



Webinar | 13 March 2026

Unlocking progress in the plastics treaty negotiations



Photo by James Wakibia

AGENDA



Welcome & Overview of the key findings

Dr Antaya March
Director, Global Plastics Policy Centre

Open panel discussion: Unlocking progress in the plastics treaty negotiations

Moderated by Lizzie Fuller

Panel members:

Dennis Clare, Federated States of Micronesia

Andrea Zbinden, Federal Office for the Environment (FOEN), Switzerland

Guillaume Lecaros De Cossio - Diplomat (Peru) and expert negotiator

Magnus Løvold, Norwegian Academy of International Law (NAIL)

Olivia Carolina Bonner, Forum on Trade, Environment & the SDGs (TESS)

Q&A

Close

ABOUT US

Based at the University of Portsmouth, the Global Plastics Policy Centre is an independent knowledge broker that facilitates effective plastics policy-making in government and the private sector.

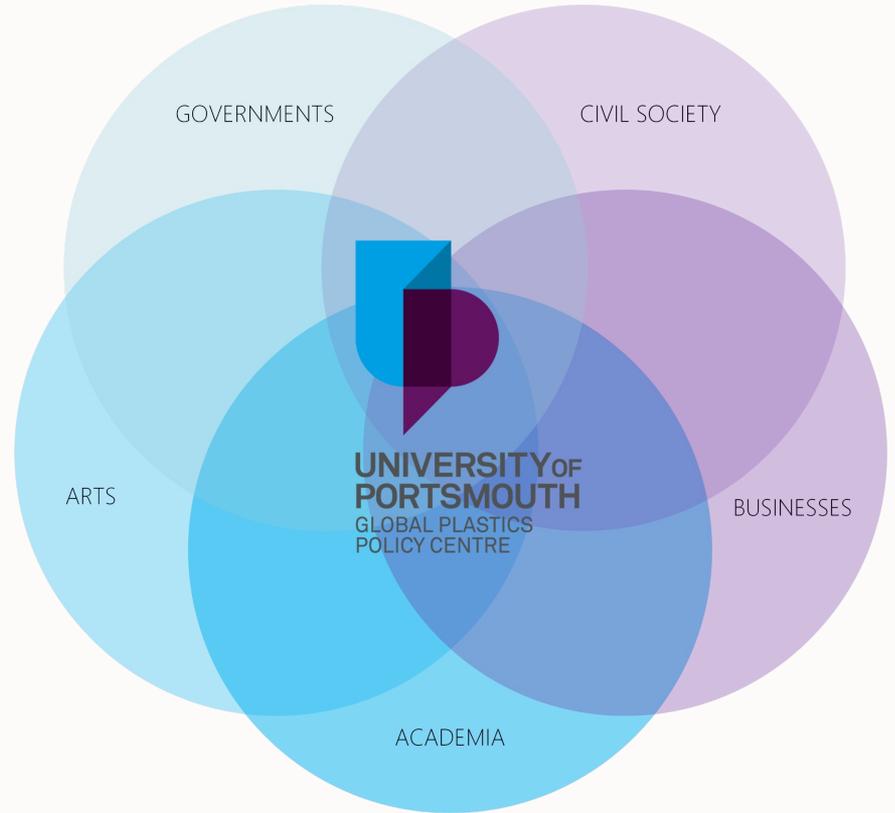
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Presented by
Dr Antaya March



Webinar | Unlocking progress in the plastics treaty negotiations

Overview of research on treaty process



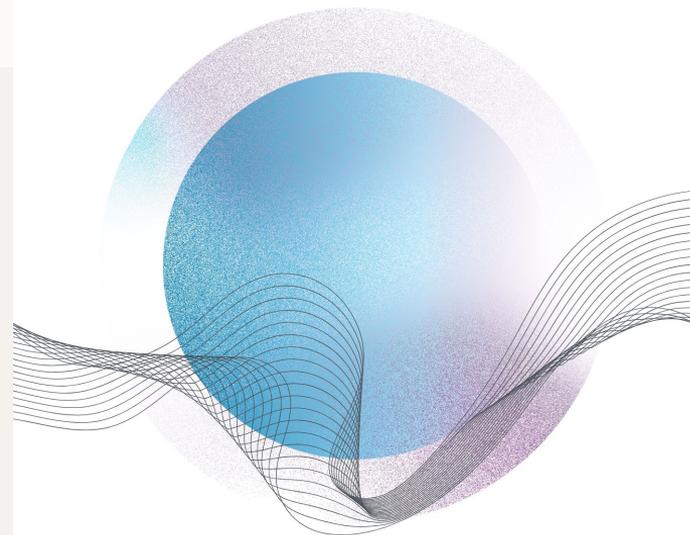
Photo by Samuel Winton

Effective international environmental negotiation processes

- Drawing on insights (56 interviews) from members and observers engaged across the INC process over the past three years
- Focus on what enables effective international negotiation processes and what could help the process move forward



March, A., Evans, T., Nieminen, L., Winton, S., Georgiou, G., Bowyer, C., Fletcher, S. and Fuller, L. (2026). Effective international environmental negotiation processes | Lessons from the process to develop a plastics treaty from INC1 through INC5.2. Global Plastics Policy Centre, Revolution Plastics Institute, University of Portsmouth, UK.



Effective international environmental negotiation processes

Lessons from the process to develop a plastics treaty from INC1 through INC5.2

February 2026

Influences that have shaped progress to date

A process not equipped to facilitate delivering on the ambitious mandate within the intended timeframe

Geopolitical shifts have made for a more challenging negotiation environment

Positional divides have remained a defining feature of the process

Weak use of procedural tools has allowed disruptive norms to take hold

Leadership factors have influenced progress to date:

- Rotation of chair
- Functioning of the leadership system
- Responses to procedural issues

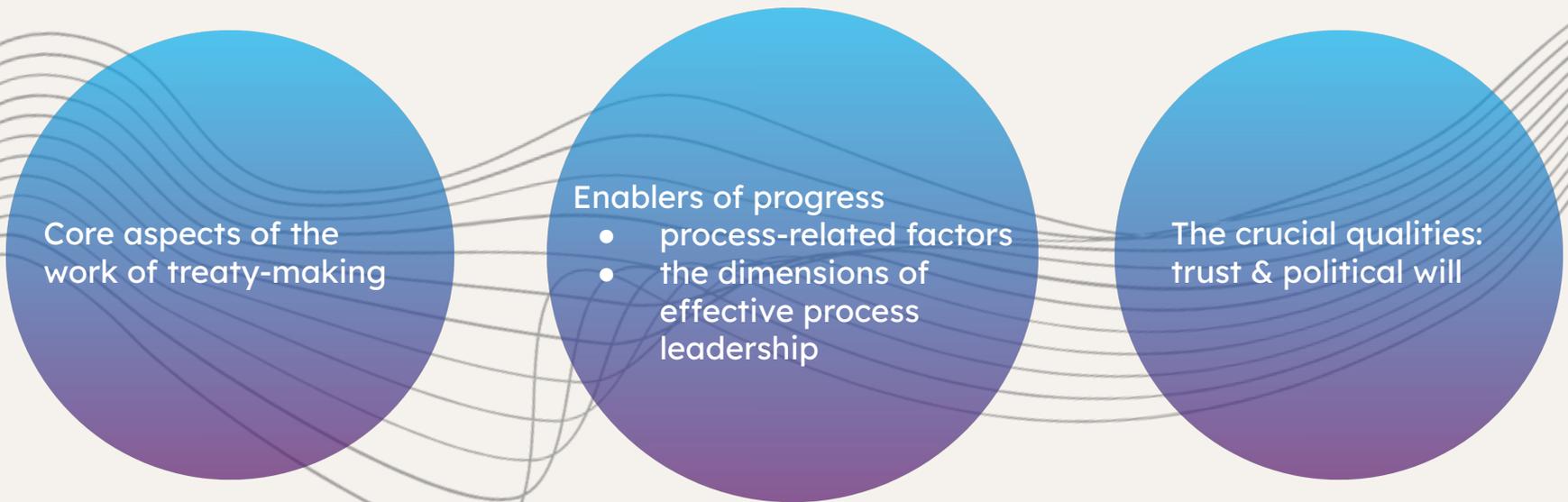
SPOTLIGHT: **positive impacts of the process**

- Expanded understanding of the plastics lifecycle
- Growth in technical knowledge and policy thinking
- Emergence of global networks and communities of practice
- Collective learning through the negotiation process



Designing effective treaty processes

Research-informed conceptual framework:



Core aspects of the work of treaty-making

Enablers of progress

- process-related factors
- the dimensions of effective process leadership

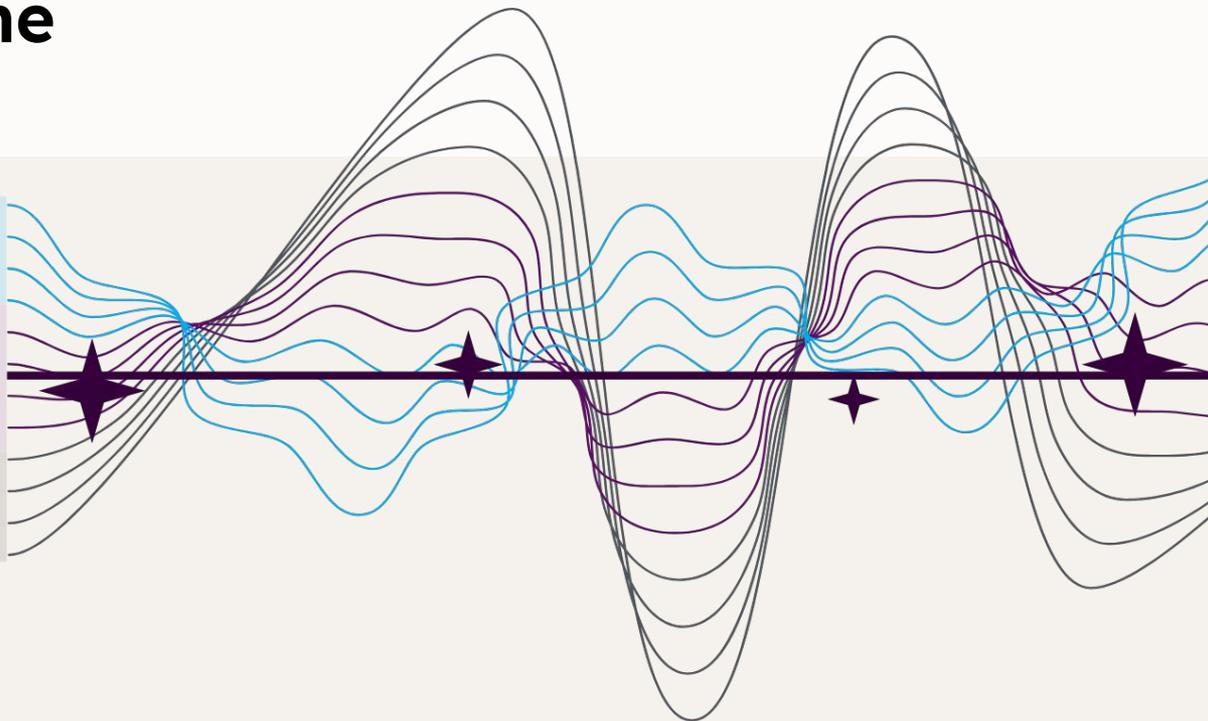
The crucial qualities: trust & political will

Core aspects of the collective work

Development of technical understanding
(problems & potential solutions)

Facilitation of meaningful dialogue that enables understanding political constraints & supports finding pathways to agreement

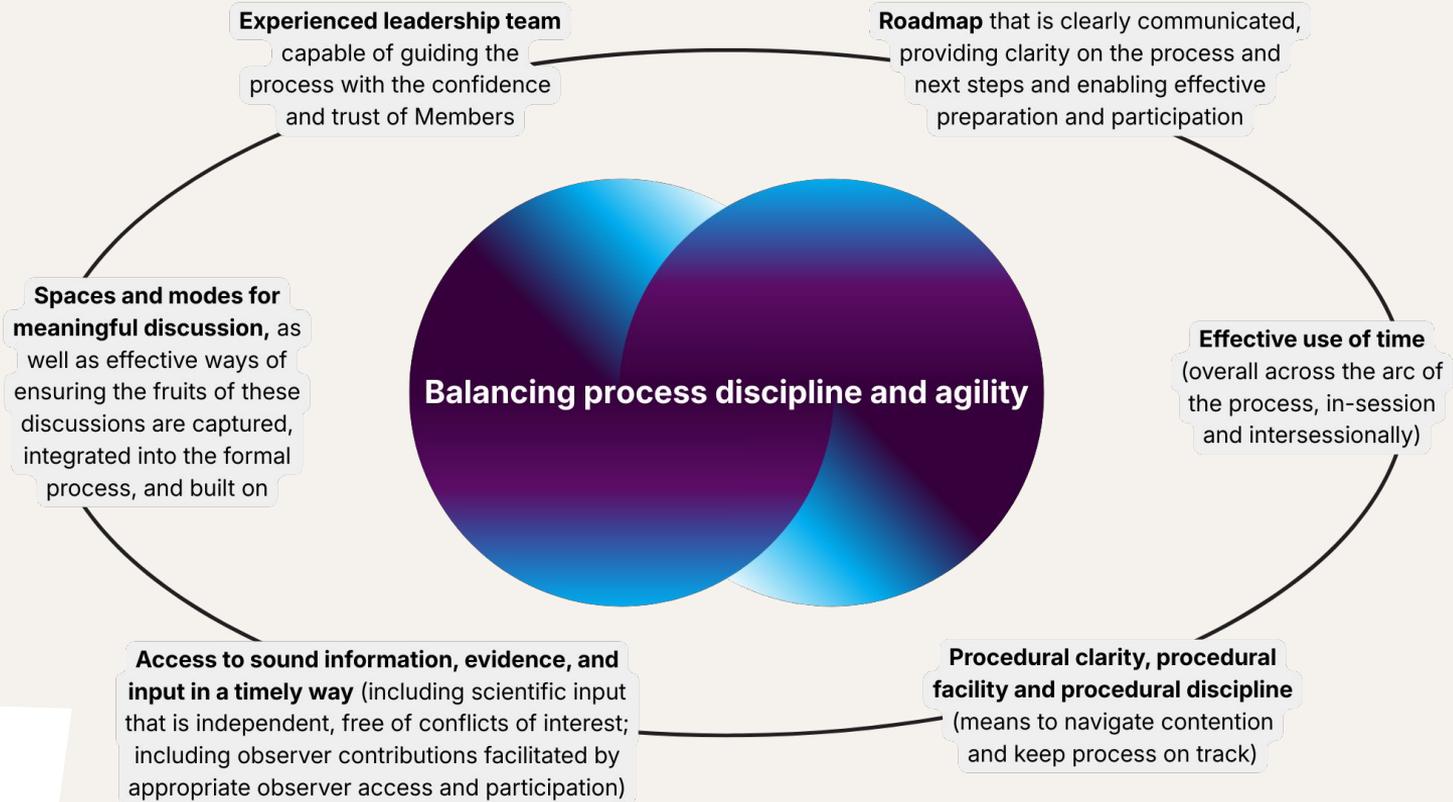
Text development that dovetails conceptual discussions



Modalities that enable efficiency in each of the three workstreams, and between them

Sufficient foundational alignment

Key enablers of progress



The crucial qualities: Trust & political will

Trust

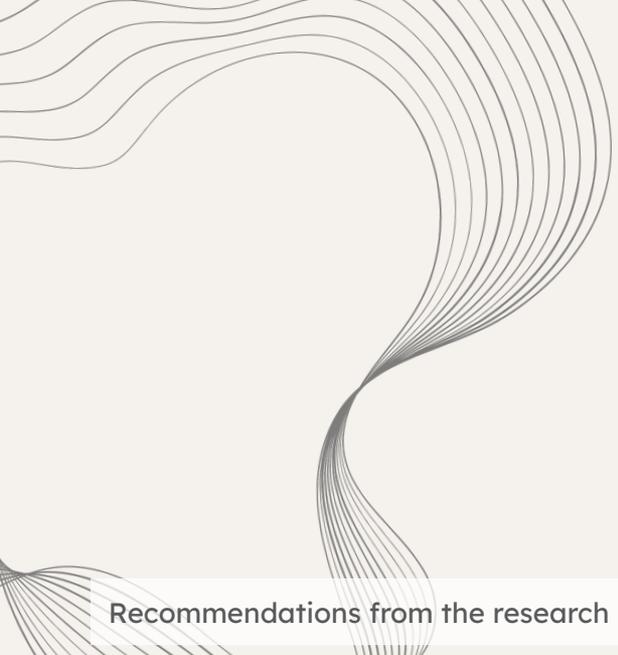
- Both relational *and* procedurally grounded
- Built through consistent application of rules and practices, clear communication and transparency.

Building political will

Sufficient foundational alignment needed to develop a collective approach that

- effectively responds to the problem
- attends to implementation capacity and support.





Recommendations from the research

Unlocking progress in the plastics treaty negotiations



Photo by James Wakibia

**MEMBERS
CHAIR**

1 Build on the informal dialogues during INC5.2 to develop a 'basic proposal' before the next substantive negotiation meeting

“It will be difficult now to work on just one element without also addressing the others and seeing the other trade-offs and flexibility. We need focused discussion on this package, and all the elements that we need to solve and unlock discussions that were so difficult until now. That’s the work we need to do now in the intersessional period before rushing into [the next substantive negotiation meeting of the INC].”

FG3-P8, government

**CHAIR
BUREAU**

2

Consultatively develop a clear roadmap for the process through to its conclusion

“I feel like there’s a lack of clarity on “this is what we’re doing and this will lead to this point”. There’s no road map.”

INC3-P4, government

“Allow time in between meetings so consultation can take place. Allow for regions to discuss, allow for political involvement. This should happen and have time to settle. But it’s important not to lose momentum. The world is looking at us. We need to take the necessary time.”

FG2-P7, government

**CHAIR
BUREAU**

3

Organise the work in ways that address the limitations of the INC process thus far, with a view to unlocking potential in the negotiations

“[T]here’s been numerous occasions where even the Co-Facilitators themselves are unsure as to what needs to be done or to be discussed in a particular session, and that has led to a lot of lost time where you have a lot of back and forth [...] and everybody just generally unsure as to what the outcome of that particular session needs to be.”

INC4-P20, NGO/CSO

CHAIR
with support **4** **Enact process discipline, balanced with creative responsiveness to the dynamics of the negotiations**

“[There are] basic procedural things that are not being done and contributed to the uncertainty about rules to apply.”

FG3-P11, government

OBSERVERS **5** **Conduct considered and targeted engagement**

“I can say to the observers that they have been helpful previously, [but] at [INC] 5.2 all we heard from a lot of NGOs was one word: VOTE. But the question is: how do we vote? Do we have enough votes? What treaty do we vote on? [...] It created a lack of trust on the other side. [...] I believe in the importance of inclusivity and transparency, but it would be helpful if [observers] reflect more on how they would be helpful in the process.”

FG2-P9, government

**CHAIR
BUREAU
SECRETARIAT
ALL MEMBERS**

6

Actively invest in building trust

“Anytime that the Chair had to intervene with his version of what’s important and what’s not it more or less eroded the confidence of Members.”

FG3-P19, government

“

“We have to be clear about it and we have to understand that the responsibility is collective. We are all responsible for what happened. We have to fix the process. **If we don't fix the process, we'll never reach anything of substance.**”

FG2-P11, government



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Open panel discussion



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Federal Office for the
Environment,
Switzerland



**Guillaume Lecaros
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Diplomat and expert
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Olivia Bonner

Forum on Trade,
Environment &
the SDGs



Magnus Løvold

Norwegian Academy
of International Law

Read the full report
and more



Thank you!



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