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# How to drive solutions for the success of the Global Plastics Treaty

“How to” workshop summary

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## Moderator



**Chloé Dubois**  
Co-founder and executive director  
Ocean Legacy

## Speakers



**Gargi Pareek**  
Director, government affairs for Indian  
subcontinent  
TOMRA



**Atul Bagai**  
Former head of UNEP  
India



**Martin Koehring**  
Ocean and finance specialist  
UNEP Finance Initiative



**Doug Woodring**  
Founder and managing director  
Ocean Recovery Alliance

# Summary

The panel explored pathways for a fair, ambitious and effective Global Plastics Treaty, focusing on bridging country gaps, setting bold yet realistic production targets, and designing equitable financing. Multilateral co-operation is urgent but complex, requiring flexible yet ambitious action to address the plastic crisis as a global health and environmental emergency. Health impacts offer a unifying entry point, with solutions needing regional tailoring, innovation and true-cost accounting. The path forward involves a multi-pronged approach, embedding circular-economy principles, engaging producers through global EPR systems and fostering inclusive governance.

### **EPR and the evolution of recycling policy (India as a case study)**

Initial gaps: India originally had weak or voluntary EPR frameworks; until recently, it was operating under a 2006 policy, which lacked robust enforcement mechanisms.

- Effective EPR brings in: Defined targets for producers, including collection, recycling and recycled content, alongside accountability



measures for polluters. Clear systems for measurement are essential, particularly in tracking recycling at the collection and output stages. Incentives and penalties play a crucial role in ensuring compliance.

- Recycled-content mandates: India has introduced a requirement for 30% recycled content in all plastic packaging, including PET. This policy has driven significant investment in domestic recycling infrastructure, with major players such as Reliance and Indorama contributing. Market prices for recycled PET have surged to €1600-1800, reflecting strong demand.

- Deposit-return schemes (DRS): DRS help maintain clean, high-quality recycling loops, particularly for PET bottles. A single bottle in a DRS can offset the production of 200 virgin bottles in one year, highlighting its role in promoting circularity. While DRS is widely implemented in the global north, Asian markets primarily downcycle plastics, often into textiles.
- Science-led solutions: Clear, evidence-based policies are needed to foster innovation in alternatives and guide regulation.
- Differentiation is key: Not all plastics are equal. A nuanced approach (eg, focusing on single-use plastics first) can enable faster consensus and cooperation.

### Global Plastics Treaty considerations—challenges and strategies

- Trust and simplicity: There is lack of trust in recycling, and the treaty risks becoming overly complex due to the involvement of numerous stakeholders and overlapping agendas, such as health and chemicals. The primary focus must remain on preventing plastic pollution, particularly its leakage into nature.
- Role of recycling: Recycling is often undervalued in treaty discussions. Even with optimal success in reduce, reuse and EPR policies, only a 30% reduction in pollution is projected by 2040, making recycling a necessary part of the solution.
- Case example—Harvest Plastic Programme: This programme has been implemented in Cambodia and Indonesia, focusing on source-separated, clean-plastic collection, achieving an 85-90% recovery rate. It highlights how existing municipal systems are not designed for plastic waste, limiting the effectiveness of recycling efforts.

### Addressing plastic-production caps and chemicals of concern

Plastic-production caps remain one of the most contentious treaty issues, with debates often compared to past multilateral agreements like the Montreal Protocol. A measured approach, informed by previous treaty negotiations, is key to advancing discussions at INC 5.2. The controversy stems from plastic producers' strong influence on national positions and the continued reliance of many industries on plastics, with few viable alternatives. This has led to two opposing camps—one pushing for immediate virgin-plastic reduction and the other prioritising consumption-focused, downstream solutions before limiting production. A path forward:

- Essential-use exemptions: Borrowing from the Montreal Protocol, exempt critical uses (eg, medical, emergency services) from bans while phasing out non-essential uses.

- Industry engagement: Today's industry is more progressive than in the past. With the right frameworks, many may support voluntary production limits.
- Include language on production caps as a later annex so that the treaty can move forward while still addressing this critical issue with more time.
- Focus on eliminating certain single-use and unnecessary materials that are frequent polluters.
- Prioritise addressing a few chemicals of concern (such as UV blockers), which could cut across many products/industries, rather than having an open-ended list that would be difficult to achieve consensus on.

### Financial mechanisms: enablers of ambition

It was emphasised that the financial sector is not just present at negotiations—it is actively shaping the treaty. Through the Finance Leadership Group on Plastics, the financial community is aligning trillions in assets with the treaty's goals.



### Key contributions from the financial sector:

With over \$10trn in represented assets, banks, insurers and investors play a crucial role in shaping plastic policy. The Finance Leadership Group on Plastics actively contributes to intergovernmental negotiating committees (INCs), influencing treaty discussions. In 2024, a finance-industry statement on plastic pollution, endorsed by 180+ institutions representing \$17.2trn, called for EPR schemes, mandatory disclosures and policy environments that support circular economies.

### Strategic financial levers:

Redirecting finance away from harmful activities towards sustainable alternatives is essential for systemic change. This includes supporting system redesign through blended finance, public-private partnerships and risk guarantees. Financial mechanisms must also ensure equity by helping developing countries build necessary infrastructure and access innovation.

### Tools and guidance available:

- Diving Deep Guide—waste prevention and management frameworks for financial institutions.

- Navigating Pollution Blueprint—tailored for banks to assess and redirect plastic-related financial flows.
- Sector-specific insurance guidance and an upcoming Plastic Pollution Action Guide for institutions.

### Bridging divides between states—equity and global co-operation

The panel recognised the urgent need to close the gap between countries ready to move forward with strong commitments and those facing infrastructural, political or economic barriers.

- Technical and financial assistance for lower-capacity nations.
- Voluntary commitments as stepping stones to binding targets.
- Use of historical treaty models to guide compromise (eg, differentiated responsibilities).
- Clear definitions to avoid ambiguity in policy (eg, which plastics are targeted, under what timelines).
- Countries are at different stages of readiness—some leading, others hesitant or under-resourced. A global treaty must accommodate varied capacities while ensuring that ambitious nations do not stall.

