

Report On UNEP 1st Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee Meeting on international legally binding instrument on plastic pollution



Date: 29th November, 2022

Venue: CSS Ava Center, Khulna

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binding instrument on plastic pollution
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Background:

Jagrata Juba Shangha (JJS) has been working on environmental issues since the inception of the organization and has one of the major thematic focuses on environmental protection. The organization has a strong network with International Pollutant Elimination Network (IPEN) and has been working on plastic and waste management issues for a long time. United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) is organizing the first meeting of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee (INC 1) to develop an internationally binding instrument on plastic pollution including in marine environments from 26 November- 2 December 2022 in Uruguay. As an environmental organization, JJS has organized a discussion session in Khulna on 29th November 2022 about the INC-1 discussion issues to raise awareness among the government, institutional and civil society stakeholders. IPEN's position and demands about plastic pollution have also been discussed in the programme.

Objective:

- To raise awareness among the government, institutional and civil society stakeholders regarding the use of plastic and hazardous chemical
- To raise local demand and mobilize relevant institutions/departments on effective plastic management

Meeting Agenda:

- Organization of the INC-1 structure; key terms; and final provisions
- Science about plastic pollution
- Priorities, needs, challenges and barriers to ending plastic pollution at the country level
- IPEN Position and Demands on the INC-1

Participants:

A total of 24 representatives from the Department of Environment (DoE), the Conservancy Department of Khulna City Corporation (KCC), the Bangladesh Environmental Lawyers Association (BELA), UNICEF, environmental activists, faculty members from universities including Khulna University (KU), Khulna University Engineering & Technology (KUET), journalist and media personnel, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and youth leaders were among those who attended. The discussion session covered knowledge sharing and discussion.

Table 1: Type of Participants & resource person

TYPE OF PARTICIPANTS	DOE	KCC	BELA	FACULTY MEMBERS	STUDENT	YOUTH LEADER	JOURNALIST	NGO ACTIVIST
NUMBER	01	01	01	04	01	02	06	8

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Organization of the INC-1 structure; key terms; and final provisions:

The Executive Director of JJS stated the INC-1 structure, key terms, provisioning, priorities, how the committee has been working, potential elements and scope of working in the committee, and so on in the program's inauguration speech. He also emphasized the consequences of plastic and hazardous chemical use and initiatives taken by JJS both with IPEN, other organizations, and the organization itself.



Plastic Pollution and INC:

- In February 2022, at the resumed the fifth session of the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA-5.2), a historic resolution (5/14) was adopted to develop a legally binding instrument on plastic pollution with the ambition to complete the negotiations by end of 2024.
- The instrument is to be based on a comprehensive approach that addresses the full life cycle of plastic. The INC will consider how to promote sustainable production and consumption of plastics from product design to environmentally sound waste management through resource efficiency and circular economy approaches.
- IPEN's position on foundational principles for a Plastics Treaty
- Guiding principles: The Treaty should be informed by the precautionary principle and the polluter-pays principle. The Treaty should aim at implementing human rights such as the right to information on the hazards of plastics and the right to participate in decision-making on plastics policy.

IPEN's considerations for INC-1:

In his presentation, he also articulated a couple of IPEN's considerations in the INC process-

- The broadest possible participation of all involved stakeholders.

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- Promote a country-led process to create an instrument to end plastic pollution.
- The practice of organizing groups under the UNEA Major Groups system should be abandoned, as it is less inclusive.

Science about plastic pollution and Priorities, needs, challenges and barriers to end plastic pollution at the national level:

Rabeya Sultana, Assistant Professor, Environmental Science Discipline, Khulna University, presented a technical session on the science behind plastic, the lifecycle of plastic, the cost and effect of plastic recycling, the rate of plastic production and consumption, the circular economy chain in plastic production, the impact of macro- and microplastic pollution, etc. She highlighted in her statement that 350 million metric tons of plastic have been produced in 2019. Whereas Asia Pacific has produced nearly half of the world's total plastic production, the remaining countries have produced the other half. OECD members have used most of the plastics produced, including first-world countries. Most of the plastic has been used for secondary packaging in the first world; 99% of the plastic is produced from non-renewable hydrocarbons, which take a long time to sink into the environment. From the perspective of Bangladesh, it dumps openly, and a portion goes for landfilling. The recycling process is not functioning well, and the process of recycling also reduces profit for the business. If we do not efficiently recycle plastic, it will lose net energy. So, the responsible authorities should be careful about the effective recycling of plastic and hazardous chemical waste. Focusing on the extent of plastic pollution, she also noticed that in our country, the toxicity of plastic has spread everywhere; in our daily lives, we are inhaling microplastics, even in isolated places like near the mangrove forest of the Sundarbans.



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She placed a couple of recommendations -

- Minimizing the size of chemical plastics,
- Reducing the production of virgin materials
- Inclusion of country-wise baseline data, but no evidence from BD, though we are laying downstream of Himalayan,
- Formulation of international risk assessment framework with consideration of multidimensionality of plastic and micro-plastic
- Reducing and eliminating single-use, problematic, unnecessary, hazardous plastic through production design
- Innovating and developing more sustainable alternatives, “Substitute materials for plastic” and the substitution of hazardous plastic
- Standardization and labelling of plastic products

Open Discussion and Participants Feedback/recommendations:

After the introduction of INC structures, IPEN, and JJS affiliation, the existing situation of plastic pollution, and a technical presentation on the science behind plastic, different level participants gave their feedback, opinions, and recommendations based on the discussed issues of what to do to minimize plastic pollution. The key points are coded here.

✚ Mahfuz Rahman Mukul, Divisional Coordinator, BELA

“In a newspaper recently published news about finding plastic in breast milk even. We have to decrease the usage of plastic. We have to change ourselves from our own household. Need to change our mentality. Need to set our starting point for daily use. During COVID, we raised the



Mahfuz Rahman Mukul, Divisional Coordinator, BELA emphasized setting a starting point for plastic-free daily routines

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use of plastic. The control mechanism is not functioning properly, the government should impose restrictions on those issues.”

✚ Gouranga Nandy Bureau Chief, Kaler Kontho, Khulna

“We need to control plastic marketing. If we can control that, the consumer level use will reduce automatically. We regularly use plastic and chemical in packaging. We need to change our mentality by blaming only the consumer. We are all responsible for popularizing plastics, but we are blaming the weaker section only. Most often, in packaging, we see the most use of plastics. We have to change the attitude to blame the users, not the producers”



Gouranga Nandy Bureau Chief, Kaler Kontho, Khulna emphasized shifting mentality from blaming consumers

✚ Anisur Rahman, Conservancy Officer, KCC

“KCC is now collecting medical waste separately. KCC has two plants/projects on recycling/reuse of energy through used plastic. Need separation for plastic waste recycling among wastes. KCC has also a plan for that. We need to reduce the use but we cannot control it completely. KCC is going to produce fuel from plastics and will start with 5 tons of plastics, which we will collect from the city waste. And in the CTRDP project, we can do the separation of plastics and use considering 3 R. We can start the exchange of plastic bottles; we are going to start waste to energy.”



Anisur Rahman, Conservancy Officer, KCC emphasized on KCC's initiatives on plastic recycling and collection of hazardous waste separately from other waste

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✚ Alauddin, Journalist, Daily Purbanchal

“We can think about alternative businesses for producers and consumers before controlling plastic use. The DD of DoE is proactively handling the situation in city corporation jurisdiction. As a journalist, I also noticed his initiatives for controlling hazardous waste pollution.”



Alauddin, Journalist, Daily Purbanchal highlighted to rethink about plastic business

✚ SM Tafsirul Islam, Lecturer, URP, KU, Khulna University

“We are running towards 2030 to achieve the SDG. In Dhaka per capita plastic use is very high compared to the national status. We are failing to properly manage plastic and hazardous waste in the country. Daily 246 tons of plastic waste are produced in Dhaka currently. In Khulna per capita plastic use is 3.8 KG. We cannot suddenly stop plastic use but slowly we are working to build awareness. Local-level planning is crucial. Reducing 50% of waste is a government goal. Recycling practices are very limited in number. A huge amount of TK could be earned by recycling.”



SM Tafsirul Islam, Lecturer, URP, KU, Khulna University stated the country's situation of plastic generation, especially in Dhaka and suggested for plastic recycling to earn profit

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✚ **Diponkor Roy, Daily Star, Khulna**

“The producers must take back the produced plastic goods by their company. The producer should think about the alternate use of plastic.”

✚ **Dr. SM Nazmul Ahsan, Health Officer, UNICEF**

“We learnt a lot from today’s presentation. How people can learn which is safe and which is not? We used to go to the market without our own bags but now our behavior should be changed because the disposal of plastic is difficult. Sea, canals and drains are filled with used plastics due to a lack of proper management. Disposal management is a huge challenge for countries like BD. It’s an environmental health issue as well. We need to rethink this.”



Dr. SM Nazmul Ahsan, Health Officer, UNICEF considered plastic pollution as an environmental and health issue as well and needs to rethink for its proper management

✚ **Ashfiquur Rahman, Assistant Professor, DS, KU**

“We are consuming Nano plastic than microplastic today. We did an assessment in KU, we found 150 types of plastic we are using daily at the university campus. we need to do a solution at the producer level. We need regulation on the use of plastic rather than free use.”

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Ashfiqur Rahman, Assistant Professor, DS, KU emphasized for regulation on the use of plastic rather than free use

Baishakhi, Youth Leader, SCP, JJS

“In the departmental stores, we get free bags and sometimes we take more bags than we need. We do not know much about the bad effects of plastic use. We don't have knowledge regarding the regulation of plastic uses.”



Baishakhi, Youth Leader, SCP, JJS gained knowledge on life cycle of plastic and the consequences of plastic pollution

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Concluding Session:

With the presence of the Director of Environment and head of Urban and Rural Planning, the session has been concluded following the discussion and presentations. The presented resource persons gave emphasis to articulate the key recommendations that should be incorporated with the involvement of responsible government departments.

Prof. Mostaofa Sarowar, Head, URP, KUET

“Where do we need to start?? Producer or consumer? We are using plastic as an alternative. In Bangladesh, we take the initiative to ban plastic/polyethene use. when the substitute is used by all then the substitutes became expensive. So, it ultimately does not bring a market-based solution in the long run. If you think about your day, you find that day starts with plastics and whole days are continuing. The use of plastic in an environmentally friendly way is possible but expensive. In our country plastic first, ban by law but practicality is different. We are using Per capita 9 Kg plastic. In Europe, it uses around 100kg per person. The problem in our country is management. We are not responsible for management. We need to properly manage the circular economy. We need to show more responsive behavior from both the consumer and producer end.”



Prof. Mostaofa Sarowar, Head, URP, KUET recommended giving focus on effective plastic management to reduce impact of plastic pollution

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✚ Iqbal Hossain, Director, DoE

“Degradation of average thick plastics takes centuries. The unrestrained use of plastic will have an effect on fertility problems in future generations. So, we all should come forward. The Environment Conservation Rules of 1995 have been followed in our country to regulate plastic use. However, we need to rethink what to do now. We often visited to control plastic use. For example, yesterday we collected 90 kg of polythene merely from Boro Bazar. The conservation department and other media personnel should come forward and let the DoE know about the dismal practices cases so we can take regulatory action on plastic pollution control. We intend to organize a workshop on recycling plastic management. We are not frustrated, but we will hope to get new research from our researchers. We will take initiatives jointly with the city corporation.”



Iqbal Hossain, Director, DoE highlighted DoE initiatives for regulatory action against the hazardous use of plastic and suggested KCC for coming forward

✚ ATM Zakir Hossain, ED, JJS

“The media has a big role to play in controlling plastic use. The DD of the DoE is working on regulatory actions to control plastic use. But an effective solution can come from the collective actions of departments like the Department of Environment (DoE) and KCC. From the session, we get a couple of recommendations, including imposing regulations on the use of plastic products, lessening plastic production, raising awareness about a plastic-free lifestyle, minimizing the size of chemical plastics, and finally, effective management of plastic. The participating government

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departments should work more intensively to address those issues for a healthy lifestyle for our future generation because we have no alternative. JJS is always very sensitive to the use of single-use plastic. It's not a very big deal to minimize the use of single-use of plastic. The pollution from plastic use will be minimized drastically, only if we minimize the use of single-use plastic. JJS will raise the recommendations in several national international forums for policy regulation. I think the DoE, KCC, BELA, University Departments and environmental activists also will assist us in the journey. Thanks to all for participating effectively."



ATM Zakir Hossain, ED, JJS recapping the session learning, suggested minimizing the use of single-use plastic and sought assistance from DoE, KCC, BELA, University Departments and environmental activists to work collectively

Key Recommendations:

- We should raise the demand to developed countries for polluters to pay properly and address the extent of the downstream impact of plastic pollution.
- Need to raise awareness among mass people to minimize single-use plastic and all kind of plastic use in our daily life. The responsible authority should mobilize or regulate people for using alternatives to single-use plastic.
- Plastic producers should rethink the production of plastic. The producer should minimize the size of used chemicals in plastics. Good to transform the plastic producer into alternative environmental safely production.

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- Considering the extended uses of plastic and existing reality, the government department should take more collective actions on effective plastic management rather than merely seeking for banning plastic production and consumption.
- Though we are laying downstream of the Himalayan and vulnerable to plastic pollution, Bangladesh don't have any strong baseline data on plastic pollution. It requires to have strong baseline data for plastic management.
- Key issues to include in the negotiation process emerged from 21 submissions of Member States.
- As a local entity and considering the coastal issues, the GO and NGOs should have a scope of strong participation in an international forum on plastic pollution management.

Key Output/Results:

- Participants understood the structure of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee structures, values and principles for developing international legally binding instrument on plastic pollution
- Sensitized the status of plastic pollution globally, from the perspective of Bangladesh and the consequences
- The participating Government departments/institute including DoE and KCC, Environmental organizations (BELA), NGOs, university departments, environmental activists and journalists committed to working collectively on plastic pollution management.
- Build a local-level network engaging GOs, NGOs department, university faculties and journalists to raise local demand at an international forum like INC.



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Annexure:

Participants List:

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Published Press Release:

প্লাস্টিক বর্জ্যের ১০শতাংশ ধ্বংস হলেও ৯০ ভাগের বেশি বিশ্ব পরিবেশকে বিপন্ন করছে

স্টার্স রিপোর্টার : পৃথিবীতে প্রতি বছর প্রায় ৩৬১ কোটি মেট্রিক টন প্লাস্টিক ও প্লাস্টিকজাত দ্রব্য উৎপাদিত হয়। এর মধ্যে প্রায় অর্ধেকই হচ্ছে একবার ব্যবহারযোগ্য(সিংগেল ইউজ) প্লাস্টিক। এসব পচনশীল প্লাস্টিক বর্জ্যের শতকরা ১০ ভাগ পুড়িয়ে ধ্বংস করা হলেও বাকী ৯০ ভাগের বেশি বিশ্ব পরিবেশকে নান। ভাবে বিপন্ন করে

জেক্সএস'র সভায় তথ্য

তুলেছে। বেসরকারি সংস্থা জাম্মত যুব সংঘে জেক্সএস আয়োজিত এক সভায় গতকাল মঙ্গলবার এ তথ্য দেয়া হয়। নারায়ণ সিএসএস আজ্ঞা সেণ্টারে গতকাল বিকেলে এ সভা অনুষ্ঠিত হয়। সভায় বলা হয়, এখনই সকল শ্রেণি-পেশার মানুষকে প্লাস্টিক দ্রব্য এবং প্লাস্টিকের বায়ু ব্যবহারের বিরুদ্ধে জনমত গড়ে তুলতে হবে। সভার আগে নিজেকেই প্লাস্টিক ব্যবহার বন্ধ করে

জনসচেতনতা সৃষ্টি করা সম্ভব বলেও বক্তারা উল্লেখ করেন। সেই সাথে সভায় উপস্থিত সকলে প্লাস্টিক ব্যবহার বন্ধে শপথ নেন।

জেক্সএস'র নির্বাহী পরিচালক এটিএম জাকির হোসেনের সভাপতিত্বে অনুষ্ঠিত সভায় প্রধান অতিথি হিসেবে উপস্থিত ছিলেন, বিভাগীয় পরিবেশ অধিদপ্তরের পরিচালক মোঃ ইকবাল হোসেন। এসময় বিশেষ

অতিথি ছিলেন, খুলনা প্রকৌশল ও প্রযুক্তি বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের ইউআরপি ডিপার্টমেন্টের হেড প্রফেসর মোহাম্মদ সারওয়ার এবং প্রবন্ধ উপস্থাপন করেন, খুলনা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের পরিবেশ বিজ্ঞান ডিপার্টমেন্টের সহকারী অধ্যাপক রাবোয়া সুলতানা।

অন্যান্যের মধ্যে বক্তৃতা করেন, বেঙ্গল মাহমুজুর রহমান মুন্সল, সাংবাদিক ২-এর পাঠ্য ও কব



জাম্মত যুব সংঘ-জেক্সএস আয়োজিত গতকাল সিএসএস আজ্ঞা সেণ্টারে অনুষ্ঠিত সভায় অতিথিদের সাথে প্লাস্টিকের বিরুদ্ধে বায়ু ব্যবহারের শপথ নেন অংশগ্রহণকারীরা। (পূর্বদিক)

প্লাস্টিক বর্জ্যের ১০শতাংশ

গৌরাঙ্গ নন্দী, তেলিসির কনজারভেশন অফিসার অনিসুর রহমান, দুবির সহকারী অধ্যাপক মোঃ আশফিকুর রহমান, লেকচারার এসএম তাফসিরুল ইসলাম, ইউনিসেসক'র ডাঃ নাজমুল আহসান, সাংবাদিক একরামুল করিম, এইচ এম আলআউমিন, দিলশাদ রায়, শেখ আল আহসান, শিক্ষার্থী বৈশাখী প্রমুখ।

সভায় জানানো হয়, বিভিন্ন গবেষণায় দেখা গেছে, জনবসতিবিহীন স্থান করার দক্ষিণ বেসকালিতে যেমন পানি ও মাটিতে প্লাস্টিকের সংমিশ্রণ পাওয়া গেছে তেমনি বাংলাদেশে শীত মৌসুমে আসা অতিথি পাখির পাকস্থলীতেও পাওয়া যাচ্ছে প্লাস্টিক জাতীয় দ্রব্য। অপর এক গবেষণায় দেখা যায়, ডাবের পানিতেও পাওয়া গেছে মাইক্রো প্লাস্টিক।

সভায় প্রধান অতিথির বক্তৃতায় পরিবেশ অধিদপ্তরের বিভাগীয় পরিচালক বলেন, বাজারে যেসব প্লাস্টিক পাওয়া যাচ্ছে তা মাটিতে পড়লে পঁচতে সময় লাগে ২০ বছর। ডিপলসহ অন্যান্য দ্রব্যের প্লাস্টিক পঁচতে সময় লাগে ৬০ বছর এবং এ থেকে মোটা প্লাস্টিকের পচনশীল সময় সাত্বে চারশ' বছর। আমেরিকার এক গবেষণার উদ্ধৃতি নিয়ে তিনি এমনটি জানান। সুতরাং পরিবেশের জন্য মারাত্মক ক্ষতিকর এসব প্লাস্টিকের বিরুদ্ধে বাংলাদেশে প্রচলিত যে আইন রয়েছে সে আইন অনুযায়ী অভিযান অব্যাহত রয়েছে উল্লেখ করে তিনি বলেন, সেসময়ও নগরীর বড় বাজার থেকে ৯০ কেজি প্লাস্টিক উদ্ধার করা হয়েছে। পরিবেশ অধিদপ্তরের এ অভিযান অব্যাহত থাকবে বলেও তিনি জানান। তবে এজন্য তিনি সকলের সহযোগিতা কামনা করেন।