working Group on Marine Litter and Microplastics, played a role as the technical co-host of the meeting.

II. Official opening of the meeting

2. An official opening of the meeting graced by the Government of Seychelles, the Nairobi Convention and the BRS conventions took place on 12 December 2023.

3. Welcoming the participants, Mr. Dixon Waruinge, Head of the Nairobi Convention, delineated the meeting’s objectives, aiming to explore comprehensive management opportunities for plastics, associated chemicals, and wastes in the WIO region including through strengthening the implementation of the Basel, Rotterdam, and Stockholm Conventions. The specific goals were to discuss the progress of WIO countries in combating marine pollution from plastics, associated chemicals, and wastes; review advancements in developing the international legally binding instrument on plastic pollution on its completion and adoption; identify common interests and formulate potential joint activities with the Nairobi Convention and the Basel, Rotterdam, and Stockholm Conventions. Initiating a comprehensive life cycle-based revision of the Regional Action Plan on Marine Litter was also on the agenda.

4. Mr. Rolph Payet, Executive Secretary of the Basel, Rotterdam, and Stockholm conventions, brought attention to the global initiatives addressing the interconnected challenges of plastics and hazardous chemicals. Notably, he underscored the significance of the Basel Convention’s Plastic Waste Amendments and the Stockholm Convention as crucial components in global efforts to combat plastic waste. Ongoing negotiations for a legally binding instrument on plastic pollution further highlighted the urgency in addressing the environmental and health risks posed by both plastics and hazardous chemicals. Mr. Payet emphasized the integral role of multilateral environmental agreements in providing a framework for coordinated action. His mission extended to exploring comprehensive opportunities for managing plastics, chemicals, and wastes in the WIO region. This exploration, undertaken collaboratively with partners, including the Nairobi Convention and BRS conventions, underlined the importance of a unified approach to tackle the complex and intertwined challenges of plastics and hazardous chemicals in the global environmental landscape.

5. Hon. Flavien Joubert, Minister for Agriculture, Climate Change, and Environment, emphasized that marine litter is a global challenge impacting countries irrespective of their waste management systems, as ocean currents transport debris. United Nations' Sustainable Development Goal 14.1 specifically addresses marine debris and pollution, focusing on land-based sources. In the WIO region, the escalating plastic litter poses a threat to marine ecosystems, affecting livelihoods and potentially worsening poverty. Urging the necessity of region-wide solutions, he expressed Seychelles' commitment to addressing a spectrum of environmental challenges, extending beyond plastics to pollutants like PCB, DDT, and others. Emphasizing the crucial role of international cooperation, the Minister reiterated Seychelles' full support for the implementation of the Nairobi Convention and the Basel, Rotterdam, and Stockholm conventions, underscoring the nation's dedication to fostering a sustainable and pollution-free environment. His speech highlighted the need for a comprehensive approach to environmental stewardship, showcasing Seychelles' commitment to engaging with global conventions and collaborating with the international community to effectively tackle a range of environmental challenges.

6. Hon. Jean Francois Ferrari, the Designated Minister and Minister for Blue Economy and Fisheries, highlighted the urgent need for global collaboration in addressing plastic pollution within the context of the blue economy and fisheries. Stressing the severe impact on marine ecosystems and the fisheries industry, Minister Ferrari highlighted Seychelles' unique perspective as a nation deeply connected to its oceanic resources. He underscored the intrinsic link between the blue economy—focused on sustainable marine resource management—and the overall health of the oceans. He specifically addressed the threat posed by abandoned fishing gear and nets to marine life, fisheries, and livelihoods. Providing insights into Seychelles' proactive stance, he outlined initiatives targeting the collection of abandoned fish nets, aiming not only to preserve marine ecosystems but also to sustain the crucial fisheries sector. Moreover, Minister Ferrari called for international cooperation, urging collective action to develop innovative solutions, fortify waste management systems, and promote sustainable practices. His speech conveyed Seychelles' commitment to fostering a blue economy that not only harnesses marine resources' potential but also safeguards them for future generations, with responsible fisheries management and plastic pollution mitigation playing pivotal roles in achieving this vision.

II. Organizational matters

7. The meeting was chaired by Mr. Jacques Rasoanaina (Madagascar) as the Chair of the Nairobi Convention Bureau.

8. The meeting adopted the agenda and agreed to conduct the proceedings in accordance with the tentative schedule outlined in annex I to the present report, subject to adjustments as necessary.

9. The meeting was attended by representatives of the following Parties to the Nairobi Convention and the Basel Convention: Comoros, Kenya, Madagascar, Mauritius, Mozambique, Seychelles, Somalia, South Africa, Tanzania.

10. In addition, the following United Nations bodies and specialized agencies, intergovernmental organizations and non-governmental organizations attended the meeting: United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), Indian Ocean Commission, International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), Institute of Marine Sciences, Kenya Association of Manufacturers, Kenya Marine and Fisheries Research Institute, Western Indian Ocean Marine Science Association (WIOMSA), African Circular Economy Network, Parley Seychelles, Plastics SA, Sustainable Seas Trust, TechIPz, University of Dar es Salaam, University of Nairobi, WWF Kenya and European Investment Bank (virtually).

11. A list of participants is set out in annex II to the present report.

III. Scene setting

12. Mr. Jared Bosire, a representative of the Secretariat of the Nairobi Convention, delivered a presentation on the Convention's initiatives in plastic pollution in the WIO region. The Nairobi Convention serves as a legal framework and collaborative platform for regional cooperation among countries and agencies with the mandate to protect, manage, and develop the Western Indian Ocean at a regional level. The vision is to foster a partnership between governments, civil society, and the private sector for the prosperity of the WIO region. Mr. Bosire emphasized the critical issue of land-based pollution, attributing up to 80% of marine pollution to municipal, industrial, and agricultural

wastes and run-off. He highlighted the severe impacts on human health, coastal ecosystems, and marine life, urging a collaborative approach to address this challenge.

13. The presentation outlined the tangible actions taken by the Nairobi Convention, including decisions such as CP9/3 in 2018 on the management of marine litter. This decision encouraged the development of a regional strategy or action plan on marine litter, capacity-building programs, and outreach activities to address the impact of municipal waste and marine litter. The WIO Regional Action Plan on Marine Litter was presented with objectives to guide regional actions, support the implementation of the Protocol on Land Based Sources and Activities, and contribute to achieving SDG 14.1. Key actions and interventions proposed included establishing a regional forum, improving port reception facilities, promoting the 4 Rs (Reducing, Reusing, Recycling, Recovering), and creating awareness through education and training. Additionally, a marine litter and microplastics regional technical working group was proposed to facilitate information exchange and policy guidance. The presentation concluded by highlighting significant progress made in addressing plastic pollution, including the landmark resolution at UNEA-5.2 for an international legally binding instrument on plastic pollution, signifying a global shift towards a more comprehensive and collaborative approach.

14. Ms. Kei Ohno Woodall, a representative of the Secretariat of the BRS conventions, presented the initiatives of the BRS conventions in Africa. She highlighted that globally, the Conference of the Parties (COP) to the Basel Convention adopted Plastic Waste Amendments in 2019, subjecting all plastic waste (excluding that for recycling) to the prior informed consent procedure. This enhanced control over transboundary movements and promotes environmentally sound management. In 2023, technical guidelines on the environmentally sound management of plastic waste were adopted, offering crucial guidance. The Stockholm Convention addresses hazardous chemicals, including those in plastics, and in 2023, the COP expanded the list to include two more plastic additives, bringing the total number of persistent organic pollutants to 34, of which 17 are associated with plastics.

15. The presentations sparked engaging discussions, with participants raising questions, particularly focusing on the chemicals present in plastics and the associated challenges in implementing effective control measures across the region. Attendees also sought clarification on issues related to the trade in plastic waste and recycled materials. The Secretariat responded to these inquiries, providing insights and information to enhance participants' understanding of the issues surrounding plastic pollution and the implementation of the conventions as well as connection to the on-going consideration under the intergovernmental negotiating committee (INC).

16. Emphasizing the need for comprehensive strategies for both the Nairobi Convention and the BRS conventions, the discussions delved into understanding some of the hurdles in implementing control measures against plastic pollution, reflecting a broader concern for sustainable practices in the trade of plastic waste and recycled materials. These interactions laid a foundation for continued collaboration and shared efforts among participants in their commitment to finding effective solutions.

IV. Regional initiatives

17. **Ms. Gina Bonne, Indian Ocean Commission, made a presentation on “Towards a Regional Strategy for Plastic Management in the Western Indian Ocean Region”.** The presentation covered key aspects, beginning with an overview of the Indian Ocean Commission (COI), a regional intergovernmental organization comprising five member states. The COI, established in 1984, operates in various areas such as governance, diplomacy, security, economy, environment, and human development.

18. Ms. Bonne highlighted the results of a diagnostic study conducted in 2014, emphasizing challenges in national waste management systems, types and volumes of waste, and transboundary issues related to international conventions. Further studies on marine plastic pollution in the Atlantic and Indian Ocean provided estimates, detailed policy dimensions, and outlined actions taken to combat marine plastic pollution. The presentation also touched on the Plastic Expedition project, which focused on plastic waste in the Indian Ocean Island states.

19. The proposed action plan aimed to support national plastic action plans and initiatives, emphasizing shared knowledge, regulatory measures, financing of waste management, and regional dialogues with industries. Core elements included supporting national strategies, regulatory measures, financing waste management, and developing common positions on international initiatives. Implementation arrangements involve the Nairobi Convention, Regional Economic Communities, and the African Union, providing a comprehensive approach to address plastic pollution in the Western Indian Ocean Region.

20. **Ms. Stacey Webb, on behalf of WIOMSA and the Sustainable Seas Trust, made a presentation titled “What we know - Partnering Towards a Future Where the People of Africa and Her Seas Flourish Together”.** The presentation provided insights garnered from collective research and experience, particularly in collaboration with the WIOMSA. Emphasizing the urgency for action, Ms. Webb stressed the critical role of the recycling sector, which not only generates employment but also contributes to human and environmental health, benefiting various sectors like agriculture, fisheries, tourism, and local economies. The presentation underscored the importance of data collection, both qualitative and quantitative, to understand intervention impacts and achieve set goals. It emphasized the need for African-centric recycling initiatives, advocating for viable and expanding end-markets to sustain recycling enterprises.

21. The focus then shifted to WIOMSA’s initiative to combat marine plastics in the WIO region, involving seven countries committed to harmonized data collection for action plans against plastic pollution. The program produced the African Marine Litter Monitoring Manual, offering flexible and replicable methods written by Africans for Africans. Results from the program, including training workshops, public awareness activities, and educational outputs, highlighted its success. Moreover, the program’s outputs, such as scientific articles and educational materials, are actively contributing to national action plans in partner countries. The presentation concluded with an innovative citizen science project, Operation Clean Spot (OCS), which integrates monitoring, resources, and recycling education, presenting an adaptable model for waste management in various community contexts across Africa. WIOMSA and SST aim to test this program in different communities, aligning with global plastic treaty goals.

22. Following the presentations, a key query addressed the challenge of tailoring the proposed action plan to accommodate the unique needs and hurdles faced by the diverse member states within the Indian Ocean Commission. Ms. Bonne emphasized the importance of flexibility within the strategy, highlighting that while there is a regional framework, the plan is designed to be adaptable to the specific circumstances and requirements of each participating state. Another inquiry focused on the collaboration with the private sector, particularly in the context of the Plastic Expedition project. Ms. Bonne outlined the strategies in place to actively involve and partner with businesses, stressing the potential for a circular economy and the encouragement of sustainable practices.

23. In response to the inquiry on how the valuable insights and successful strategies from initiatives like the African Marine Litter Monitoring Programme could be efficiently scaled and reproduced in diverse regions across the continent, Ms. Webb underscored their commitment to fostering knowledge-sharing and building capacity. Notably, she highlighted the versatility and replicability of their methodologies, particularly those elucidated in the comprehensive African Marine Litter Monitoring Manual. She emphasized the importance of fostering collaborations with local partners and communities, recognizing the distinctive characteristics inherent to each region.

V. Legally binding instrument on plastic pollution

24. Mr. Ayub Macharia (Kenya) provided a comprehensive overview of the status of the negotiation of the international legally binding instrument on plastic pollution, highlighting the significant milestone of the adoption of the resolution, “End plastic pollution: Towards an international legally binding instrument,” during the resumed fifth session of the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA) on 2 March 2022. He traced the historical journey towards the legally binding instrument on plastic pollution, starting with UNEA-1 in 2014, where the global emerging threat of plastics was acknowledged, and subsequent resolutions identified knowledge gaps, called for a global response considering a product life-cycle approach, recognized inefficient global governance, and established an expert group.

25. The presentation delved into the specific details of UNEA resolution 5/14, outlining the core obligations, objectives, and control measures to be discussed in the intergovernmental negotiating committee (INC). Mr. Macharia explained the main outcomes of the third session (INC-3), which included discussions on the options paper covering core obligations, objectives, and means to support implementation such as financial mechanisms and capacity building. He highlighted the upcoming tasks, including the development of an initial draft for the fourth session (INC-4).

26. Mr. Douw Steyn, Plastics SA, then presented on private sector engagement in the INC process, focusing on effective plastic and chemical management in the WIO region to prepare countries for the implementation of the legally binding instrument on plastics. Plastics SA serves as the umbrella organization for the plastics industry in South Africa, encompassing raw material producers,

converters, and recyclers. Mr. Steyn emphasized the urgent need for a global agreement on plastic pollution to drive innovation and establish a circular economy for plastics worldwide.

27. Plastics SA envisions a world without plastic pollution, where plastics are sustainably produced, designed, used, reused, and recycled. They support the goal of eliminating additional plastic pollution by 2040, urging governments, plastic makers, financial institutions, brands, retailers, users of plastics, recyclers, waste management entities, and scientific institutions to collectively take actions. These actions range from supporting policies and financing mechanisms to developing circular and sustainable products, investing in recycling technologies, and conducting research on environmental footprints and behavior change.

28. The presentation concluded with a timeline of the international legally binding instrument on plastic pollution, outlining key meetings and negotiations leading to the finalization of the agreement in 2025, emphasizing the need for global collaboration to achieve success.

29. Ms. Joyce Ouma Klu from the European Investment Bank then made a virtual presentation on the Clean Ocean Project Identification and Preparation (COPIP) Programme, a part of the Clean Oceans Initiative. The initiative, launched in 2018, aims to reduce ocean pollution, particularly plastic pollution, and involves six partners committed to financing projects totalling €4 billion from 2018 to 2025. Ms. Klu detailed the progress of the COPIP Program, which focuses on sub-Saharan African coastal cities, highlighting its three phases: project identification, pre-feasibility studies, and feasibility studies. By now, 20 projects across East, Central, and West Africa have been identified, with 10 proceeding to pre-feasibility studies. The program addresses challenges in solid waste, wastewater, and stormwater management, striving to prevent waste and plastic pollution in the oceans by preparing bankable projects contributing to the Clean Oceans Initiative's objectives.

30. Ms. Klu shared two specific examples within the Western Indian Ocean region: Tanga, Tanzania, and Mombasa, Kenya. In Tanga, the pre-feasibility study focuses on gradually introducing source separation, community and central composting, material recovery facilities, refuse-derived fuel for cement factories, and improving the existing landfill. Mombasa, being a larger city, faces more serious challenges in waste management. The pre-feasibility study for Mombasa involves source separation, transfer stations, material recovery facilities, composting, black soldier fly larva production, and the conversion of an open dump site to a sanitary landfill. Pilot projects, such as the Taka Connect app for waste recyclers, are already underway in Mombasa, showcasing the program's commitment to innovation and sustainable waste management practices.

31. For additional details on the COPIP program or the broader Clean Oceans Initiative, Ms. Klu encouraged participants to reach out to the respective program managers in Kenya and Tanzania or exploring the resources available on the European Investment Bank website (<https://copip.eu/>).

32. During the discussion session following the presentations, participants emphasized the importance of capturing the resource value of plastics, considering them as byproducts of oil. While acknowledging that plastics are recyclable in many countries, the challenge lies in efficient collection from consumers. Food waste emerged as a significant concern, with plastics playing a crucial role in safe food transportation. The discussion underscored the need for extended producer responsibility (EPR) as a collaborative effort between the government and industry, extending beyond municipal initiatives. In South Africa, the recovery rate for plastics remains low, prompting calls for increased resource re-utilization and enhanced recycling practices for these valuable materials.

33. In response to a question, Mr. Macharia acknowledged potential risks during the negotiations at INC-4 and emphasized the importance of resolving areas of disagreement in Ottawa. To overcome challenges, strategies include transitioning from the “zero draft” to a “revised draft”, presenting concrete proposals, and conducting public consultations on principles and scope during the limited intersessional period. The objective is to facilitate open dialogue and collaboration, fostering consensus on crucial aspects of the international instrument on plastic pollution.

VI. Presentations by the Focal Points

A. Comoros

34. Mr. Djounaid Mbousri (Comoros) delivered a presentation on the effective management of plastics and their chemicals in Comoros. He emphasized that plastic waste pollution in the Union of Comoros poses a significant anthropogenic threat to its oceans, affecting livelihoods and ecosystems. With over 8,000,000 tons of plastic waste estimated to be dumped into the oceans, the environmental

impact is not only felt in marine ecosystems but also on land, resulting in environmental damage estimated at 1 billion dollars annually. Mr. Mbousri highlighted the transboundary nature of the plastic pollution crisis, stressing the need for a coordinated national and regional response.

35. The Union of Comoros has implemented a national environmental policy since 1993, aimed at integrating environmental considerations into social and economic development policies. This policy focuses on the rational use of natural resources, biodiversity conservation, and proper management of marine and coastal areas. Specific legislation, such as the Law No. 94-018, addresses the management of chemicals and hazardous waste, including harmful substances and the importation, exportation, transport, production, sale, and distribution of such substances. Additionally, Mr. Mbousri discussed the country's efforts to combat plastic pollution, including the adoption of laws targeting the reduction of plastic waste and microplastics in marine environments.

36. The presentation also covered the waste management challenges faced by Comoros, especially in urban areas, and outlined strategies to address them. The United Nations Development Programme collaborates with Comorian authorities to enhance plastic waste management. The strategy includes reducing plastic waste through awareness campaigns, eliminating the disposal of plastic waste at sea, stimulating investments and innovation to decrease plastic waste, and creating a framework document for waste management policies. Mr. Mbousri concluded by underlining the importance of plastic recycling, presenting it as an opportunity for environmental protection and job creation, and discussed ongoing initiatives to recycle plastic waste in the country.

B. Kenya

37. Mr. Ayub Macharia (Kenya) presented a comprehensive overview of pollution and plastic waste management along the country's 600-kilometer coastline. He emphasized the intricate interlinkages between the coastal ecosystem and the hinterland, with major rivers such as Athi-Sabaki, Tana, and others discharging pollutants, including plastics, into the sea. Mr. Macharia outlined Kenya's legal and policy framework, citing the Constitution's commitment to a clean environment, Vision 2030's focus on waste management, and key regulations such as EMCA 1999 and the National Solid Waste Management Strategy 2014. He highlighted recent developments, including the introduction of the Sustainable Waste Management Policy 2021, Sustainable Waste Management Act 2022, and the National Marine Litter Management Action Plan (2021–2030). The policy and legislation promote a circular economy and a lifecycle approach to waste management, encouraging public attitude change, waste sorting, and the establishment of facilities for reuse and material recovery.

38. Mr. Macharia provided insights into Kenya's plastic interventions, discussing the successful ban on polythene bags since February 2017, achieving over 80% success in enforcement. The presentation also covered initiatives related to plastic PET bottles, a framework of cooperation with the private sector, and a ban on single-use plastics in conservation areas. He emphasized ongoing discussions with neighboring countries to enhance border surveillance and prevent illegal imports of polythene bags. Additionally, the presentation highlighted the government's incentives to the private sector, including VAT exemptions and corporate tax reductions for plastic recycling plants, aiming to encourage investment, create jobs, and support environmental conservation. The EPR outlined in the Sustainable Waste Management Act 2022 emphasizes producers' obligations to reduce pollution and environmental impacts.

C. Madagascar

39. Mr. Jacques Rasoanaina (Madagascar) presented an overview of the current state of plastic management in the country. In 2014, Madagascar generated approximately 689,850 tons of waste, with plastics accounting for around 10%. However, the projection for 2020 suggested a 2.8% increase. Notably, most cities lack a waste management master plan, contributing to a low plastic waste collection rate of only 48% per year. The involvement of the private sector in waste management has been sporadic, partly due to the absence of comprehensive waste regulations.

40. The legal framework for waste management in Madagascar includes membership in various multilateral environmental agreements and specific laws such as the Water Code (Law No. 98-029, 20/01/1999), the Environment Charter (Law No. 2015-003), and policies addressing industrial pollution (Law No. 99-021). Decree No. 2017-010 prohibits the production, importation, marketing, stockpiling, and use of plastic bags with a thickness less than 50µm. Despite these legal instruments, the waste management system in Madagascar is still at an early stage of development. Key actors in waste management include SAMVA (sanitation) in Tana, and waste management responsibilities are

assigned to sanitation services at the urban commune level. The presentation highlighted the ongoing challenges and the need for more robust waste management strategies in Madagascar. The UNEP/Global Programme of Action Microplastics project, approved in June 2023, aims to address these challenges, allocating a fund of USD 70,000 for waste sorting centers in Antananarivo, Toamasina, and Antsiranana. Mr. Rasoanaina concluded by emphasizing that the waste management system in Madagascar is still in its early stages.

D. Mauritius

41. Ms. Shabina Lotun (Mauritius) and Mr. Jogeewar Seewoobaduth (Mauritius) outlined the nation's policies, strategies, and interventions in addressing plastic pollution. The government's commitment to making Mauritius a plastic-free country by 2024 is evident in its legislative framework, including regulations such as the Environment Protection (Banning of Plastic Bags) Regulations 2020 and the Environment Protection (Control of Single Use Plastic Products) Regulations 2020. These regulations, effective from specific dates in 2021, ban single-use plastic items, and the government has also taken measures to manage PET bottles through the Environment Protection (PET Bottle Permit) Regulations 2001, with ongoing efforts to boost recycling rates.

42. They highlighted key interventions, including the development of a roadmap on plastic with UNEP expertise, ongoing research projects on biodegradability and alternatives to plastic, and a national inventory on plastic pellets. The government is actively involved in international cooperation, participating in negotiations for a global legally binding instrument by December 2024. Additionally, Mauritius is part of the "Implementing Sustainable Low and Non-Chemical Development in SIDS" (ISLANDS) project, with an allocated amount of USD 4.5 million for local activities and a regional component focused on sound chemical and waste management.

43. Despite these efforts, they acknowledged several challenges, including resistance to change, the higher cost of plastic alternatives, enforcement issues with fake biodegradable products, inadequate technical capacity, and a lack of knowledge on appropriate standards. However, he also highlighted opportunities for Mauritius and other Small Island Developing States to develop new industries, conduct research on bioplastics, establish regional treatment facilities, share knowledge, and seek funding for regional projects.

E. Mozambique

44. Ms. Julieta Cuanda (Mozambique) addressed the global issue of plastic pollution, emphasizing that Mozambique is not exempt from this concern. Governments worldwide have implemented vague measures to control the worrying phenomenon of plastic pollution, which is largely a consequence of poor solid waste management practices. Mozambique faces challenges in waste and recycling practices, resulting in significant potential and actual losses due to low material recovery rates. The setbacks are attributed to weak or incomplete legal frameworks, an emerging business environment, and cultural barriers.

45. In Mozambique, the national trends regarding plastic consumption indicate a heavy reliance on imports, with an average plastic waste production of 6.1 kg per capita per year. The country struggles with a low waste collection rate of 30%, leading to improper disposal in non-sanitary landfills or dumps. Shockingly, only 1% of the plastic waste produced is recycled. About 17 thousand tons of plastic waste leak into rivers and the ocean, with 10% of the plastic waste generated entering the marine environment. The packaging sector is a major contributor to plastic leaks, accounting for over 70% of the total, particularly through items like drink bottles (24.7%), plastic bags (20.5%), and other bottles and containers (13.9%). Legal instruments at the national level are being developed to manage plastics, but challenges persist. The presentation underscored the need for promoting a circular economy, sustainable manufacturing, capacity building, private sector engagement, education and public awareness, and enhanced collaboration with academia for better data quality and decision-making.

F. Seychelles

46. Ms. Nanette Laure (Seychelles) presented the current status of plastic waste management in the country, focusing on initiatives, policies, and strategies implemented to combat the growing issue. The Waste Free Seychelles initiative, launched to address the significant financial burden of litter collection, targeted specific types of plastic bags through regulations and awareness campaigns. The introduction of the Waste Management Trust Fund (WMTF) in 2008, along with the implementation

of levies on PET bottles and aluminum cans, proved successful in reducing plastic waste by creating an economically viable recycling system. The government also enacted regulations to restrict the production and distribution of plastic bags, utensils, and polystyrene take-away boxes, transitioning to biodegradable alternatives. Furthermore, restrictions on plastic straws and balloons were introduced, showcasing a commitment to comprehensive environmental protection.

47. Despite these efforts, the presentation outlined several challenges, including resource limitations, increased demand and consumption leading to more waste generation, lack of waste sorting, absence of standards, insufficient technical expertise, and difficulties in enforcing plastic bag regulations. The government recognized the importance of continuous education, awareness campaigns, and a shift in public mindset to overcome these challenges. Additionally, the Seychelles government emphasized its commitment to addressing marine pollution through a comprehensive Marine Litter Action Plan, developed with the support of the UNEP, aiming to strengthen data collection, monitor trends, and empower decision-makers to make informed policy decisions associated with plastic pollution and microplastics. Overall, the government's multifaceted approach involves policy implementation, public engagement, and international collaboration to build a sustainable waste management system and protect the country's natural environment.

G. Somalia

48. Mr. Aden Hude (Somalia) presented on the pressing issue of plastic pollution, focusing on the marine litter situation and the government's efforts to combat this environmental challenge. Somalia, with the longest coastline in Africa, faces significant challenges related to marine safety and environmental protection. Illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing, a lack of marine safety policy, piracy, and insufficient maritime infrastructure contribute to these challenges. Despite international efforts supporting maritime security, pollution and environmental degradation, particularly from inadequate waste management systems, threaten Somalia's marine ecosystems.

49. The causes and sources of marine litter in Somalia were highlighted, including the recent flood situation, which has exacerbated the issue. The impacts of plastic pollution on marine life, landfills, and human health were discussed. The government and local communities have initiated various efforts, such as awareness campaigns, community-led cleanups, and the introduction of acts and regulations to address plastic pollution. However, challenges like poor infrastructure, insufficient funding, and limited public awareness persist. The presentation concluded with a call-to-action, urging the audience to reduce plastic usage and support government and community efforts for a more sustainable future, exemplified by initiatives like the Green Somalia campaign aimed at planting 10 million trees nationwide. Somalia's participation in international discussions reflects its commitment to finding effective solutions for managing plastic waste and hazardous chemicals in the WIO region.

H. South Africa

50. Mr. Yamkela Mngxe (South Africa) gave a presentation with a focus on preparing countries for the implementation of the legally binding instrument on plastics. The South African response includes the implementation of a "Source to Sea Initiative" to combat land-based litter near rivers and waterways. This strategy aims to investigate and address pollution, particularly plastic pollution, at the source in river catchments before it reaches the coast. The initiative involves scaling up litter collection, promoting community involvement in waste sorting and recycling, and assessing microplastic contamination in rivers. South Africa, ranked 11th globally in mismanaged plastic waste, is actively contributing to the UN Clean Seas Campaign through its source-to-sea approach, targeting priority rivers to reduce marine litter flows and litter generation.

51. Various initiatives in South Africa, such as the National Water Research Strategy and catchment management plans like the Port St John's Umzimvubu Source2Sea Eco-catchment Initiative, demonstrate a commitment to a 'living catchment' managed collaboratively for optimal livelihoods based on biodiversity and ecosystem services. The presentation outlined a national source-to-sea program on marine litter, initiated to address waste management and marine litter from land-based sources. This program involves beach clean-up programs, EPR for plastic packaging, and interventions to recover, remove, recycle, and prevent waste from entering priority rivers. The comprehensive approach aligns with regional and international obligations, including the WIOSAP vision, the Protocol on Land-based Sources and Activities under the Nairobi Convention, UNEA resolutions on marine litter, and SDG 14.1. Challenges include the lack of coordinated efforts among government departments, delayed action, and limited engagement with private sectors and NGOs. The

South African government is committed to addressing marine litter through this initiative, emphasizing the importance of public-private sector partnerships.

I. Tanzania

52. Ms. Annamaria Cornelius Gerome (Tanzania) presented an assessment of plastic waste management in the country. Tanzania has witnessed a significant increase in its urban population, leading to challenges such as a rise in waste production. Currently, the nation generates 17.4 million tonnes of waste per year, expected to reach 21.7 million tonnes by 2025. Plastic waste production stands at an estimated 400,000 tonnes annually, with only 40% being collected. The recycling rate is low, with only 20% to 30% of plastic waste being recycled, and 75% of plastic waste originates from products manufactured within the country. Challenges include inadequate implementation of environmental regulations, plastic waste being mixed with other waste, lack of waste separation plans, and the insufficient involvement of local authorities in creating an environment conducive to waste recycling.

53. Tanzania has taken steps to address these challenges, being a party to the Basel Convention. The country has reviewed its National Environment Policy and the Environment Management Act of 2004, with a ban on the production, distribution, import, export, and use of plastic carrier bags. Additionally, regulations have been introduced to prohibit substandard plastic packages, manage hazardous waste, and provide guidelines for solid waste management through the principles of Reduce, Reuse, and Recycle (3Rs). Efforts are also underway to draft guidelines on EPR to enhance the accountability of manufacturers for waste produced from their products.

J. Discussions

54. In the ensuing discussions, several key themes emerged, reflecting the diverse challenges and approaches each country faces in managing plastic waste. Kenya highlighted its EPR framework, covering all products, and emphasized issuing improvement notices and contracts with producers to ensure accountability. Financial incentives for EPR were noted as absent from the government, with fees owned by producers in a non-profit structure. The challenges around wastewater management were also touched upon, indicating existing laws and enforcement frameworks but acknowledging persistent gaps.

55. Mauritius discussed its efforts to control the use of pellets, banning certain types and allowing compostable biodegradable bags. The issue of fake bags in the market and the need for better control over pellet imports were highlighted. A cost-benefit assessment was emphasized, and the private sector's role in producing alternatives was discussed. In Tanzania, questions were raised about regulations on plastic bottle cups and their alternatives, with an emphasis on the challenges of enforcing new policies introduced in 2021. Private sector engagement was deemed crucial, focusing on public-private partnerships and the expectation that the private sector would contribute to investment and research and development in plastic waste management.

56. Overall, the discussions underscored the importance of a multi-stakeholder approach, involving both governments and the private sector in addressing the complex issues surrounding plastic waste management. The challenges ranged from legal frameworks and enforcement to the need for alternatives and research capacity, emphasizing the collaborative efforts required for effective and sustainable solutions.

VII. Circular economy

57. **Ms. Miriam Bomett (Kenya Association of Manufacturers (KAM)) presented on “Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) Schemes as an Enabler of Circular Economy”.** KAM, established in 1959, represents manufacturing and value-add industries in Kenya, working towards a dynamic and flourishing manufacturing sector. Ms. Bomett provided insights into Kenya's economic performance, emphasizing the manufacturing sector's significant contribution to GDP, job creation, and tax contributions.

58. The presentation delved into Kenya's waste environment, policy, legal, and regulatory framework on waste management, highlighting the shift from a linear and recycling economy to a circular economy approach. Bomett outlined manufacturers' initiatives on plastic waste management, including the establishment of Producer Responsibility Organizations (PROs) focusing on packaging, electronic and electrical products, and hazardous products. The presentation emphasized lessons learned, recommending mandatory EPR schemes, increased collaboration among stakeholders,

enhanced global partnerships, business investments with incentives, and consumer awareness. Bomett also highlighted the role of government in creating a competitive environment for waste entrepreneurship, incentivizing plastic alternatives, and collaborating holistically with the private sector, academia, and civil society.

59. **Mr. Chris Whyte (Africa Circular Economy Network (ACEN)) presented on “Progress Towards Circular Economy in Africa: Challenges and Opportunities.”** Mr. Whyte highlighted the three principles of the Circular Economy: eliminating waste and pollution, circulating products and materials at their highest value, and regenerating nature. He emphasized that the Circular Economy is more than just recycling; it is a systemic transition impacting various sectors, including energy, water, waste, manufacturing, and more. The Circular Economy, if adopted, has the potential to achieve Sustainable Development Goals, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, mitigate climate change, and meet global commitments.

60. Mr. Whyte provided an overview of ACEN’s extensive network, including the ACEN Foundation, African Circular Economy Alliance (ACEA), and Global Alliance for Circular Economy and Resource Efficiency (GACERE). He acknowledged Africa’s inherent circularity driven by necessity but pointed out the region’s long journey ahead, with global circularity currently at 7.2%. The presentation focused on South Africa as an example, where the economy is materially dominated by export-oriented extractives and energetically dominated by fossil fuels. The key priority sectors for circularity, according to ACEA, include food systems, packaging, built environment, fashion, and electronics.

61. While acknowledging the importance of addressing plastics, especially in the context of the conference in Seychelles, Mr. Whyte discussed the broader challenges of waste management in Africa. He highlighted the urgency of addressing plastic waste globally, with projections indicating an increase over the next two decades. The presentation concluded with a discussion of real Circular Economy options, including the use of waste plastic in construction materials, road infrastructure, and technologies like pyrolysis, hydrolysis, thermolysis, and gasification to convert problematic plastics into fuels or building products. Whyte emphasized the potential of such solutions to address energy issues in Africa and drive sustainable development.

62. **Mr. Udit Arora (TechIPz) delivered a presentation titled “Science as a Basis for Decision-Making Across the Plastics Value Network.”** Mr. Arora’s agenda covered the evolution of science-based decision-making in the context of the environment and human health, key contemporary issues, the industry’s responses, and the technological advancements driving change throughout the plastics value chain. The presentation delved into the historical milestones in science-based decision-making and emphasized the current challenges, particularly the shift from a linear to a circular economy and concerns related to additives, microplastics, and the impact of new technologies like chemical recycling.

63. Mr. Arora highlighted the importance of evidence-based decision-making, acknowledging uncertainties and ongoing research in areas such as the impact of microplastics on human and animal health. The presentation also discussed the technological advancements driving change across the plastics value chain, citing collaboration success stories from companies like SABIC, Dow, Valoregen, Quantafuel, and others. The concluding thoughts emphasized the evolving policy landscape and the complexity of effective decision-making, which requires evidence from multiple sources, stakeholder engagement, consideration of individual country needs, and a thorough review of socio-economic impacts. Mr. Arora stressed the significance of effectively communicating science and evidence to make informed decisions in addressing the challenges within the plastics value network.

64. **Eric Okuku (Kenya Marine and Fisheries Research Institute) presented on “Promoting Connectivity in Waste Circularity”.** The presentation addressed the current status of marine debris in Kenya, highlighting the prevalence of plastics in both beach and benthic environments. The statistics indicated significant plastic leakage of 37,000 tons per year, emphasizing the urgent need for effective waste management solutions.

65. Mr. Okuku introduced the TakaConnect mobile app as an innovative solution to combat plastic pollution. The app serves as a platform for interaction among various stakeholders in waste management, facilitating communication between waste collectors, buyers, and recyclers. The app, available for free download on the Google Play store, features user-friendly interfaces for registration, login, and dashboard views for sellers, buyers, and recyclers. Additionally, an online interactive map was presented as a crucial tool for waste players, allowing them to identify markets, locate waste collectors, buyers, and recyclers, and access pertinent information about each player. The TakaConnect app and online map aim to promote connectivity in waste circularity by capturing after-

market waste resources for recycling, facilitating digital market access, enhancing waste player networks, and promoting community-based waste recovery and recycling for a cleaner environment.

VIII. Presentations by non-state actors

66. **Alex Kubasu (WWF) addressed the issue of plastic pollution in Africa and emphasized the role of communities in tackling this crisis.** The presentation highlighted the global plastic pollution crisis, noting the doubling of annual global plastic production from 2000 to 2019 and the projected tripling of production and waste generation by 2060 if business continues as usual. Africa, contributing 5% to global plastic volumes, faces significant challenges, with Egypt, Nigeria, South Africa, Algeria, Morocco, and Tunisia accounting for 51% of total plastic consumption in the region. The presentation outlined a vision for “No Plastic in Nature” through a systems approach involving business, cities, policy, and communities.

67. To achieve this vision, the presentation outlined programmatic work in Africa, focusing on Plastic Smart Cities, involving businesses, informal sectors, national policies, financial institutions, fast-moving consumer goods, and community engagement. The initiatives include supporting the implementation of EPR regulations, shaping procurement practices, and engaging with municipalities and mayors. The presentation emphasized research, regional policy engagement, and a global treaty to address the plastic pollution challenge. Additionally, the involvement of communities in the plastic value chain was discussed, emphasizing the importance of awareness creation, policy development, enabling environments, sorting and selling, value chain strengthening, collection, value addition, transportation and aggregation, and material recovery. The presentation highlighted opportunities to engage communities in circular economy practices, drawing on indigenous knowledge, the concept of Ubuntu, and the need for a robust legal framework to address plastic pollution effectively.

68. **Mr. Peter Manyara (IUCN) presented on connecting governments, industries, and society in Africa to reduce and control plastic pollution.** IUCN’s approach involves project actions that focus on understanding leakage through comprehensive data analysis across different dimensions, including types of plastics, polymer sectors, applications, and regional factors. The Plastic Hotspotting model is used to reconcile data, identify hotspots, and analyze plastic material flow, country leakage comparisons, and macro vs. micro leakage. The model, available online, enables stakeholders to explore actionable hotspots and priority interventions.

69. The presentation highlighted the importance of a holistic, life cycle perspective in addressing plastic pollution and emphasized the constitutional mandate of governments to ensure a healthy environment. Peter Manyara suggested blending command and control regulations with market-based policies, avoiding policy uncertainty, and cautioning against a downstream-focused approach. He underscored the significance of involving regional economic bodies and legislative assemblies, such as the East African Community Southern African Development Community, and Indian Ocean Commission. The presentation concluded with key takeaways, including the need for capacity building, strengthening plastics intergovernmental science-policy platforms, and addressing the challenges posed by the increasing number of chemicals.

IX. Breakout group session

70. During the breakout group session, participants were organized into three groups. Each group was tasked with considering a specific theme and required to identify five policy-oriented challenges and opportunities within their respective themes, proposing three policy-oriented recommendations for collaborative activities with the Nairobi Conventions and BRS conventions. Furthermore, each group put forth three recommendations tailored for the upcoming meetings of the respective conferences of the Parties, covering aspects such as capacity building, policy development, and cross-cutting initiatives to effectively address the challenges posed by plastic pollution.

71. The first group, co-facilitated by Mr. Machari and Mr. Manyara, discussed policy implementation on plastics and chemicals. The participants were tasked with providing insights on turning the existing regional action plan on marine litter into a more comprehensive plan addressing plastic pollution, including the role of chemicals in plastics and trade-related aspects.

72. The group discussed various policy-oriented challenges and opportunities related to plastic pollution. Among the identified challenges were the lack of standardized safety specifications for emissions in thermo-processing, the absence of effective recycling/upcycling technology solutions, and limited options for implementing existing policies and legislation. Silos at the national level were recognized as barriers to effective cooperation and coordination. Opportunities included the existence

of developed policies, legislation, and EPR schemes to address plastic pollution in the region. The group emphasized the need to monitor the effectiveness of existing policies and learn from best practices.

73. The group proposed policy-oriented recommendations for joint activities with the Nairobi Convention and BRS conventions, suggesting a gap analysis to identify missing elements in the current regional action plan. Additionally, they recommended the review and integration of relevant annexes, such as those from the Barcelona Convention and Waigani Convention, aligning with the Basel Convention Plastic Waste Amendments. Capacity-building activities were emphasized to support policy implementation and enhance circularity in plastics, addressing issues like plastic waste export/import, recycling, and the application of suitable standards. The group also provided policy-oriented recommendations for consideration by the Nairobi COP and BRS COPs, including revising the regional action plan, encouraging mutual cooperation, engaging in trade-related issues, and formulating policy measures with economic incentives to address plastic pollution.

74. In the second group, facilitated by Mr. Arora, the focus was on strengthening partnerships with the private sector. Participants were guided to consider elements of financing through public-private partnerships and research and development (R&D) on alternatives.

75. Identified challenges included regulatory issues such as governance structures with misaligned priorities, outdated policies, and varying capacities to keep pace with industry developments. The absence of a formal engagement framework between the two sectors, financing challenges, and the adoption of alternatives to plastics without sufficient scientific evidence or engagement were also recognized. Recommendations for joint activities with the Nairobi Convention and BRS conventions included better organization of governments to bring higher value to industries, encouragement of private sector organization and integration, establishment of a Private Sector Engagement framework, and a focus on defining the value of materials considering economic aspects and sustainability pillars.

76. For the Nairobi COP and BRS COPs, the group proposed capacity-building measures such as providing knowledge updates on the progress of multilateral environmental agreements, supporting the development of inclusive positions and negotiations, and inviting private sector and industry experts to share developments in the plastics industry. Additionally, they suggested regional cooperation on waste management through knowledge and data sharing on each country's strengths and opportunities, as well as facilitating trade and market access without heavy restrictions. The emphasis was on creating a collaborative and organized framework to overcome the identified challenges and enhance the effectiveness of public-private partnerships.

77. The third group, facilitated by Ms. Bonne, delved into the theme of research for evidence-based decision-making. Participants discussed the regional relevance of chemicals of concern, effective monitoring of plastic pollution, and related challenges and opportunities.

78. The group focused on chemicals of concern, effective monitoring of plastic pollution, challenges, opportunities, and recommendations for joint activities and COPs. The challenges identified included limited awareness of chemical additives in plastics, insufficient financing for research, and a lack of harmonized manuals for sampling and analysis. Challenges also extended to the high cost of sample analysis, limited feedback of research to policy, and the management of legacy plastic at both national and regional levels.

79. Opportunities highlighted the potential to expand existing Marine Litter Monitoring Programs, establish a regional center for a database, build capacity using existing institutions, and focus on regional approaches toward reducing single-use plastics. Recommendations for joint activities with the Nairobi Convention and BRS conventions included conducting source inventories, capacity enhancement, supporting joint data management systems, strengthening science-to-policy mechanisms, and endorsing research on the Full Life Cycle Approach. The recommendations for COPs involved mobilizing financing for research, promoting partnerships and collaborations, leveraging the Decade of Ocean Science, and encouraging collaboration with regional institutions and economic communities for research and resource mobilization. Overall, the outcomes emphasized a comprehensive and collaborative approach to addressing challenges and harnessing opportunities in managing plastic pollution and chemicals of concern in the WIO region.

80. A summary of the outcomes of the breakout group session can be found in annex III to the present report.

XI. Closure of the meeting

81. Following the customary exchange of courtesies, the meeting was declared closed at 5 p.m. on Tuesday, 12 December 2023.

Annex I

Tentative schedule of the meeting

Towards Effective Management of Plastics and their Chemicals in the WIO Region: Preparing countries for implementation of the legally binding instrument on plastics

Seychelles (Savoy Hotel), 11–12th December 2023

Monday 11 December 2023		
Time	Event	Speaker/Facilitator
I: Opening and scene setting		
09:00 – 09:30	Introduction <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Government of Seychelles ▪ Nairobi Convention ▪ BRS conventions 	Nairobi Convention Secretariat
09:30 – 09:50	Objectives and structure of the workshop	Chair
09:50 – 10.10	Nairobi Convention and its initiatives in plastic pollution in the WIO region	Nairobi Convention Secretariat
10:10 – 10:30	BRS and its initiatives in Africa	BRS Secretariat
10:30 – 11:00	Coffee break	
II. Regional initiatives		
11:00 – 11:20	Towards a regional strategy for plastics management for the western Indian Ocean region	Gina Bonne (Indian Ocean Commission)
11:20 – 11:40	WIOMSA/SST: What do we know?	Stacey Webb (Sustainable Seas Trust)
III: Legally binding instrument on plastic pollution		
11:40 – 12:00	Status of the negotiation of the international legally binding instrument on plastic pollution	Ayub Macharia (Kenya National Environment Management Authority)
12:00 – 12:20	Private Sector engagement in the INC Process	Douw Steyn (Plastics SA)
12:20 – 12:40	Clean Oceans Project Identification and Preparation (COPIP) Programme	Joyce Ouma (European Investment Bank)
12:40 – 13:00	General discussions	Chair
13:00 – 14:00	Lunch break	
IV: Presentations by the focal points (10 min per country)		
14:00 – 15:30	Comoros, Kenya, Madagascar, Mauritius, Mozambique, Seychelles, Somalia, South Africa, Tanzania	Chair
15:30 – 16:00	Coffee break	
V: Presentations by the focal points (continued)		
16:00 – 17:30	Focal Points Presentations	Chair
17:30	End of the day	

Tuesday 12 December 2023		
Time	Event	Speaker/Facilitator
VI. Welcoming ceremony		
09:00 – 10:00	Welcoming Remarks <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Nairobi Convention ▪ BRS conventions ▪ Government of Seychelles 	Chair
VII: Circularity economy		
10:00 – 10:30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Extended producer responsibility schemes as an enabler of circular economy ▪ Progress towards circular economy in Africa: Challenges and opportunities 	Miriam Bomett (Kenya Association of Manufacturers) Chris Whyte (Africa Circular Economy Network)
10:30 – 11:00	Coffee break	
VII: Circularity economy (continued)		
11:00 – 11:30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Science as a basis for decision-making across the entire value chain of plastics? ▪ Connecting stakeholders along the value chain towards circular economy 	Udit Arora (TechIPz) Eric Okuku (Kenya Marine and Fisheries Research Institute)
VIII: Presentations by non-state actors		
11:30 – 12:00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Community engagement in circular economy ▪ Connecting industries and society in Africa to reduce and control plastic pollution 	Alex Kubasu (WWF-Kenya) Peter Manyara (IUCN)
IX: Breakout group session		
12:00 – 13:00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Effective regional participation in the INC process ▪ Policy recommendations at regional and national level to combat plastic pollution ▪ Financing circular economy ▪ Research for evidence-based decision making ▪ Financing circular economy ▪ Research for evidence-based decision making 	Chair
13:00 – 14:00	Lunch break	
X: Report back from breakout groups		
14:00 – 15:30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Joint activities between NC & BRS ▪ Recommendations for COP 11 ▪ Financing circular economy ▪ Research for evidence-based decision making <i>Way forward and Next steps</i>	Chair
15:30 – 16:00	Coffee break	
XI: Closure of the meeting		
16:00 – 16:30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Nairobi Convention ▪ BRS conventions ▪ Government of Seychelles 	Chair
16:30	End of the day	
Wednesday 13 December 2023		
09:00 – 15:00	Field excursion	Secretariat/Government of Seychelles

Annex II

List of participants

NO	NAME	Email	Organization	Country
1.	Lydia Asba	l.asba@gov.sc	Ministry of Agriculture, Climate Change and Environment, Seychelles	Kenya
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41.	Udiot Arora		Tech Ips	Seychelles
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46.	Mark Jeypsingh		The Oceans Projects	Seychelles
47.	Alice Nescerrche		The Oceans Projects	Seychelles

Annex III

Breakout group session – 12 December 2023

Group 1: Policy implementation on plastics and chemicals

Facilitator: Mr. Ayub Machari (Kenya), Mr. Peter Manyara (IUCN)

Tasks:

- (a) Tips for discussion: Consider how to transform the existing regional action plan on marine litter into a comprehensive regional action plan that addresses plastic pollution, encompassing chemicals in plastics, and taking into account trade-related aspects.
- (b) Identify 5 policy-oriented challenges;
- (c) Identify 5 policy-oriented opportunities;
- (d) Propose 3 policy-oriented recommendations on joint activities with the Nairobi Convention and the BRS conventions;
- (e) Propose 3 recommendations for the Nairobi COP and the BRS COPs.

Outcomes:

1. Policy-oriented challenges

- (a) Lack of standardized safety specifications and standards for emissions in thermo-processing;
- (b) Absence of technology solutions for effective recycling/upcycling;
- (c) Limited options for the implementation of existing policies and legislation, exemplified by challenges such as:
 - (i) The presence of a fish nets collection scheme, yet uncertainty about proper disposal or recycling options, suggesting a need for local solutions;
 - (ii) Uncertainty regarding the tracking of mixed plastics (chemicals in plastics, different types of plastics present in products);
- (d) Misunderstanding of the Plastic Waste Amendments leading to non-acceptance of transboundary movements of Annex IX plastics;
- (e) Silos at the national level preventing effective cooperation and coordination.

2. Policy-oriented opportunities

- (a) Policy, legislation, EPR schemes to address plastic pollution have been developed in the region. Certain policies are working, and best practices could be learned from others. The effectiveness of policies can be monitored or tracked for further information;
- (b) The Nairobi Convention has the marine litter action plan that could also address plastic pollution, if revised;
- (c) Strengthening green procurement could help reduce unnecessary plastics, setting targets for plastics reduction.

3. Policy-oriented recommendations on joint activities with the Nairobi Convention and the BRS conventions

- (a) Recommend that the Nairobi Convention and BRS conventions conduct a gap analysis (or review existing reports) to identify what are missing in the current Nairobi Convention regional action plan addressing plastic pollution and implementing provisions of the Basel and Stockholm conventions as they relate to plastic pollution;
- (b) Recommend that the Nairobi Convention and BRS conventions review the following and explore avenues for their integration into the Nairobi Convention's regional action plan or relevant Protocols. This should also take into account ongoing discussions under the

INC. The outcome of this activity could be a recommendation to the Nairobi Convention COP to consider possible revision of its regional action plan or relevant Protocols:

- (i) The annexes added to the Regional Action Plan for Marine Litter under the Barcelona Convention on single-use plastics (annex I) and plastic additives (annex II);
 - (ii) The recent amendments adopted by the Waigani Convention, aligning with the Basel Convention Plastic Waste Amendments (trade);
- (c) Recommend that the Nairobi Convention and BRS conventions conduct joint capacity-building activities and encourage further collaboration with other partners to support technical assistance to:
- (i) Support the implementation of policies addressing plastic pollution, including enhancing synergies at the national level. This encompasses increasing understanding of the Plastic Waste Amendments and facilitating their implementation;
 - (ii) Develop the capacity to enhance circularity in plastics and prevent or minimize the generation of plastic waste by increasing the recycling or reusing of plastic waste, managing export/import feedstock, and manufacturing recycled products. This includes supporting the application of suitable standards;
 - (iii) Support the expansion and implementation of the Green Customs Initiatives for plastic pollution.

4. Policy-oriented recommendations for consideration by the Nairobi COP and the BRS COPs

- (a) Recommend that the Nairobi COP consider revising its regional action plan for marine litter to integrate actions to address plastic pollution, including on plastic additives, problematic and avoidable plastics, transboundary movements of plastic waste in line with the Basel Convention;
- (b) Recommend that the Nairobi COP and the BRS COPs to encourage further mutual cooperation and collaboration on actions towards addressing plastic pollution including microplastics and chemicals in plastics;
- (c) Recommend that the Nairobi COP and the BRS COPs to actively engage Africa Continental Free Trade Area as well as COMESA in supporting the implementation of the Basel Convention Plastic Waste Amendments and other trade-related issues relevant to plastics;
- (d) Recommend that the Nairobi COP invites Parties to formulate policy measures addressing plastic pollution, including the utilization of economic incentives.

Group 2: Strengthening partnership with private sector

Facilitator: Mr. Udit Arora (TechIPz)

Tasks:

- (a) Tips for discussion: Consider elements of financing through public-private partnerships; R&D on alternatives
- (b) Identify 5 challenges
- (c) Identify 5 opportunities
- (d) Propose 3 recommendations on joint activities with the Nairobi Convention and the BRS conventions
- (e) Propose 3 recommendations for the Nairobi COP and the BRS COPs

Outcomes:

1. Challenges public and private sectors face when trying to partner

- (a) Regulatory challenges:
 - (i) Governance structures – too many government stakeholders working in silos and misaligned priorities;
 - (ii) Outdated policies and regulations slowing progress;
 - (iii) Capacities to work at the same pace or stay ahead of industry developments;
 - (iv) Compliance or non-compliance of laws and regulations as well as their enforcement;
- (b) Alternatives to plastics being adopted or mandated without enough scientific evidence or even engagement with the private sector and socio-economic impact analysis;
- (c) Lack of a formal engagement framework between the two sectors;
- (d) Financing and funding of projects:
 - (i) Who should pay and how much?
 - (ii) How to define the value of the project (NPV and IRR)?
 - (iii) How to make available seed capital for start-ups for projects deemed too risky for banks?

2. Recommendations on joint activities with the Nairobi Convention and the BRS conventions

- (a) Governments to organize themselves better to bring the highest possible value to various industries;
- (b) Governments to encourage the organization of the private sector and potentially even integration;
- (c) Establish a framework for Private Sector Engagement – Strategy and closing feedback loops;
- (d) Define the value of materials by examining the economic aspect in which the Government serves an enabler (setting up infrastructure). Review the impact on all three sustainability pillars;
- (e) Strengthen the reporting, monitoring, and evaluation frameworks.

3. Recommendations for the Nairobi COP and the BRS COPs

- (a) Capacity building:
 - (i) Provide knowledge updates on the progress of MEAs, including the INC process;
 - (ii) Support and coordinate the development of inclusive positions and negotiations;
 - (iii) Invite private sector and industry experts to share the latest developments in the plastics industry;
- (b) Regional cooperation on waste management:
 - (i) Enable knowledge and data sharing on each country's strengths and opportunities in waste management;
 - (ii) Enable trade and market access without heavy restrictions.

Group 3: Research for evidence-based decision-making

Facilitator: Ms. Gina Bonne (Indian Ocean Commission)

Tasks:

- (a) Tips for discussion: Consider regional relevance of chemicals of concern, effective monitoring of plastic pollutions, etc.;
- (b) Identify 5 challenges;
- (c) Identify 5 opportunities;
- (d) Propose 3 recommendations on joint activities with the Nairobi Convention and the BRS conventions;
- (e) Propose 3 recommendations for the Nairobi COP and the BRS COPs.

Outcomes:

1. Chemicals of concern

- (a) Limited awareness of chemical additives in plastics - conduct research to analyze the different chemicals, prioritize the toxic ones, and assess their impacts on humans;
- (b) Strengthen the regional working group to cover a wide range of chemicals of concern and advise on priority chemicals to be considered.

2. Effective monitoring of plastic pollution

- (a) Source inventory within the region - leakage/Conduct baselines for plastics and chemicals of concern, e.g., DDT - Source-to-Sea approach;
- (b) Identify hotspots that will inform decision on the specific areas to focus the monitoring;
- (c) Develop a synchronized regional mechanism to monitor plastic pollution/chemicals and gather data that is shareable;
- (d) Assess the socio-economic impacts of plastic across the value chain, including occupational health and trade. Explore regional-level technology for recycling different types of plastics;
- (e) Evaluate the effectiveness of existing laws and legislations;
- (f) Explore the use of multilateral platforms e.g., GPML.

3. Challenges

- (a) Lack of harmonized manual for sampling/analysis of chemicals of concern;
- (b) Limited Financing for research to support monitoring/research on chemicals of concern/plastic pollution;
- (c) Limited feedback of research to policy;
- (d) Limited human and technical capacity;
- (e) High cost of sample analysis;
- (f) Limited joint enforcement;
- (g) Legacy plastic - how to deal with this - nationally and regionally.

4. Opportunities

- (a) Expand existing Marine Litter Monitoring Programme to cover all WIO countries;
- (b) Regional centre for data base/Existing manual that ensures commonality in data collection for marine litter. Opportunity to develop a manual for other chemicals;
- (c) Build capacity utilizing existing institutions within the region and nationally/leverage on regional capacity to support expensive activities e.g., sample analysis/stakeholder collaboration roping in the private sector;

- (d) Technical working group that will respond to specific projects to be implemented at regional level/Work on the regional strategy/awareness/host the existing information in a portal that is easily accessible;
- (e) Focus on a regional approach towards reduction of single use plastics NC/BRS to convene policy makers to consume research;
- (f) Regional Trade agreements to control the trade of plastics - looking at the socio-economic impact and gender issues;
- (g) Research on incentives governments can offer to private sector.

5. Recommendations on joint activities with the Nairobi Convention and the BRS conventions

- (a) Conduct a source inventory depending on the national circumstance – Both;
- (b) Capacity enhancement – Both;
- (c) Support a joint Data Management system/Unification of the solutions/learnings that are easily available for the region/Portal for the knowledge base in line with the respective countries data sharing policies;
- (d) Strengthen the WIO region science to policy and bring in plastic pollution and chemicals;
- (e) Support research on the Full Life Cycle Approach.

6. Recommendations for the Nairobi COP and the BRS COPs

- (a) Recommend that the COP considers inviting contracting Parties to mobilize financing for research;
- (b) Recommend Parties to the conventions to promote partnerships and collaborations on research to enhance capacity in each country;
- (c) Leverage the Decade of Ocean Science to propose an action for the region focusing on plastic pollution;
- (d) Promote collaboration between the Nairobi Convention and WIOMSA to continue supporting research. Promote the availability, sharing of data, and sharing success stories;
- (e) Recommend that the COP requests the secretariats to promote partnerships and enhance collaboration with regional institutions and regional economic communities to promote research and resource mobilization.