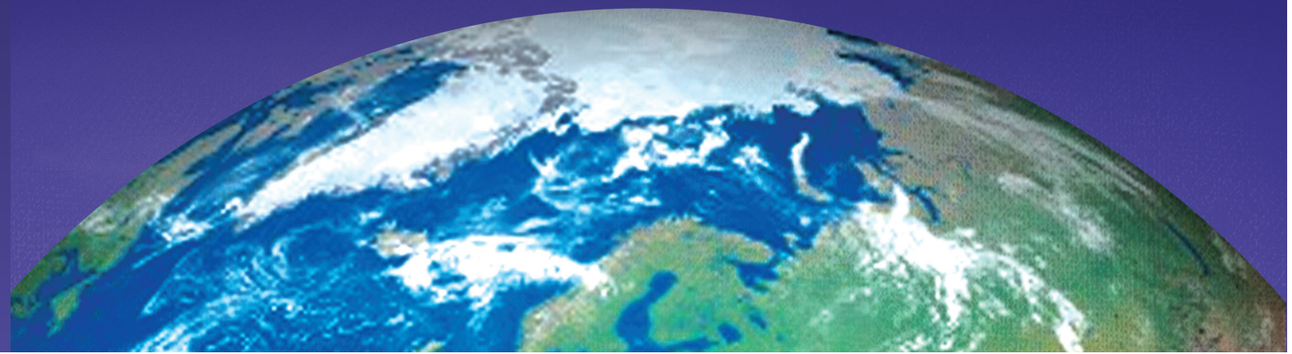
Adopted in March 2002, UNEA Resolution 5/14 mandated the formation of an Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee (INC) tasked with crafting a global set of rules to end plastic pollution across its life cycle.

The Centre for Science and Environment has been following the negotiations of the INC closely and has mapped out country positions based on submissions made by the member states.

Judging from the progress made thus far, the ambitious timeline for developing the treaty seems to be under jeopardy. With two more meetings to go in 2024, the question is: Can the timeline be adhered to?

GLOBAL PLASTIC TREATY NEGOTIATIONS

Country Positions



GLOBAL PLASTIC TREATY NEGOTIATIONS

Country Positions

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1

PLASTIC POLLUTION

MUCH MORE THAN A WASTE MANAGEMENT PROBLEM

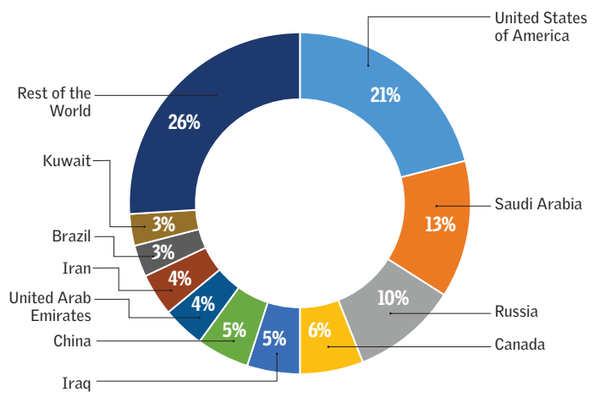
Plastic pollution: Much more than a waste management problem

According to the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), up to 99 per cent of plastics are made from polymers derived from non-renewable hydrocarbons (crude oil and natural gas).[1] Polymers, commonly known as plastics, are larger units of smaller molecules (monomers) that are joined together by chemical bonds.

Although plastic is often seen as a separate issue from climate change, its production, use, distribution and disposal are major sources of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. Together, these processes contributed about 1.8 million metric tonnes (MMT) or approximately 3.4 per cent of global GHG emissions in 2019.[2] Plastic production alone accounted for 90 per cent of these emissions.[3]

Private, public and state-owned companies like ExxonMobil, Shell and the Saudi Arabian Oil Group (or Aramco) have been increasing the output of primary (virgin) plastics in anticipation that a serious global response to climate change might reduce demand for their fuels. Petrochemicals, the category that includes plastic, now account for 14 per cent of total crude oil use, and are expected to drive half of the growth in oil demand between now and 2050.[4]

Graph 1: Country-wise distribution of global oil production in 2022



Source: U.S. Energy Information Administration, International Energy Statistics

Countries that are rich in crude oil and gas—like the USA and Saudi Arabia—extract the resources and ship them to countries where they can be refined and polymerized to make plastics (see *Graph 1: Country-wise distribution of global oil production in 2022*).

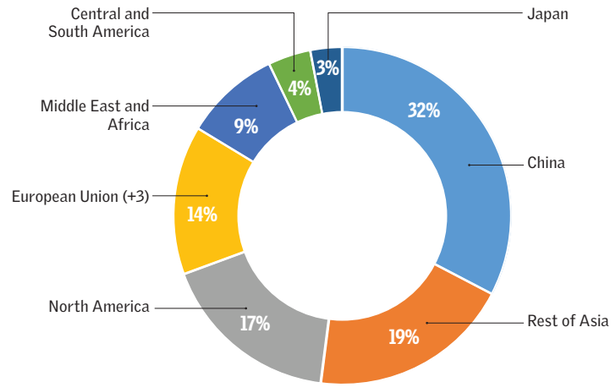
The issue of overproduction

Annual plastic production has doubled in the last 20 years—from 234 MMT in 2000 to 460 MMT in 2019.[5] Under a business-as-usual scenario, annual production is set to triple and reach 1,261 MMT by 2060.[6]

At 238 kg per capita per year, Organisation for Economic Cooperation (OECD) countries currently have the highest per capita consumption of plastics.[7] They are also projected to remain the largest per capita consumers of plastics in 2060.

Historically, Europe and North America have dominated global plastic production. But, in the last decade, Asia has emerged as a significant producer, with China evolving as a global hub for plastic manufacturing. About 32 per cent of global plastic production currently happens in China[8] (see *Graph 2: Regional distribution of global plastic production in 2022*).

Graph 2: Regional distribution of global plastic production in 2022



Source: Petrochemicals New Build and Expansion Projects Analysis by Type, Development Stage, Key Countries, Regions and Forecasts, 2023–27, Global Data 2023

Plastic happens to be one of the few materials that are supply driven rather than demand driven. Plastic products and products packaged in plastic have been introduced in places that have neither the infrastructure nor the funds to manage this stream of waste. Of all the plastics that were ever produced, only 9 per cent have been recycled and 12 per cent have been incinerated, while 79 per cent were found in various compartments of the environment, including landfills and dumpsites.[9]

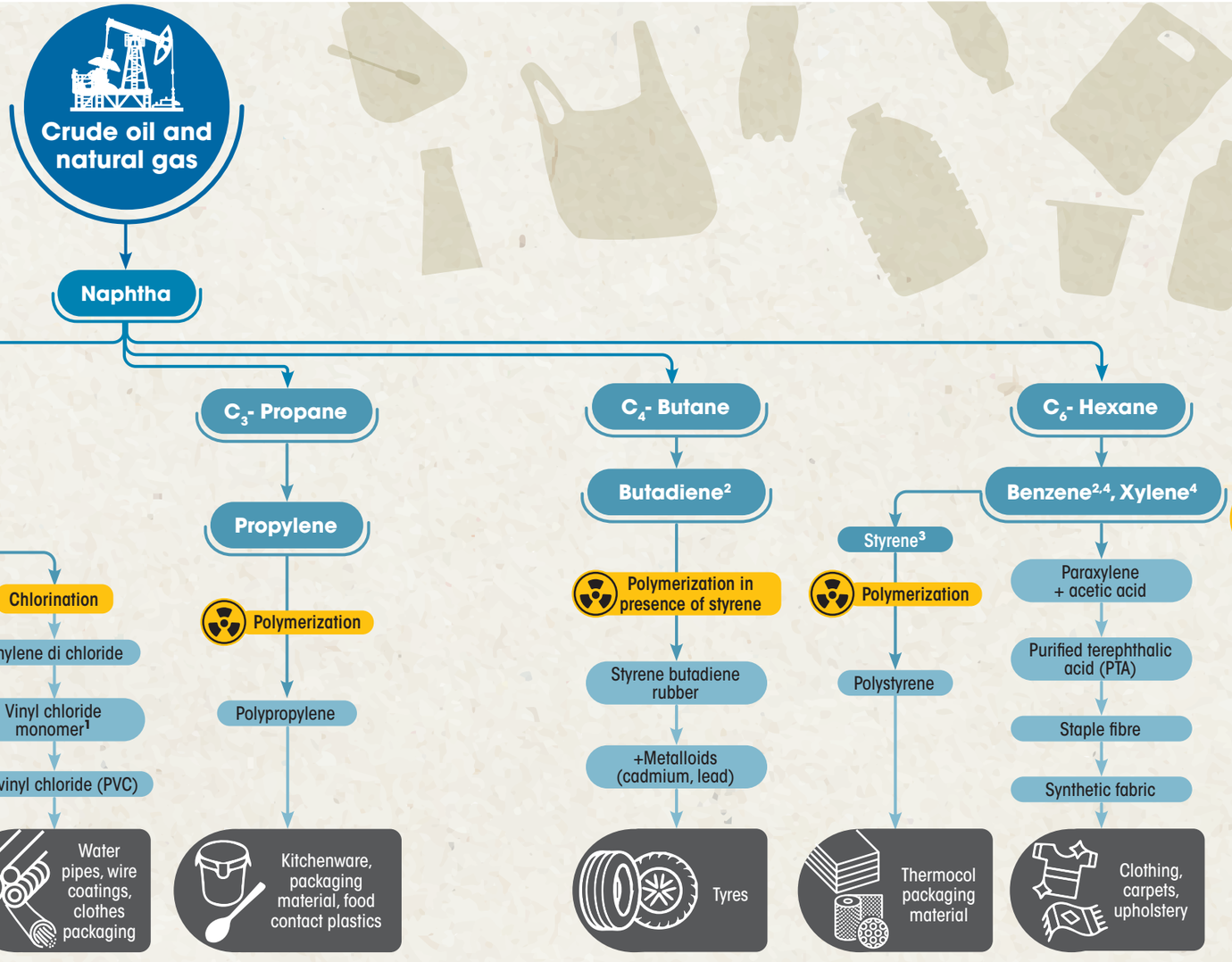
Figure 1: The invisible link—chemicals used in plastic production and their human health impacts

Plastics and human health

The number of chemicals being used by the plastic industry in the manufacturing process is increasing. A research paper from 2021 revealed that 10,500 distinctly identifiable chemicals are being used during the production of plastic.[10] The researchers note with concern that approximately 30 per cent of these chemicals are uncategorizable due to lack of information.

Manufacturing hazard

Nearly all of the world's plastic is manufactured from naphtha, a by-product of petroleum refining. Here is a snapshot of the production of different types of plastic products and the chemicals involved



DANGEROUS MIX

[1] Vinyl chloride monomer in liquid and vapour form in vinyl chloride polymerization plants increases mortality from angiosarcoma of the liver, brain cancer and connective and soft tissue cancers

[2] Benzene and butadiene cause leukemias and lymphomas

[3] Styrene is neurotoxic and a possible human carcinogen

[4] Benzene, xylene are neurotoxic

POLYMERIZATION THREAT

Polymerization is the process of making plastic by joining monomers (single molecule) to produce polymer (large molecule). A look at popular chemical groups used in polymerization and their health impacts:

FLAME RETARDANT

Organophosphate esters can cause reproductive and developmental toxicity

PLASTICIZERS

Orthophthalate diesters, bisphenol A (BPA), phthalates, per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) are neurodevelopmental toxicants, carcinogenic and endocrine disruptors

STABILIZERS

Nonylphenol is an endocrine-disrupting chemical

Source: Centre for Science and Environment; Infographic: Tarun Sehgal

A 2023 report by the United Nations Environment Programme, *Chemicals in Plastic: A technical report*, revealed that more 13,000 chemicals have so far been identified or detected in plastics as monomers, additives and processing aids. An analysis of about 7,000 identified chemicals revealed that more than 3,200 of them are causes of potential concern and may be hazardous to human health.[11]

The PlastChem project, which aims to address the fragmented understanding of chemicals in plastics and their impact on human health and the environment, released a report in 2024, titled *State of the Science on Plastic Chemicals*. It suggests that more than 16,000 chemicals are known to be used for making plastics, of which less than 6 per cent have been regulated by global legislation, while more than 10,000 do not have any disclosed hazard information.[12]

The growing scientific evidence raises serious concerns about the safety of using plastics for such applications like food contact materials (see *Figure 1: The invisible link—Chemicals used in plastic production and their human health impacts*).

This points to the fact that apart from being a waste management and litter problem, plastic suffers from unsustainable production and consumption issues, along with being a serious human health issue all along its life cycle.[13]

United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA) and Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee (INC)

The United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA) was formed in 2012 to create an effective system of international environmental governance.[14] Every two years, its 193 member states gather with business and civil society bodies to set priorities for global environmental policies, develop international environmental laws, and agree on steps to address the planet's most pressing environmental challenges.

As the key decision-making body on environmental issues, UNEA's resolutions also inform the work of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP).

During its fifth meeting in March 2022, UNEA adopted Resolution 5/14, which mandated the creation of an Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee (INC) to develop a legally binding instrument to end plastic pollution. INC consists of all the member states of the UNEP that will be negotiating the instrument. Resolution 5/14 also mandated that the instrument cover the "full life cycle" of plastic.[15]

What is the full life cycle of plastic?

In the context of plastic pollution, the terms “upstream”, “midstream”, and “downstream” are often used to describe different stages in the life cycle of plastic, from production to disposal.

1. Upstream includes activities such as extraction of raw materials (petroleum or natural gas), refining these materials into monomers like ethylene, and converting them into primary plastic (virgin) polymers like polyethylene (HDPE, LDPE), which are then manufactured in the form of pellets, powder or flakes.[16]

2. Midstream refers to the intermediate stages of the plastic life cycle, where the pellets are converted to intermediates like plastic films or preforms that are then converted to plastic products to be used for final application. This stage involves the use of primary plastic polymers, and distribution, retailing and consumption of plastic products.

3. Downstream refers to the final stages of the plastic life cycle, focusing on waste management (including collection, sorting and transportation), recycling/processing, and disposal methods such as incineration (in waste-to-energy or specialized incineration facilities), landfilling and dumping. Downstream activities are important for managing the environmental impacts of plastic pollution, including preventing plastic waste from entering natural ecosystems like oceans and waterways.

Understanding these distinctions is important for addressing plastic pollution comprehensively. Efforts to mitigate plastic pollution can target interventions at each stage of the plastic life cycle, from reducing plastic production and consumption (upstream actions), designing better plastic products which can be reused and recycled (midstream actions), to improving waste management and recycling infrastructure (downstream actions).

Countries considered in the report and methodology for assessment

The three concluded rounds of discussions have witnessed a handful of member states and regional groups actively contributing to and shaping the negotiations. A few groups like the Pacific Small Island Developing States (PSIDS) have embraced stronger provisions like reduction of primary plastic production.

On the other hand, there is a small group of countries (mostly oil and plastic producing nations) which have expressed forceful disagreement with the stronger provisions and are pushing for an instrument that focuses heavily on the downstream stages of plastic pollution, i.e., improved waste management.

The revised zero draft has been developed on the basis of in-session submissions and the interventions that were made while the zero draft was being negotiated at INC-3 in Nairobi, Kenya. Country positions have been established based on in-session submissions of member states at the negotiation floor in INC-3 which are available in the public domain.[17]

The countries considered for the report are those which have been shaping and influencing the negotiations. The attempt has been to cover most of the major oil, gas and plastic producing countries for the analysis, in order to understand the position of those countries whose economies are linked to the plastic life cycle.

The following 118 countries have been considered for the report

Grouping	Country / Member State
BRIC (did not make in-session submissions as a group)	Brazil
	Russia
	India
	China
European Union	Austria
	Belgium
	Bulgaria
	Croatia
	Republic of Cyprus

Grouping	Country / Member State
European Union	Czech Republic
	Denmark
	Estonia
	Finland
	France
	Germany
	Greece
	Hungary
	Ireland
	Italy
	Latvia
	Lithuania
	Luxembourg
	Malta
	Netherlands
	Poland
	Portugal
	Romania
	Slovakia
	Slovenia
	Spain
	Sweden
African Group	Algeria
	Eswatini
	Namibia
	Angola
	Ethiopia
	Niger
	Benin
	Gabon
	Nigeria
	Botswana
	Gambia
	Rwanda
	Burkina Faso
	Ghana
	Sao Tome and Principe
	Burundi
	Guinea
	Senegal
	Cabo Verde
	Guinea-Bissau

Grouping	Country / Member State
	Seychelles
	Cameroon
	Kenya
	Sierra Leone
	Central African Republic
	Lesotho
	Somalia
	Chad
	Liberia
	South Africa
	Comoros
	Libya
	South Sudan
	Congo
	Madagascar
	Sudan
	Côte d'Ivoire
	Malawi
African Group	Togo
	Democratic Republic of the Congo
	Mali
	Tunisia
	Djibouti
	Mauritania
	Uganda
	Egypt
	Mauritius
	United Republic of Tanzania
	Equatorial Guinea
	Morocco
	Zambia
	Eritrea
	Mozambique
	Zimbabwe
	Algeria
	Eswatini
	Namibia
	Angola

Grouping	Country / Member State
Pacific Small Island Developing States (PSIDS)	Fiji
	The Federated States of Micronesia
	Tuvalu
	Kiribati
	The Republic of the Marshall Islands
	Nauru
	Papua New Guinea
	Samoa
	Solomon Islands
	Tonga
	Vanuatu
	Palau
	Timor-Leste
	Cook Islands
Individual countries	Australia
	Canada
	Norway
	Japan
	United States of America
	Iran

The Gulf Cooperation Countries (GCC), including Bahrain, Kuwait, Iraq, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, made interventions on the negotiation floor. However, since the discussions in the contact groups are governed by the Chatham House Rules[18] and none of the countries made in-session written submissions, we cannot discuss the positions that these countries have taken during the negotiations.

The responses of the countries considered for the report have been bifurcated into five categories:

- No intervention
- Agree with the text of the zero draft
- Proposed ambitious additions to the text of the zero draft
- Proposed lower ambition (weaker) text in the zero draft
- Do not want this option to feature in the text

The report is divided into 17 sections based on the 17 provisions which have been considered for the analysis. It presents a bird's-eye view of the positions taken by countries on various issues. The sections are as follows:

1) Primary plastic polymers
2) Chemicals and polymers of concern
3) Problematic and avoidable plastic products including single-use plastics
4) Product design and performance
5) Reduce, Reuse, Refill, Repair, Refurbish
6) Use of recycled plastic content
7) Alternative plastics
8) Non-plastic substitutes
9) Extended Producer Responsibility
10) Emissions and releases of plastics across their life cycles
11) Waste management
12) Trade
13) Existing plastic pollution, including in the marine environment
14) Just transition
15) Transparency, tracking, monitoring and labelling
16) Financing
17) Capacity building, technical assistance and technology transfer

Only the core obligations and the means of implementation have been considered for this analysis, since the discussions around the preamble, principles, scope, etc. are at a nascent stage and the positions of most of the countries are yet to be ascertained.

2

COUNTRY POSITIONS

PRIMARY PLASTIC POLYMERS

In the context of the ongoing negotiations within the UNEA to end plastic pollution, the term "primary plastic polymers" refers to the types of plastic resins or polymers that are commonly used in the production of plastic products. These primary polymers represent the foundational building blocks of most plastic items found in everyday use.

Plastics in use in 2019, by polymer and application

Sr. no.	Polymer type	Million metric tonnes	Percentage
1	Linear low-density polyethylene (LLDPE) and low-density polyethylene (LDPE)	54	12
2	High-density polyethylene (HDPE)	56	12
3	Polypropylene (PP)	73	16
4	Polystyrene (PS)	21	5
5	Polyvinyl chloride (PVC)	51	11
6	Polyethylene terephthalate (PET)	25	5
7	Others (including applications like marine coatings, road markings and fibres)	179.5	39
	Total	**459.5**	

Source: OECD 2022. *Global Plastics Outlook: Economic Drivers, Environmental Impacts and Policy Options*, OECD Publishing, Paris

The negotiations surrounding primary plastic polymers are critical because they focus on addressing the root causes of plastic pollution by targeting specific types of plastics that contribute significantly to environmental degradation and marine litter. By identifying and addressing these primary polymers, policymakers and stakeholders aim to implement targeted measures to regulate plastic production and consumption.

UPSTREAM

Primary plastic polymers

- Other countries (not part of the analysis)
- No intervention
- Proposed ambitious additions
- Proposed lower ambitions
- Accept measures as it is
- Don't want this option

PSIDS

OPEC nations

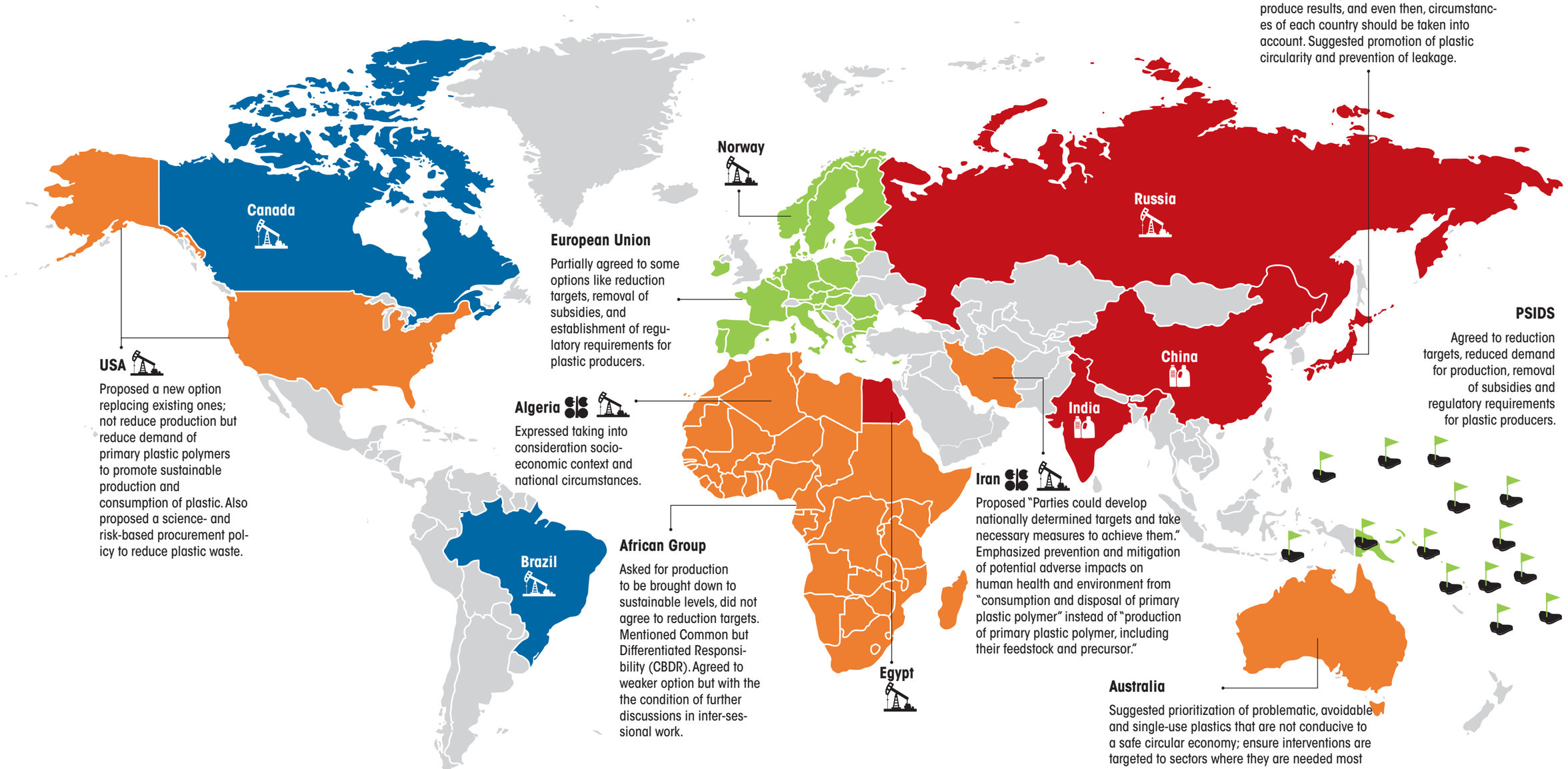
Plastic producer

Oil producer

OIL PRODUCING NATIONS

African Group

Algeria	Gabon
Congo	Libya
Equatorial Guinea	Nigeria



USA

Proposed a new option replacing existing ones; not reduce production but reduce demand of primary plastic polymers to promote sustainable production and consumption of plastic. Also proposed a science- and risk-based procurement policy to reduce plastic waste.

European Union

Partially agreed to some options like reduction targets, removal of subsidies, and establishment of regulatory requirements for plastic producers.

Algeria

Expressed taking into consideration socio-economic context and national circumstances.

African Group

Asked for production to be brought down to sustainable levels, did not agree to reduction targets. Mentioned Common but Differentiated Responsibility (CBDR). Agreed to weaker option but with the the condition of further discussions in inter-sessional work.

Japan

Suggested that production restrictions be considered only when other measures do not produce results, and even then, circumstances of each country should be taken into account. Suggested promotion of plastic circularity and prevention of leakage.

PSIDS

Agreed to reduction targets, reduced demand for production, removal of subsidies and regulatory requirements for plastic producers.

Iran

Proposed "Parties could develop nationally determined targets and take necessary measures to achieve them." Emphasized prevention and mitigation of potential adverse impacts on human health and environment from "consumption and disposal of primary plastic polymer" instead of "production of primary plastic polymer, including their feedstock and precursor."

Australia

Suggested prioritization of problematic, avoidable and single-use plastics that are not conducive to a safe circular economy; ensure interventions are targeted to sectors where they are needed most and avoid unintended consequences.

CHEMICALS AND POLYMERS OF CONCERN

The terms “chemicals of concern” and “polymers of concern” refer to specific chemical substances and types of polymers recognized for posing significant risks to human health and the environment throughout their life cycles. Abundant scientific evidence highlights the adverse impacts of various plastic chemicals such as monomers and additives. They increase the burden of disease and have substantial health costs, particularly related to endocrine disruption. Marginalized communities, children and women are the most vulnerable.

Chemicals of concern encompass additives like plasticizers (ex. phthalates), flame retardants (ex. brominated compounds), colorants and stabilizers used in plastic manufacturing. They are known for their toxicity, persistence and potential to bioaccumulate, posing risks during production, use and disposal by leaching into the environment. Negotiations prioritize identifying and regulating these chemicals, promoting safer alternatives, and implementing measures to reduce exposure.

In the case of polymers of concern, certain plastics like expanded polystyrene (EPS) foam and specific types of polyvinyl chloride (PVC) present environmental and health risks due to low recyclability, persistence and potential release of hazardous substances during degradation. Discussions aim to address these challenges through targeted regulatory actions, innovation, and policy measures to mitigate the impacts of plastic production and disposal.

The proposed approach involves creating a negative list of hazardous chemicals prohibited for use and a positive list of permissible chemicals subject to stringent testing requirements. By focusing on chemicals and polymers of concern, negotiations for a future instrument to end plastic pollution aim to safeguard ecosystems and public health from the detrimental effects associated with hazardous plastic materials. The goal is also to foster sustainability and innovation in plastic management practices.

UPSTREAM

Chemicals and polymers of concern

- Other countries (not part of the analysis)
- No intervention
- Proposed ambitious additions
- Proposed lower ambitions
- Accept measures as it is
- Don't want this option

PSIDS

OPEC nations

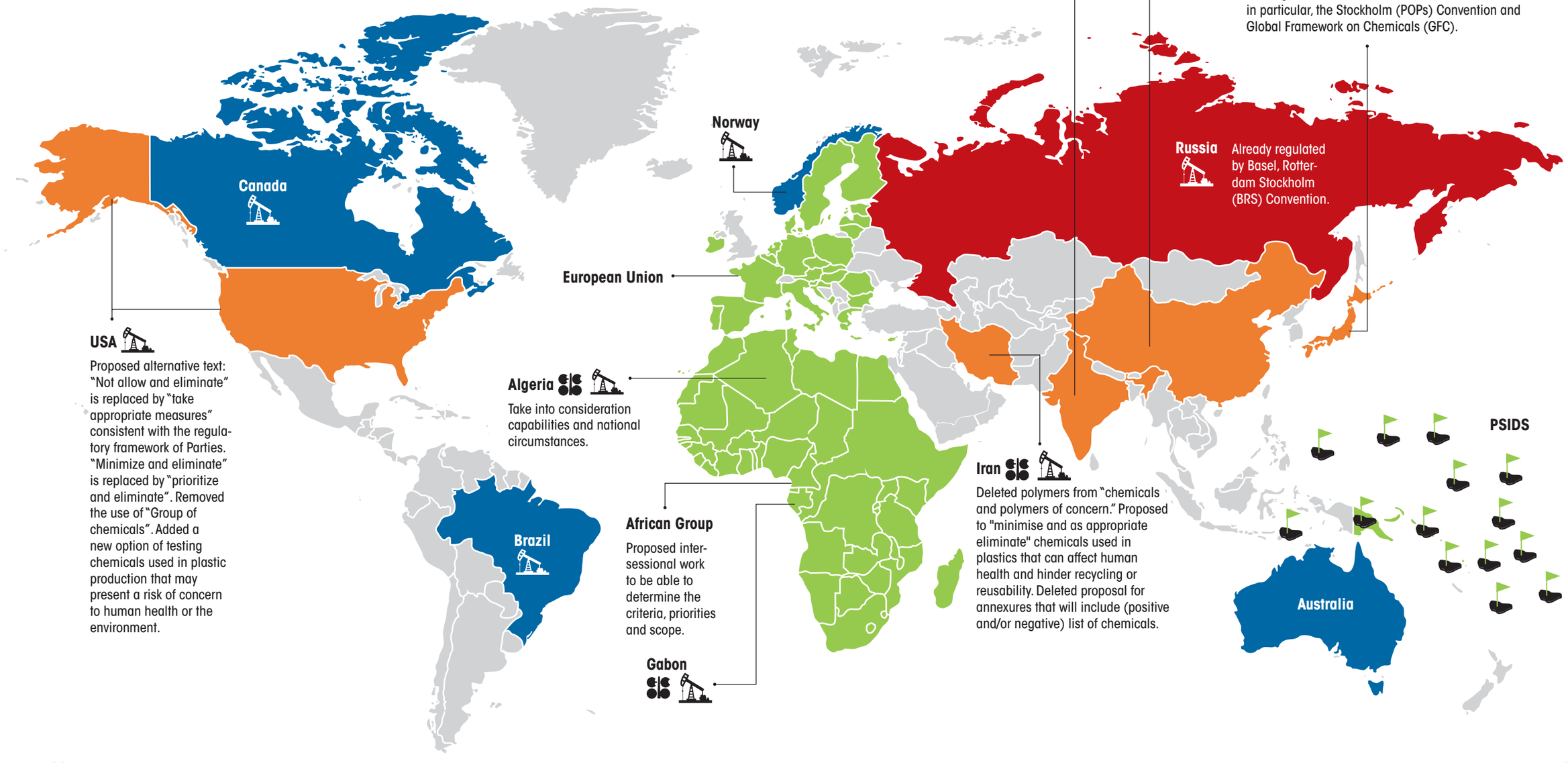
Plastic producer

Oil producer

OIL PRODUCING NATIONS

African Group

Algeria
Congo
Equatorial Guinea
Gabon
Libya
Nigeria



India

Removed "polymers" from the text and opted for weakest option.

China

Deleted "Group of chemicals and polymers."

Japan

Suggested new text that proposes to "manage" the risk of chemicals used in plastics and plastic products. Deleted "not allow" and "regulate". Emphasized that it is necessary to avoid duplication with existing international conventions and frameworks, in particular, the Stockholm (POPs) Convention and Global Framework on Chemicals (GFC).

USA

Proposed alternative text: "Not allow and eliminate" is replaced by "take appropriate measures" consistent with the regulatory framework of Parties. "Minimize and eliminate" is replaced by "prioritize and eliminate". Removed the use of "Group of chemicals". Added a new option of testing chemicals used in plastic production that may present a risk of concern to human health or the environment.

Algeria

Take into consideration capabilities and national circumstances.

African Group

Proposed intersessional work to be able to determine the criteria, priorities and scope.

Gabon

Iran

Deleted polymers from "chemicals and polymers of concern." Proposed to "minimise and as appropriate eliminate" chemicals used in plastics that can affect human health and hinder recycling or reusability. Deleted proposal for annexures that will include (positive and/or negative) list of chemicals.

PROBLEMATIC AND AVOIDABLE PLASTIC PRODUCTS INCLUDING SINGLE-USE PLASTICS

The term “problematic and avoidable plastic products including single-use plastics” encompasses specific categories of plastic items recognized as harmful to the environment and human health, which can be replaced with more sustainable alternatives.

Problematic plastics represent a diverse range of products that pose significant challenges throughout their life cycles, including those difficult to recycle or degrade, leading to persistent pollution in ecosystems. These items, often littered or improperly disposed of, contribute to visual pollution and habitat degradation, while also causing significant harm to wildlife. Examples include multi-layered packaging, plastic utensils, straws and balloons, known for their low recyclability or high rates of single-use disposal.

Avoidable plastics, on the other hand, are those that can be substituted with non-plastic alternatives or eliminated through changes in consumer behaviour, product design or policy interventions. These notably include single-use and disposable items that contribute disproportionately to plastic waste generation.

In the negotiations to end plastic pollution, addressing problematic and avoidable plastic products, particularly single-use items, is a top priority for policymakers and stakeholders seeking effective waste reduction, resource efficiency and environmental protection measures. The aim is to establish appropriate global and national measures such as removing these products from the market, reducing production through alternate practices or non-plastic substitutes, and redesigning problematic items to meet criteria for sustainable and safe product design.

This strategic approach aligns with broader efforts to transition towards circular and sustainable practices in plastic pollution management, aiming to minimize reliance on harmful plastics, promote innovation in materials and product design, and safeguard ecosystems from the adverse impacts of plastic pollution. Ultimately, the goal is to implement comprehensive strategies that reduce the environmental footprint of plastic consumption, while fostering a shift towards more sustainable and responsible consumption patterns globally.

UPSTREAM

Problematic and avoidable plastic products including single-use plastics

- Other countries (not part of the analysis)
- No intervention
- Proposed ambitious additions
- Proposed lower ambitions
- Accept measures as it is
- Don't want this option

PSIDS

OPEC nations

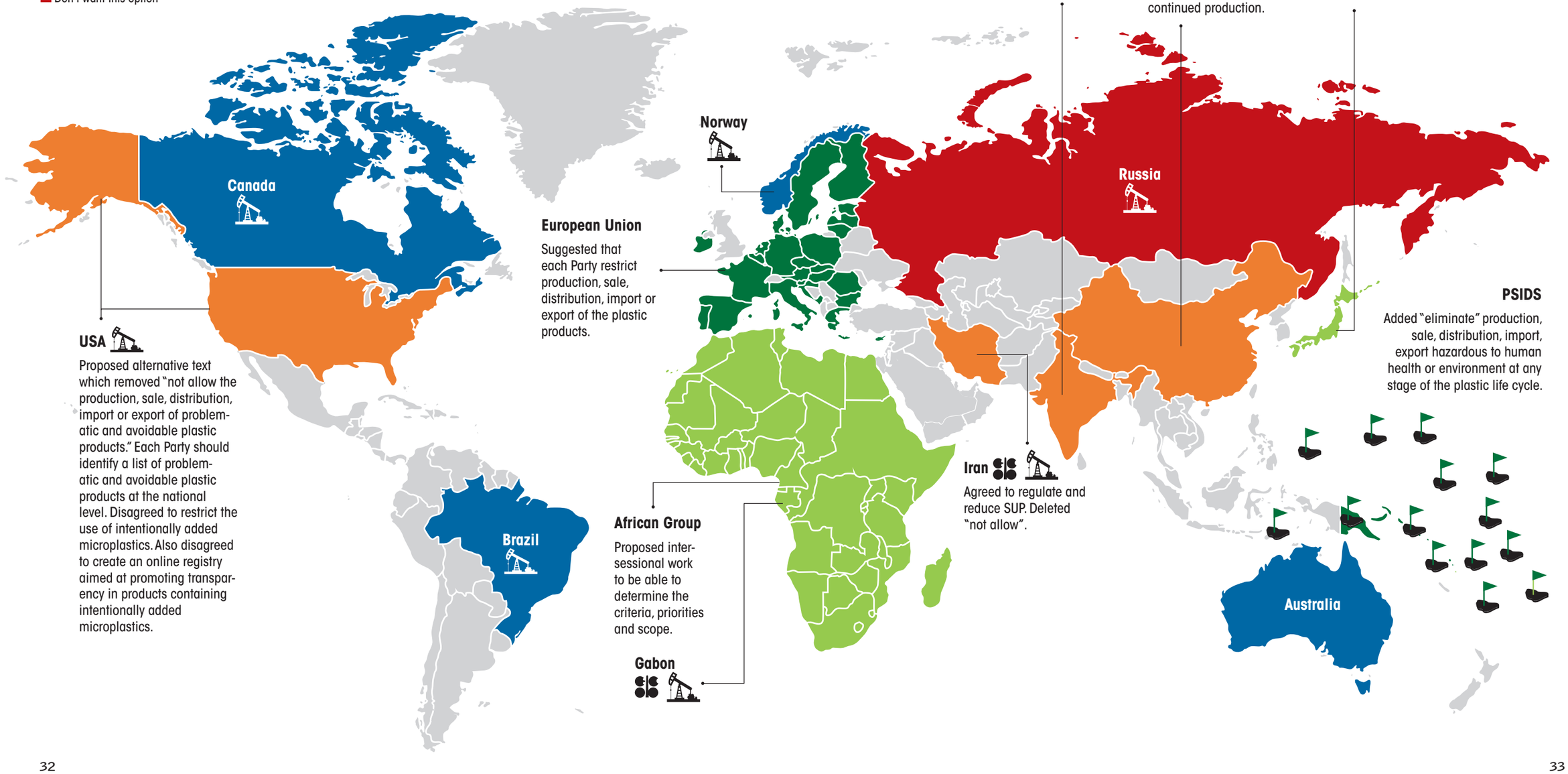
Plastic producer

Oil producer

OIL PRODUCING NATIONS

African Group

Algeria, Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Libya, Nigeria



India

Used the text "regulate" instead of "not allow". Agreed to a science-based criteria for indentification of such plastics.

China

Deleted the text "import and export of problematic and avoidable plastic products" suggesting continued production.

Japan

Specifically targeted single-use plastic with high risk of environmental leakage, considering technical feasibility and accessibility of alternative plastics.

European Union

Suggested that each Party restrict production, sale, distribution, import or export of the plastic products.

USA

Proposed alternative text which removed "not allow the production, sale, distribution, import or export of problematic and avoidable plastic products." Each Party should identify a list of problematic and avoidable plastic products at the national level. Disagreed to restrict the use of intentionally added microplastics. Also disagreed to create an online registry aimed at promoting transparency in products containing intentionally added microplastics.

African Group

Proposed intersessional work to be able to determine the criteria, priorities and scope.

Gabon

Iran

Agreed to regulate and reduce SUP. Deleted "not allow".

PSIDS

Added "eliminate" production, sale, distribution, import, export hazardous to human health or environment at any stage of the plastic life cycle.

PRODUCT DESIGN AND PERFORMANCE

Product design and performance plays a pivotal role in shaping the environmental impact of plastic products throughout their life cycles.

Product design involves deliberate planning and creation aimed at reducing environmental impacts from inception to disposal. Sustainable design entails selecting materials wisely and considering factors like recyclability, durability and end-of-life options early in development. Key strategies include opting for environmentally preferable materials, designing for recyclability with mono-materials or compatible composites, minimizing packaging waste, and promoting durability to extend product lifespan. Innovative concepts such as modular or repairable designs further enhance resource efficiency and sustainability.

Concurrently, product performance focuses on functional characteristics and quality, balancing effectiveness with environmental considerations. Sustainable performance entails optimizing functionality while minimizing negative impacts like energy consumption and GHG emissions. It involves designing energy-efficient products, reducing emissions throughout the product life cycle, and facilitating environmentally sound disposal or recycling at end-of-life stages. By ensuring that products meet performance requirements and user expectations sustainably, manufacturers can mitigate the environmental footprint associated with plastic production and use.

Addressing product design and performance is critical for transitioning away from plastic pollution. By integrating sustainable design principles and optimizing product performance, stakeholders can advance towards circular economy models that prioritize resource efficiency, waste reduction and environmental stewardship. This holistic approach aligns with broader sustainability goals and underscores the importance of responsible product design in mitigating the adverse impacts of plastic pollution on ecosystems and human health.

MIDSTREAM

Product design and performance

- Other countries (not part of the analysis)
- No intervention
- Proposed ambitious additions
- Proposed lower ambitions
- Accept measures as it is
- Don't want this option

PSIDS

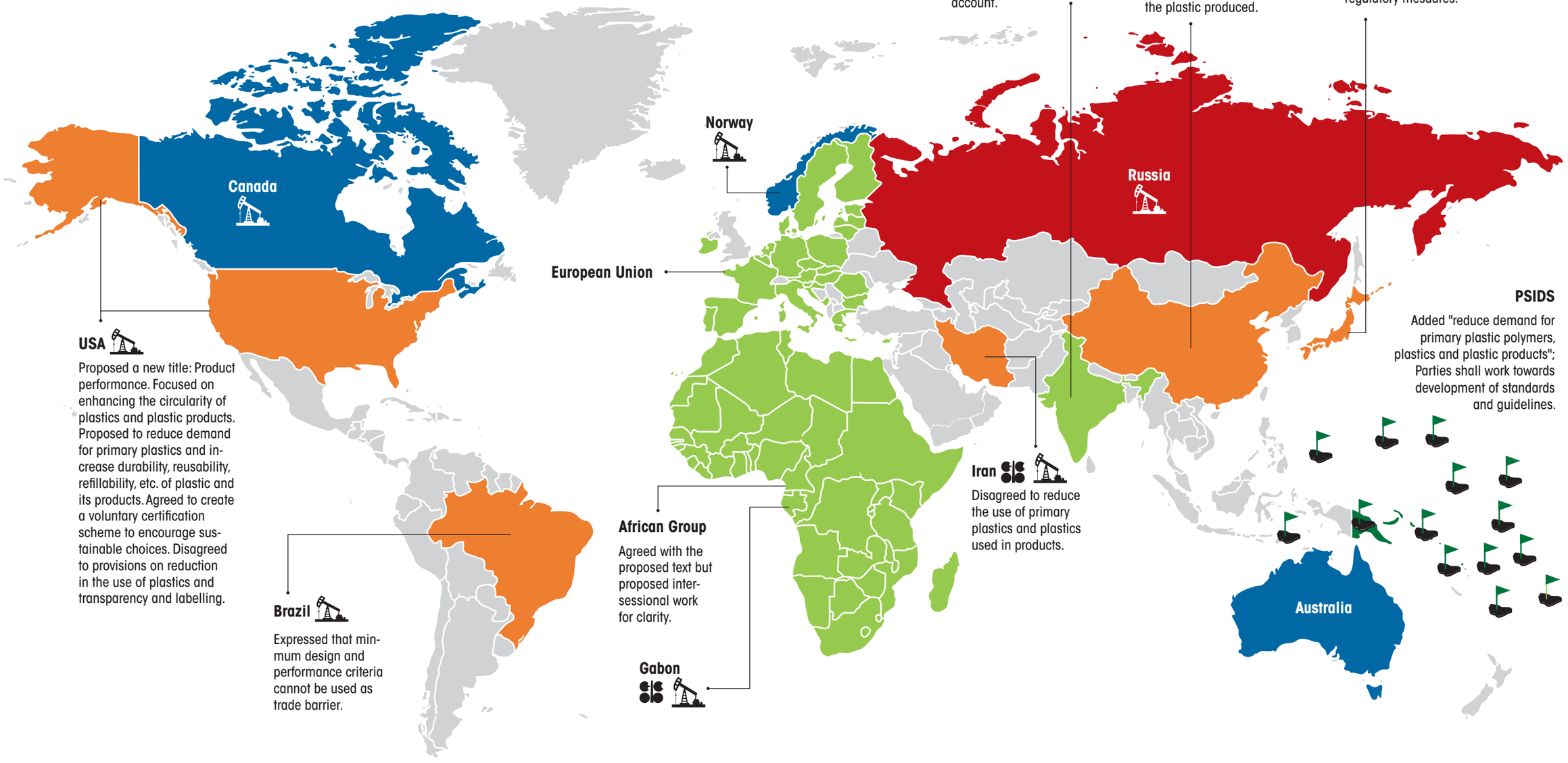
OPEC nations

Plastic producer

Oil producer

OIL PRODUCING NATIONS

African Group	
Algeria	Gabon
Congo	Libya
Equatorial Guinea	Nigeria



India

Focused on increasing reusability, repairability and recyclability. All measures to be nationally driven, taking intenational standards into account.

China

Showed support for plastic circularity. However, added that use of recycled content should be done with caution as it leads to compromised properties of the plastic produced.

Japan

Expressed that it is difficult to set uniform global design standards. It should be done nationally. Agreed to sustainable design and performance criteria but disagreed to use of regulatory mesaures.

PSIDS

Added "reduce demand for primary plastic polymers, plastics and plastic products"; Parties shall work towards development of standards and guidelines.

USA

Proposed a new title: Product performance. Focused on enhancing the circularity of plastics and plastic products. Proposed to reduce demand for primary plastics and increase durability, reusability, refillability, etc. of plastic and its products. Agreed to create a voluntary certification scheme to encourage sustainable choices. Disagreed to provisions on reduction in the use of plastics and transparency and labelling.

Brazil

Expressed that minmum design and performance criteria cannot be used as trade barrier.

African Group

Agreed with the proposed text but proposed intersessional work for clarity.

Gabon

Iran

Disagreed to reduce the use of primary plastics and plastics used in products.

REDUCE, REUSE, REFILL, REPAIR, REFURBISH

The concept of “Reduce, Reuse, Refill, Repair, Refurbish” presents a comprehensive strategy for addressing plastic pollution by promoting circular and resource-efficient consumption models. Each element of this framework is designed to minimize the environmental impact of plastics across their life cycles.

“Reduce” focuses on reducing overall plastic consumption and production by advocating for responsible consumption habits and alternative materials to minimize waste generation. Strategies like plastic bag bans and awareness campaigns play a crucial role in fostering reduced plastic use.

“Reuse” encourages the extended use of plastic products through the adoption of reusable alternatives, reducing the demand for single-use plastics and conserving resources.

“Refill” promotes refillable systems for household and personal care products, minimizing packaging waste by allowing consumers to replenish products using refillable containers. Implementing refill stations in retail settings supports this initiative.

“Repair” emphasizes the importance of repairing and maintaining plastic products to extend their lifespan, reducing disposal frequency and conserving resources. Encouraging repair services and designing products for easy repair contribute to waste reduction efforts.

Lastly, “Refurbish” involves upgrading or reconditioning plastic items to improve performance and appearance, delaying their entry into the waste stream and promoting longevity.

Together, these principles foster a shift away from single-use plastics towards a more sustainable and circular approach to plastic consumption, aligning with broader efforts to combat plastic pollution and promoting environmental stewardship.

MIDSTREAM

Reduce, Reuse, Refill, Repair, Refurbish

- Other countries (not part of the analysis)
- No intervention
- Proposed ambitious additions
- Proposed lower ambitions
- Accept measures as it is
- Don't want this option

PSIDS

OPEC nations

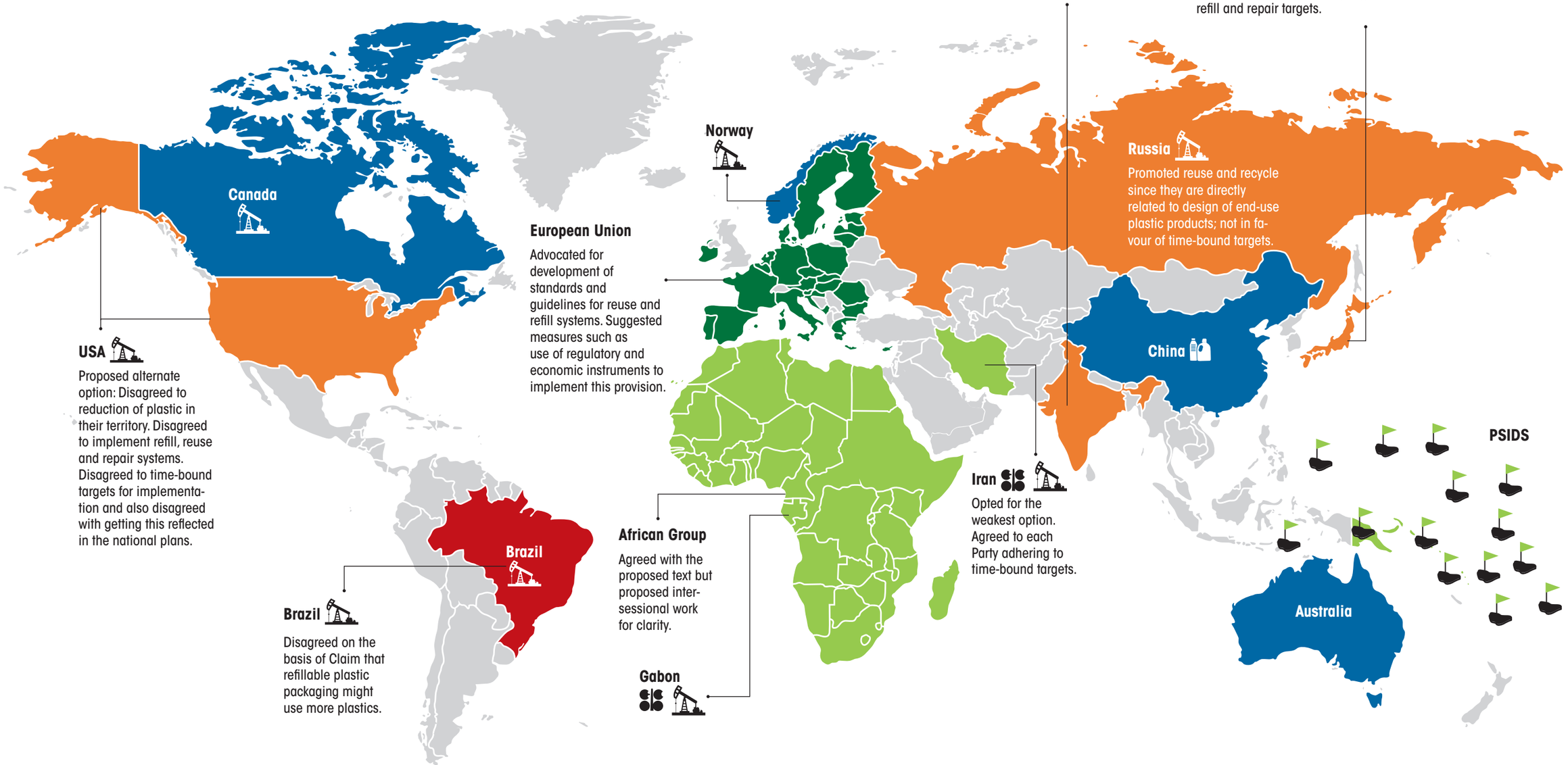
Plastic producer

Oil producer

OIL PRODUCING NATIONS

African Group

Algeria	Gabon
Congo	Libya
Equatorial Guinea	Nigeria



India

Deleted "reduce". Disagreed to minimum targets for reuse, refill and repair.

Japan

Suggested to take effective measures, covering the distribution, sales, and consumption stages to achieve minimum recycling targets. Recycling targets are preferred over reuse, refill and repair targets.

Russia

Promoted reuse and recycle since they are directly related to design of end-use plastic products; not in favour of time-bound targets.

European Union

Advocated for development of standards and guidelines for reuse and refill systems. Suggested measures such as use of regulatory and economic instruments to implement this provision.

USA

Proposed alternate option: Disagreed to reduction of plastic in their territory. Disagreed to implement refill, reuse and repair systems. Disagreed to time-bound targets for implementation and also disagreed with getting this reflected in the national plans.

Brazil

Disagreed on the basis of Claim that refillable plastic packaging might use more plastics.

African Group

Agreed with the proposed text but proposed intersessional work for clarity.

Gabon

Iran

Opted for the weakest option. Agreed to each Party adhering to time-bound targets.

USE OF RECYCLED PLASTIC CONTENT

The utilization of recycled plastic content is pivotal in advancing sustainable practices and reducing the environmental footprint of plastic production and consumption. By incorporating recycled plastics into new products and materials, the demand for virgin plastics is diminished, diverting plastic waste from landfills and ecosystems.

The significance of using recycled plastic content is multifaceted. Firstly, resource conservation is achieved by reducing reliance on new raw materials like petroleum or natural gas, thereby promoting resource efficiency and supporting a circular economy. Secondly, waste reduction is facilitated through the integration of recycled plastics into new products, contributing to efforts aimed at minimizing plastic pollution. Thirdly, manufacturing products with recycled plastic requires less energy compared to manufacturing with virgin plastics, resulting in significant energy savings and reduced GHG emissions.

Furthermore, the promotion of a circular economy is encouraged through the adoption of recycled plastic content, fostering innovation in recycling technologies and infrastructure. Policymakers can support these efforts by advocating for regulations mandating minimum recycled content in products and providing incentives like tax breaks or extended producer responsibility schemes. Consumer awareness also plays a crucial role in driving market demand for recycled plastic products, prompting businesses to incorporate more recycled materials into their offerings.

In ongoing negotiations to combat plastic pollution, the use of recycled plastic content represents a proactive strategy to mitigate environmental impacts associated with plastic production and consumption. However, attention is to be paid to developing verification mechanisms to ensure the safety and quality of recycled content, particularly for food-grade applications. As research progresses, addressing chemical concerns associated with recycled plastics will be essential to ensure the continued sustainability and safety of recycled plastic products.

MIDSTREAM

Use of recycled plastic content

- Other countries (not part of the analysis)
- No intervention
- Proposed ambitious additions
- Proposed lower ambitions
- Accept measures as it is
- Don't want this option

PSIDS

OPEC nations

Plastic producer

Oil producer

OIL PRODUCING NATIONS

African Group

Algeria, Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Libya, Nigeria

India

Only for "appropriate plastics".

China

Submitted that use of recycled content should be done with caution as it leads to compromised properties of the plastic produced.

Japan

Suggested mandatory time-bound targets for safe and environmentaly sound post-consumer recycled plastic content.

Norway

European Union

Suggested to take measures where possible to replace primary plastic with recycled plastic; measures taken may include establishment of EPR schemes.

Canada

USA

Proposed alternate option: Agreed to increase the share of secondary (recycled) plastic in consistency with national laws on post-consumer recycled plastic contents.

Algeria

Brazil

Reserved its position on producing plastics with minimum percentages of post-consumer recycled plastic.

African Group

Requested for adding the timeline for transitioning to recycled plastics for select applications.

Gabon

Iran

Claimed that this is beyond the objective of the instrument.

PSIDS

Blanket minimum percentage of recycled content may be inappropriate for certain sectors due impacts on functionality and increased toxicity; open for further discussion.

Australia

ALTERNATIVE PLASTICS

Alternative plastics encompass a variety of materials and approaches aimed at replacing traditional fossil fuel-derived plastics. Bioplastics, derived from renewable sources like plants or agricultural byproducts, offer a sustainable alternative by reducing reliance on fossil fuels and potentially lowering greenhouse gas emissions. They can be bio-based (made from renewable feedstocks) or biodegradable (capable of breaking down under specific conditions). Biodegradable plastics, designed to naturally decompose through biological processes, help curb plastic waste accumulation, emphasizing the importance of proper disposal methods. Recycled plastics, sourced from post-consumer or post-industrial waste and reprocessed into new products, contribute to a circular economy by reducing demand for virgin plastics.

While alternative plastics play a role in addressing the plastic problem, their widespread adoption may necessitate investment in waste management infrastructure for collection and processing. In negotiations to combat plastic pollution, promoting and incentivizing the use of alternative plastics emerges as a critical strategy to achieve sustainability objectives and reduce the environmental impact of plastic production and disposal. By encouraging the adoption of bioplastics, biodegradable plastics and recycled plastics, stakeholders aim to foster innovation, resource efficiency and environmental stewardship in the plastics industry. However, careful consideration is needed to ensure that alternative plastics meet safety and performance standards while effectively addressing plastic pollution concerns, underscoring the importance of comprehensive strategies that prioritize sustainability throughout the plastic life cycle.

MIDSTREAM

Alternative plastics

- Other countries (not part of the analysis)
- No intervention
- Proposed ambitious additions
- Proposed lower ambitions
- Accept measures as it is
- Don't want this option

PSIDS

OPEC nations

Plastic producer

Oil producer

OIL PRODUCING NATIONS

African Group

Algeria | Gabon
Congo | Libya
Equatorial Guinea | Nigeria

India

Disagreed to use "economic instruments" for promoting alternative plastics.

Japan

Replaced "Ensure" with "Encourage".

Norway

European Union

Suggested following addition: 1. Applicable to bio-based, biodegradable, and compostable plastic; 2. Guided by waste hierarchy 3. Plastics and plastic products should be based on minimum design cirteria.

Canada

USA

Russia

Biodegradable plastics cannot serve as a substitute as they are the source of microplastics.

China

Algeria

Iran

African Group

Brazil

Based on life cycle assessment.

Gabon

Australia

PSIDS

Expressed that any substitute or alternative plastic should be assessed via appropriate criteria designed to ensure the products are: essential, safe and sustainable, transparent and traceable. Open for further discussions.

NON-PLASTIC SUBSTITUTES

Non-plastic substitutes encompass a diverse array of materials and solutions intended to replace conventional plastics across various applications. These substitutes utilize renewable, biodegradable and environmentally friendly materials that offer functionalities similar to plastics but with reduced ecological consequences.

Non-plastic substitutes include renewable materials like plant fibres, cellulose, starches and agricultural byproducts which can be sustainably sourced and may biodegrade more readily than conventional plastics. Biodegradable alternatives such as paper, cardboard, bamboo and bagasse are part of this category, breaking down naturally in the environment and minimizing waste persistence. Natural fibres like hemp and jute are used to create durable products, while composites combining natural fibres with bio-based resins offer lightweight and sustainable alternatives. Additionally, glass and metal packaging, including recyclable containers and jars, make minimal environmental impact compared to single-use plastics. Silicone and rubber are employed as substitutes for certain applications due to their durability, flexibility and non-toxic properties.

In negotiations to combat plastic pollution, promoting and adopting non-plastic substitutes emerge as pivotal strategies to reduce reliance on conventional plastics and transition towards more sustainable material choices. Encouraging the use of renewable and biodegradable alternatives supports efforts to mitigate plastic waste accumulation and environmental harm.

By incentivizing the adoption of non-plastic substitutes, stakeholders aim to foster innovation, resource efficiency and environmental stewardship in material selection and product design, paving the way towards a more sustainable future with reduced plastic pollution. However, ensuring the performance, safety and scalability of non-plastic alternatives remains essential for their widespread adoption and successful integration into consumer markets and industrial applications.

MIDSTREAM

Non-plastic substitutes

- Other countries (not part of the analysis)
- No intervention
- Proposed ambitious additions
- Proposed lower ambitions
- Accept measures as it is
- Don't want this option

PSIDS

OPEC nations

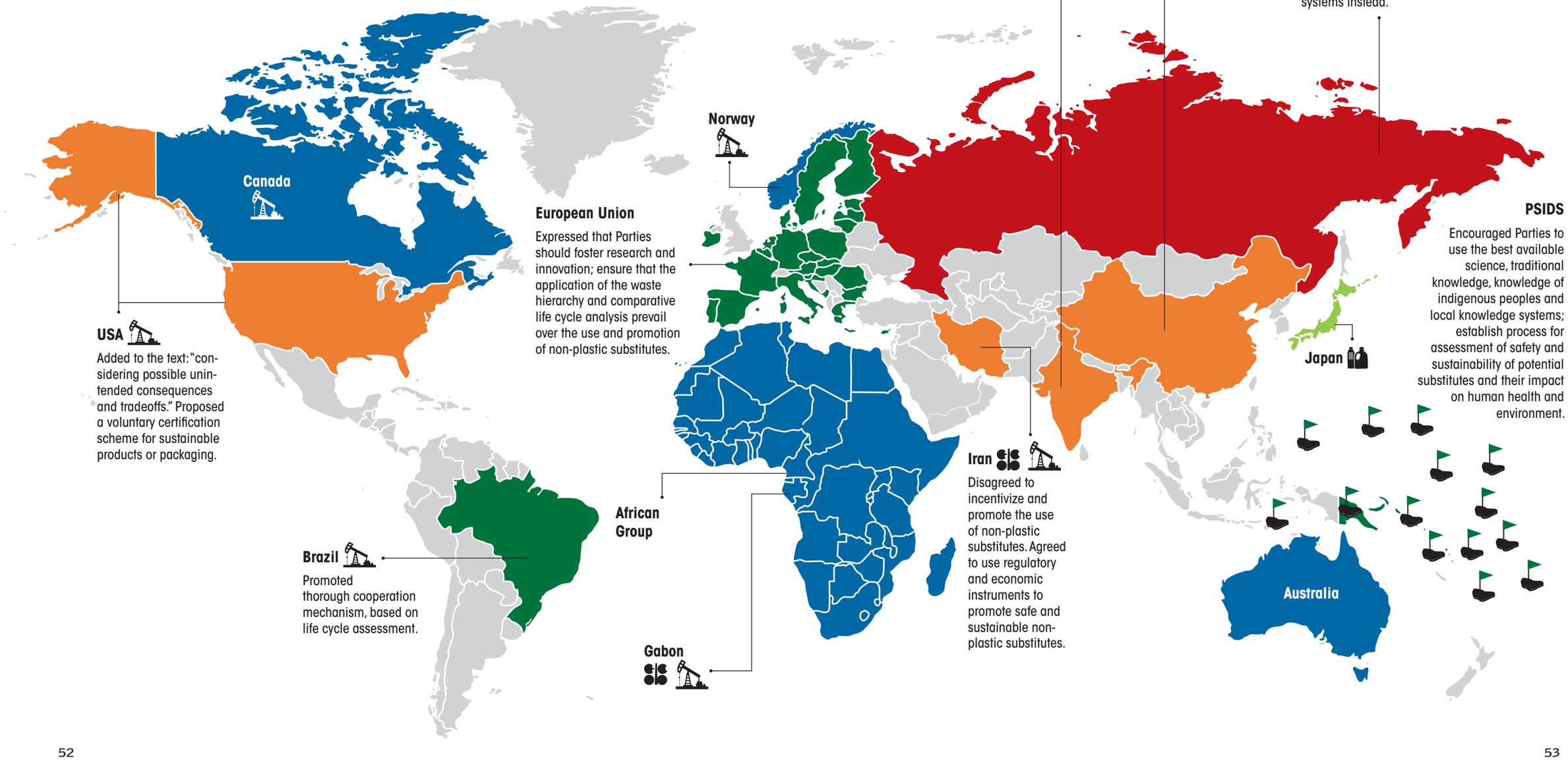
Plastic producer

Oil producer

OIL PRODUCING NATIONS

African Group

Algeria	Gabon
Congo	Libya
Equatorial Guinea	Nigeria



USA

Added to the text: "considering possible unintended consequences and tradeoffs." Proposed a voluntary certification scheme for sustainable products or packaging.

European Union

Expressed that Parties should foster research and innovation; ensure that the application of the waste hierarchy and comparative life cycle analysis prevail over the use and promotion of non-plastic substitutes.

Brazil

Promoted thorough cooperation mechanism, based on life cycle assessment.

African Group

Gabon

India

Nationally driven with financial support and technology transfer.

China

Cautious approach should be excercised, should be nationally driven.

Russia

Expressed it is premature to impose obligations regarding alternate materials on members states, proposed improvements in plastic waste management systems instead.

Japan

Iran

Disagreed to incentivize and promote the use of non-plastic substitutes. Agreed to use regulatory and economic instruments to promote safe and sustainable non-plastic substitutes.

PSIDS

Encouraged Parties to use the best available science, traditional knowledge, knowledge of indigenous peoples and local knowledge systems; establish process for assessment of safety and sustainability of potential substitutes and their impact on human health and environment.

EXTENDED PRODUCER RESPONSIBILITY

Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) is a policy approach integral to ongoing efforts to combat plastic pollution, aiming to shift responsibility of waste management from consumers and municipalities back to producers of goods, including plastics.

EPR programmes are designed to promote sustainable product and packaging management throughout the life cycle of products, emphasizing producer accountability for waste generated by their products. This framework operates on the principle of “polluter pays”, where producers assume financial and/or physical responsibility to minimize the environmental impact of their products.

Key components of EPR for plastics include obligations for producers to finance waste management costs, incentivize product design that facilitates recycling and repair, and ensure effective waste collection and recycling systems. Producers are encouraged to support the development of recycling infrastructure and technologies to enhance plastic recycling.

EPR implementation varies globally, with some regions establishing comprehensive frameworks while others are in the process of developing or expanding EPR policies specific to plastic products and packaging. By integrating EPR into plastic pollution negotiations, stakeholders aim to promote sustainable practices, incentivize circular economy principles, and reduce the environmental footprint of plastic production and consumption. Developing robust EPR policies tailored to plastic waste management is crucial for fostering producer responsibility and achieving meaningful progress in addressing plastic pollution on a global scale.

DOWNSTREAM

Extended Producer Responsibility

- Other countries (not part of the analysis)
- No intervention
- Proposed ambitious additions
- Proposed lower ambitions
- Accept measures as it is
- Don't want this option

PSIDS

OPEC nations

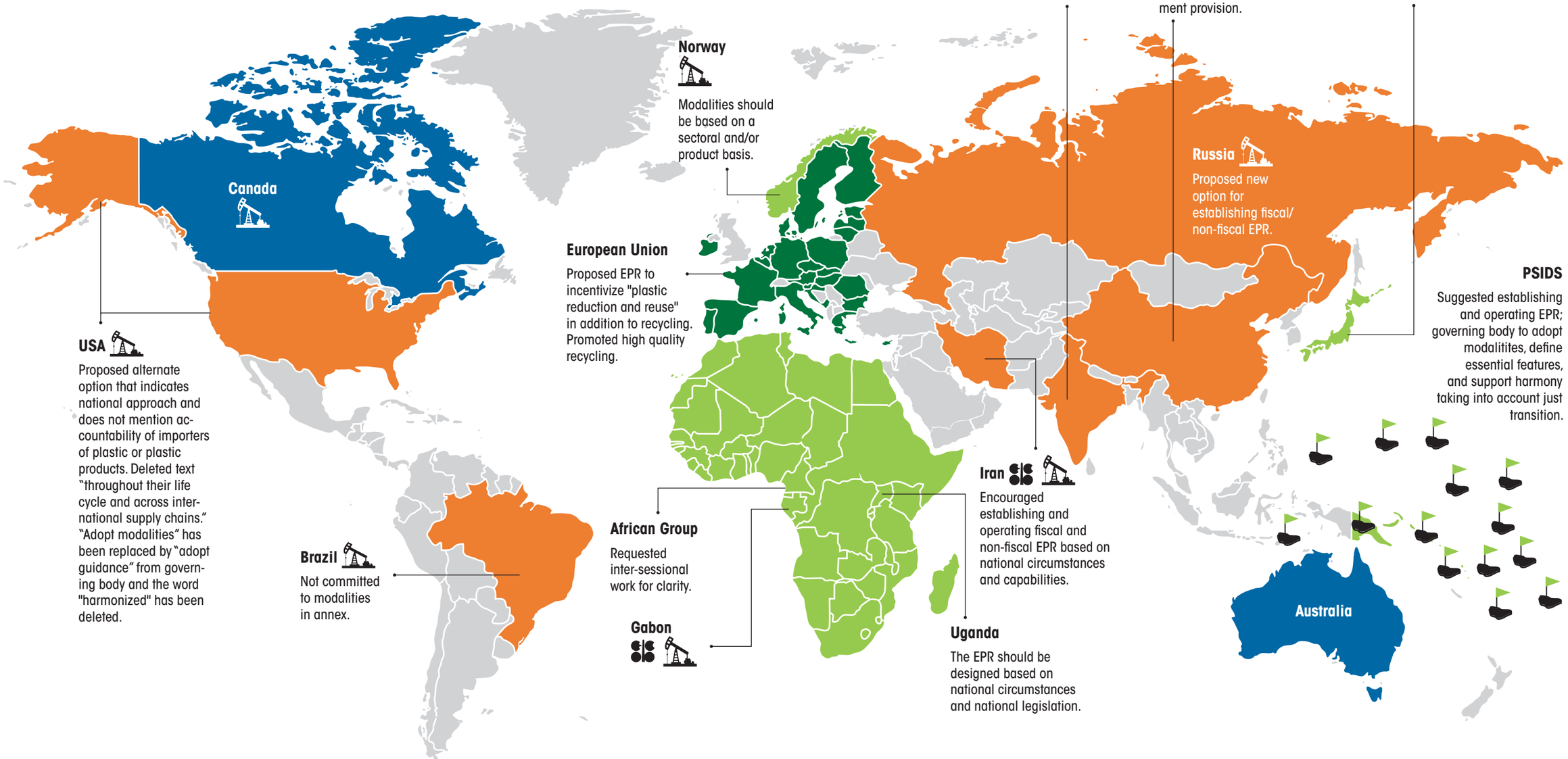
Plastic producer

Oil producer

OIL PRODUCING NATIONS

African Group

Algeria, Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Libya, Nigeria



India

Deleted "incentivize" from increased recyclability. Also deleted text like "across life cycle" and "international supply chains" from the provisions.

China

Expressed that market conditions, national capabilities and circumstances should be taken into consideration. Suggested that this be merged with the waste management provision.

Japan

Incentivization based on sector, market condition, national capabilities and circumstances.

Norway

Modalities should be based on a sectoral and/or product basis.

Russia

Proposed new option for establishing fiscal/ non-fiscal EPR.

European Union

Proposed EPR to incentivize "plastic reduction and reuse" in addition to recycling. Promoted high quality recycling.

PSIDS

Suggested establishing and operating EPR; governing body to adopt modalitites, define essential features, and support harmony taking into account just transition.

USA

Proposed alternate option that indicates national approach and does not mention accountability of importers of plastic or plastic products. Deleted text "throughout their life cycle and across international supply chains." "Adopt modalities" has been replaced by "adopt guidance" from governing body and the word "harmonized" has been deleted.

Brazil

Not committed to modalities in annex.

African Group

Requested inter-sessional work for clarity.

Iran

Encouraged establishing and operating fiscal and non-fiscal EPR based on national circumstances and capabilities.

Gabon

Uganda

The EPR should be designed based on national circumstances and national legislation.

EMISSIONS AND RELEASES OF PLASTICS ACROSS THEIR LIFE CYCLES

The concept of “emissions and releases of plastics across their life cycles” encompasses a series of stages and processes that contribute to environmental pollution and degradation.

The cycle begins with raw material extraction and production, involving the processing of fossil fuels into plastic polymers, which emit GHGs and volatile organic compounds (VOCs). During manufacturing and processing, energy-intensive processes like moulding and extrusion release carbon emissions and air pollutants, especially when fossil fuels are used for electricity. Throughout the consumer phase, plastic products shed micro-plastics from wear and tear, leach harmful chemicals under heat or UV exposure, and release microfibers into wastewater during washing.

Inadequate waste management exacerbates emissions—incineration generates dioxins and furans, landfilling leads to chemical leachate into soil and groundwater, and littering directly pollutes natural environments. Recycling processes, while beneficial, can emit GHGs during mechanical and chemical methods, especially if recycling is incomplete, leading to downcycling or disposal of plastic waste. Moreover, global transport and trade of plastics contribute to emissions from shipping and logistics, with additional impacts such as pellet spills and pollution along supply chains.

Addressing emissions and releases of plastics across their life cycles is critical for effective plastic pollution mitigation, requiring strategies that minimize emissions during production, enhance waste management practices, and promote sustainable recycling technologies to reduce environmental impacts associated with plastic production and consumption.

DOWNSTREAM

Emissions and releases of plastics across their life cycles

- Other countries (not part of the analysis)
- No intervention
- Proposed ambitious additions
- Proposed lower ambitions
- Accept measures as it is
- Don't want this option

PSIDS

OPEC nations

Plastic producer

Oil producer

OIL PRODUCING NATIONS

African Group

Algeria, Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Libya, Nigeria

India

Agreed to "Regulate" instead of "Eliminate" emissions. Disagreed to emissions and effluent standards for release to soil and water from manufacturing. Deleted the text "Polymers" suggesting polymer production does not lead to emissions.

China

Deleted "across their life cycles" and focused only on emissions from plastic waste and microplastics.

Japan

Suggested assessment and trends of emissions and releases.

Norway

European Union

Russia

Mentioned that emissions from virgin polymers are out of the scope of UNEA Resolution 5/14. Indicated that the provision lacks emissions from plastic recycling activities which should be reflected.

Canada

USA

Proposed new option that replaces "prevent and eliminate" with "should endeavour". Focus on enforcing national laws, policies and regulations. Disagreed to reflecting emissions across the plastic life cycle in the national plan.

Algeria

Proposed vulnerability and initial (baseline) studies to assess the levels of contamination.

Brazil

Sources of emissions to be nationally determined, included cooperation mechanism.

African Group

Promote research and innovation to prevent and capture plastic and plastic products into the environment, including marine environments.

Iran

Deleted "across their life cycle" from prevention and elimination of emissions from plastic polymers, plastics, microplastics, and plastic products. Deleted "chemicals and polymers of concern" from prevention and elimination of releases into the ecosystem. Promoted encouragement rather than mandating.

PSIDS

Added "in the marine environment", and suggested to take into consideration the special circumstances of PSIDS countries.

Australia

WASTE MANAGEMENT

Waste management encompasses a comprehensive array of strategies and practices designed to handle plastic waste throughout its life cycle, aiming to minimize environmental impacts and foster sustainability.

Key aspects of waste management include waste reduction and prevention, which focus on measures like reduction-at-source and product redesign to minimize plastic waste generation at its origin. Collection and sorting systems are essential components, ensuring efficient gathering and transportation of plastic waste from households, businesses and public areas to appropriate processing facilities. Recycling and recovery play pivotal roles, transforming plastic waste into new materials or products through mechanical or chemical recycling methods, conserving resources and reducing reliance on virgin plastics. For waste that cannot be recycled feasibly, environmentally responsible disposal methods like waste-to-energy incineration or landfilling are utilized to prevent environmental contamination and harm to ecosystems.

Effective waste management is underpinned by robust policies and governance frameworks that incentivize sustainable practices, innovation and accountability among stakeholders. Collaborative efforts involving governments, local authorities, industry and civil society are crucial in developing and implementing integrated waste management strategies tailored to specific contexts and challenges. By prioritizing waste reduction, efficient collection and sorting, recycling and recovery, and responsible disposal practices, comprehensive waste management approaches aim to mitigate the environmental impacts associated with plastic production and consumption, while promoting a more sustainable approach to managing plastic waste.

DOWNSTREAM

Waste Management

- Other countries (not part of the analysis)
- No intervention
- Proposed ambitious additions
- Proposed lower ambitions
- Accept measures as it is
- Don't want this option

PSIDS

OPEC nations

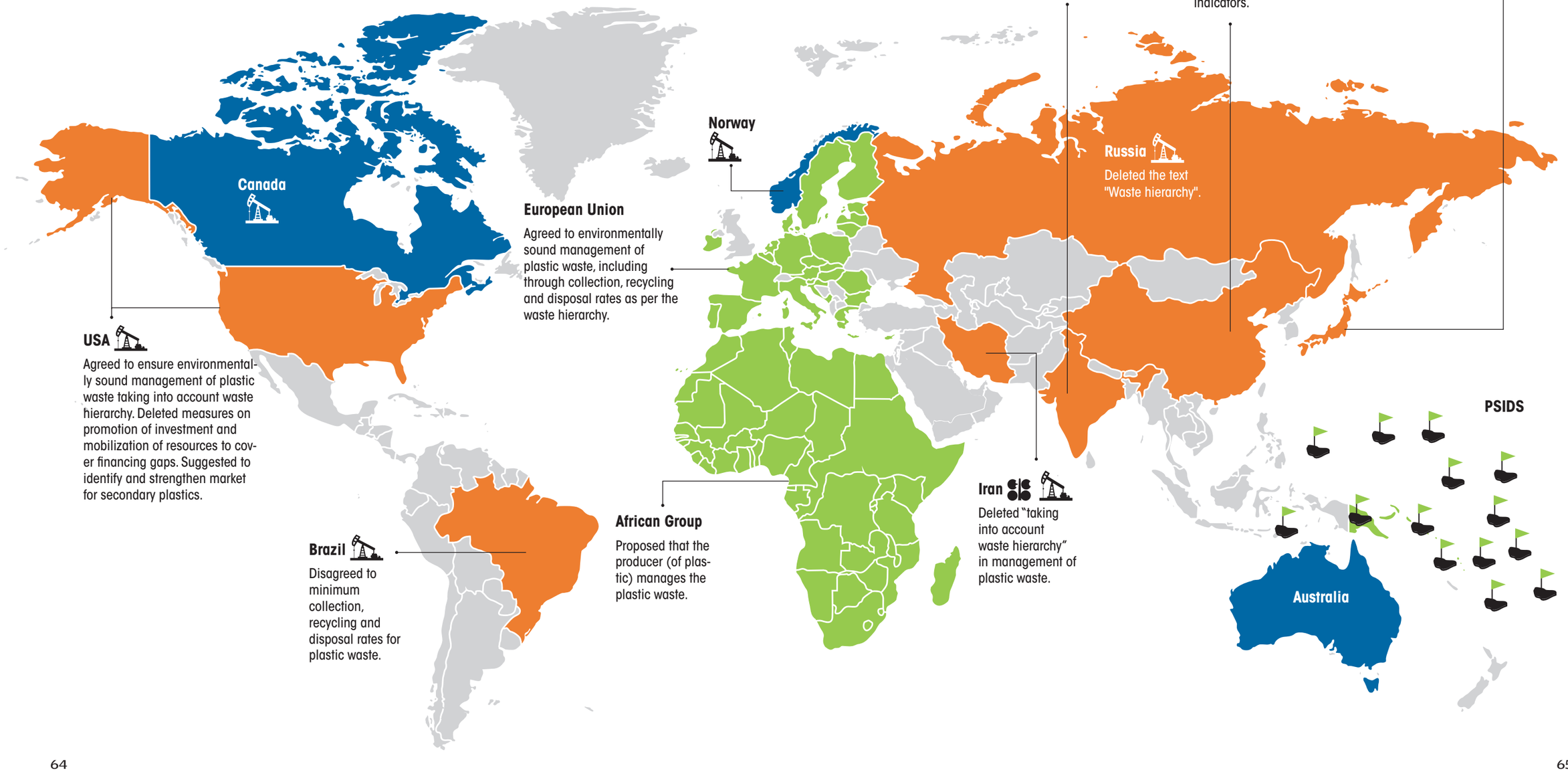
Plastic producer

Oil producer

OIL PRODUCING NATIONS

African Group

Algeria	Gabon
Congo	Libya
Equatorial Guinea	Nigeria



USA

Agreed to ensure environmentally sound management of plastic waste taking into account waste hierarchy. Deleted measures on promotion of investment and mobilization of resources to cover financing gaps. Suggested to identify and strengthen market for secondary plastics.

European Union

Agreed to environmentally sound management of plastic waste, including through collection, recycling and disposal rates as per the waste hierarchy.

India

Disagreed to waste hierarchy and creating list of practices that may lead to emissions.

China

Did not express inclination for any option, instead sought clarity on means and calculation methods of collection, recycling, disposal rates and on harmonized indicators.

Japan

Deleted "Waste Hierarchy".

Brazil

Disagreed to minimum collection, recycling and disposal rates for plastic waste.

African Group

Proposed that the producer (of plastic) manages the plastic waste.

Iran

Deleted "taking into account waste hierarchy" in management of plastic waste.

TRADE

The trade-related aspects of plastic pollution negotiations encompass a range of dimensions critical to understanding global plastic production, consumption and waste management. Firstly, the trade in plastic raw materials, including additives, polymers and resins derived from fossil fuels, significantly influences global plastic manufacturing and consumption patterns. Secondly, the import and export of plastic products themselves, spanning from packaging and consumer goods to industrial materials, have implications for plastic waste generation, recycling rates and overall environmental impacts across regions and countries.

A crucial element within trade-related negotiations is the global trade in plastic waste, particularly post-consumer plastic scrap. This practice often involves exporting plastic waste from high-consumption countries to regions with lower environmental standards and inadequate waste management capacities, typically developing countries. While exporting plastic waste for recycling aims to alleviate waste burdens, it can introduce environmental and social challenges in recipient countries, including pollution and health risks due to insufficient waste handling infrastructure.

Trade policies and regulations play a pivotal role in shaping the movement of plastics and plastic waste across borders. International trade agreements, tariffs and regulations related to environmental standards, waste management and recycling practices directly influence the flow of plastics globally and contribute to efforts aimed at reducing plastic pollution. Notably, initiatives like the Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and Their Disposal seek to regulate the international movement of plastic waste and promote environmentally sound waste management practices. By addressing trade-related aspects within plastic pollution negotiations, policymakers and stakeholders can advance efforts to enhance global waste management practices, reduce plastic pollution, and promote sustainable plastic production and consumption models.

CROSSCUTTING ISSUES

Trade

- Other countries (not part of the analysis)
- No intervention
- Proposed ambitious additions
- Proposed lower ambitions
- Accept measures as it is
- Don't want this option

PSIDS

OPEC nations

Plastic producer

Oil producer

OIL PRODUCING NATIONS

African Group

Algeria	Gabon
Congo	Libya
Equatorial Guinea	Nigeria

India

Submitted that the provision is against the World Trade Organization and overlaps with the Basel Convention.

Japan

Expressed that this provision is unnecessary because there is no globally uniform list of chemicals of concern, problematic products, and microplastics.

Norway

Russia

Provisions should not conflict with the Marrakesh Agreement establishing the WTO.

European Union

Point 6 addition: In case of export to or import from a non-Party to this instrument, each Party shall apply the provisions of this article, on a non-discriminatory basis.

USA

Canada

Suggested that appropriate measures be taken to ensure transboundary movements of plastic waste, as defined by the Basel Convention, is only allowed for the purpose of environmentally sound disposal. In circumstances where the Basel Convention does not apply, transboundary movement of plastic waste is allowed only after taking into account relevant domestic and international rules, standards and guidelines.

Algeria

Limited to certain hazardous chemicals in international trade.

African Group

Suggested that the plastics which are exported are tracked by types, volumes and destinations.

Iran

The delegation did not accept any binding agreements regarding trade in polymers. Trade of chemicals would be acceptabel in line with the Stockholm Convention.

PSIDS

Added Parties to not export "products not meeting standards on product design."

EXISTING PLASTIC POLLUTION, INCLUDING IN THE MARINE ENVIRONMENT

Discussions on existing plastic pollution emphasize the widespread presence of plastic waste across terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems, highlighting the environmental, economic and societal challenges it poses. This pollution encompasses various plastic types, including single-use plastics, microplastics and macroplastics originating from land-based activities, ocean-based sources and everyday consumer products. The consequences extend beyond environmental impacts, affecting economies through cleanup and waste management costs, and disrupting industries like tourism and fisheries due to degraded coastal areas and marine ecosystems.

In response to these challenges, stakeholders engage in negotiations aimed at combatting plastic pollution comprehensively. Strategies involve preventive measures such as reducing single-use plastics, promoting proper waste management and adopting sustainable alternatives. Cleanup efforts target removing plastic debris from natural environments, while waste management initiatives prioritize recycling and disposal methods that minimize environmental impacts. Public awareness campaigns play a key role in educating communities about plastic pollution and encouraging responsible behaviours to prevent further littering and pollution.

International cooperation is essential in addressing existing plastic pollution effectively. Parties are encouraged to assess and prioritize accumulation zones and hotspots most affected by plastic pollution, especially in marine environments, and implement mitigation and remediation measures, including clean-up activities. Engagement of local populations is emphasized to ensure safe and environmentally sound remediation efforts. Additionally, sharing information on common plastic pollution types and behaviours aims to raise awareness and prevent further plastic pollution, particularly in coastal and freshwater areas.

Overall, addressing existing plastic pollution requires a multifaceted approach involving international cooperation, preventive measures, cleanup activities, waste management, public awareness campaigns and adoption of sustainable practices. The focus is on identifying pollution hotspots, engaging local communities and promoting responsible behaviours to mitigate the adverse impacts of plastic pollution on ecosystems, economies and societies.

CROSSCUTTING ISSUES

Existing plastic pollution, including in the marine environment

- Other countries (not part of the analysis)
- No intervention
- Proposed ambitious additions
- Proposed lower ambitions
- Accept measures as it is
- Don't want this option

PSIDS

OPEC nations

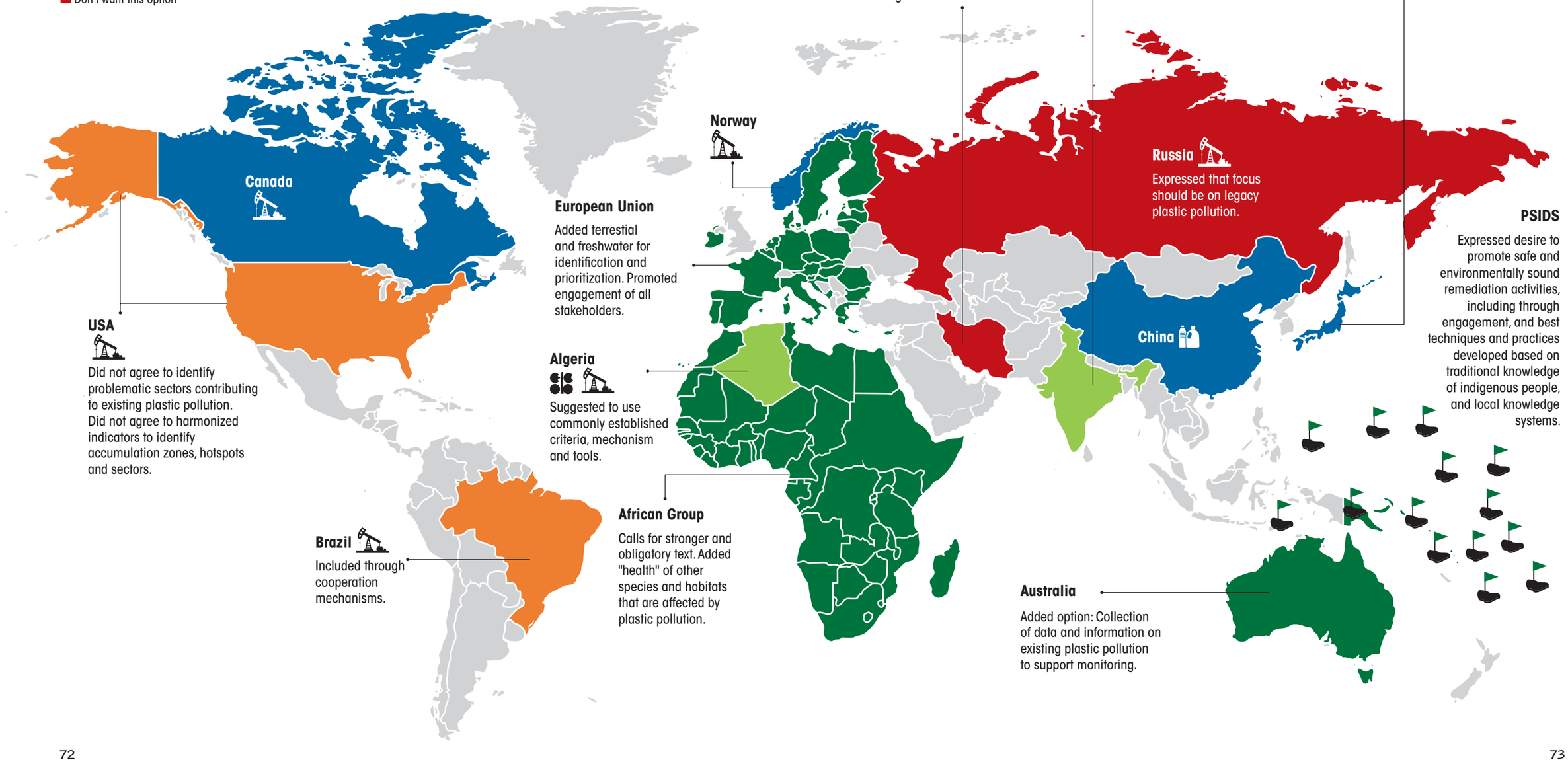
Plastic producer

Oil producer

OIL PRODUCING NATIONS

African Group

Algeria	Gabon
Congo	Libya
Equatorial Guinea	Nigeria



Iran

Suggested that it is necessary to consider the role of developed countries and their historical responsibility for existing plastic pollution. Limited to national jurisdiction. Promoted encouragement rather than mandating.

India

Proposed establishment of a subsidiary body to assess the existing levels of plastic pollution in each country and the financial resources required to mitigate and remediate existing plastic pollution.

Japan

Russia

Expressed that focus should be on legacy plastic pollution.

PSIDS

Expressed desire to promote safe and environmentally sound remediation activities, including through engagement, and best techniques and practices developed based on traditional knowledge of indigenous people, and local knowledge systems.

European Union

Added terrestial and freshwater for identification and prioritization. Promoted engagement of all stakeholders.

USA

Did not agree to identify problematic sectors contributing to existing plastic pollution. Did not agree to harmonized indicators to identify accumulation zones, hotspots and sectors.

Algeria

Suggested to use commonly established criteria, mechanism and tools.

Brazil

Included through cooperation mechanisms.

African Group

Calls for stronger and obligatory text. Added "health" of other species and habitats that are affected by plastic pollution.

Australia

Added option: Collection of data and information on existing plastic pollution to support monitoring.

JUST TRANSITION

The concept of “just transition” encompasses a socio-economic framework that aims to navigate the shift away from plastic-dependent industries towards more sustainable alternatives while ensuring equity and inclusivity. This approach prioritizes addressing social and economic impacts associated with transitioning, such as job losses and economic disruptions, by providing support to affected workers and communities. It particularly focuses on marginalized or vulnerable groups, including informal waste workers, ensuring they are not disproportionately affected by industry shifts and promoting social justice through inclusive decision-making processes and resource access.

To support workers and communities during this transition, just transition initiatives involve retraining and upskilling programmes to enable workers to pursue employment in emerging green sectors like renewable energy, recycling and sustainable packaging. These investments in alternative industries not only create new job opportunities but also contribute to economic development. The framework also emphasizes global cooperation and solidarity, recognizing that transitioning away from plastic pollution requires collective action and support among countries and regions.

In practical terms, Parties committed to just transition initiatives aim to promote fair, equitable and inclusive transitions for affected populations, with a special focus on women and vulnerable groups. This includes establishing national coordinating bodies to engage with stakeholders, improving income and livelihood opportunities through workforce training and social programmes tailored to community needs, and incentivizing skill development across the plastic value chain. Focus on informal and cooperative workers ensures legal recognition, protection and improved working conditions. These efforts align with broader environmental goals and international efforts to address plastic pollution while fostering social justice and human rights.

CROSSCUTTING ISSUES

Just transition

- Other countries (not part of the analysis)
- No intervention
- Proposed ambitious additions
- Proposed lower ambitions
- Accept measures as it is
- Don't want this option

PSIDS

OPEC nations

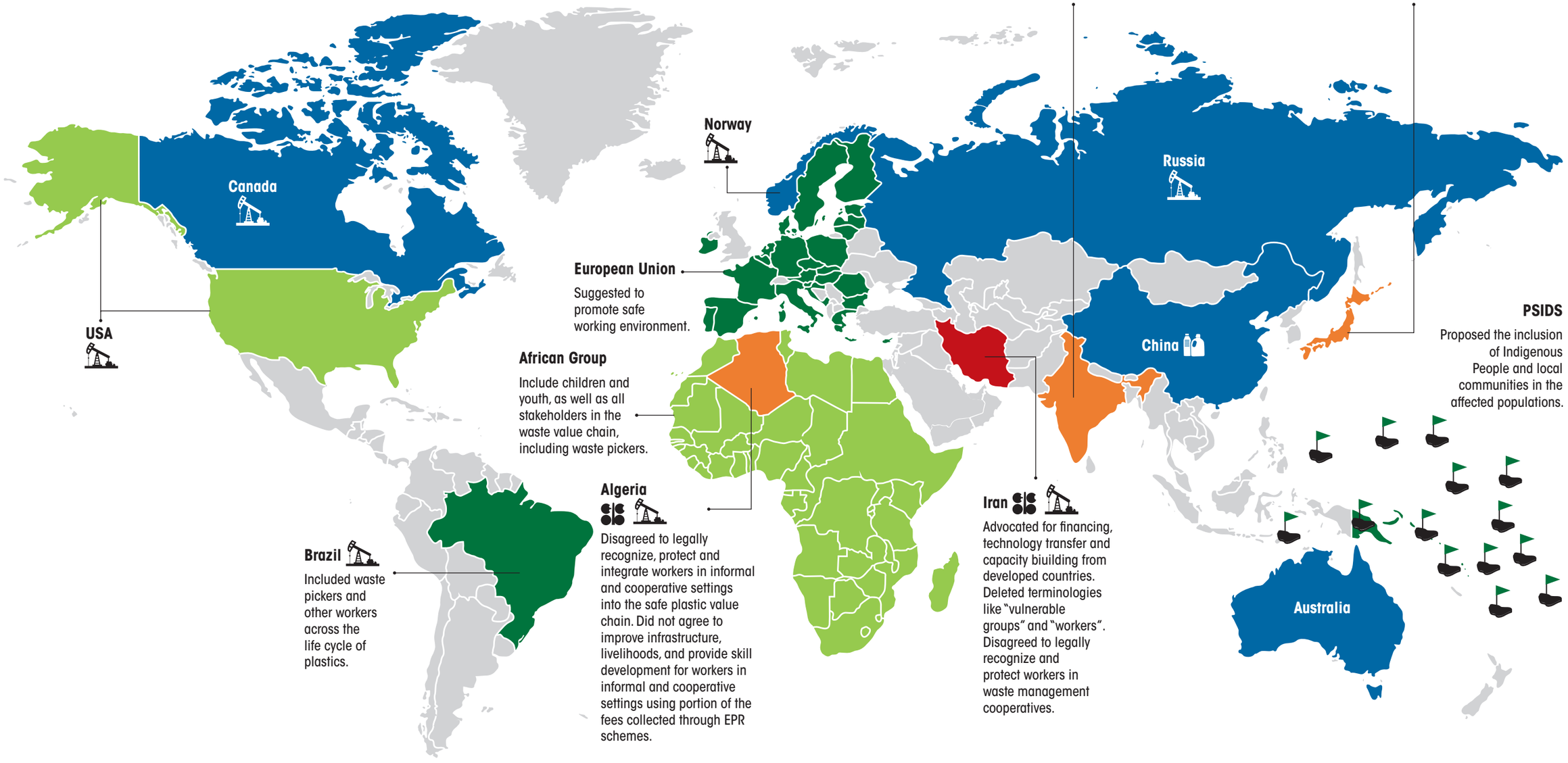
Plastic producer

Oil producer

OIL PRODUCING NATIONS

African Group

Algeria | Gabon
Congo | Libya
Equatorial Guinea | Nigeria



TRANSPARENCY, TRACKING, MONITORING AND LABELLING

Ongoing negotiations to combat plastic pollution emphasize transparency, tracking, monitoring and labelling as essential components of comprehensive strategies to enhance accountability and visibility throughout the plastic supply chain. The provisions outlined in these negotiations require Parties to disclose harmonized information on the chemical composition of plastics and plastic products, promoting informed decision-making on safe use, recycling and disposal. Traceability measures are mandated to track chemicals, polymers and plastic contents throughout their life cycles, supporting safe management practices and compliance monitoring. Additionally, Parties are tasked with establishing marking and labelling requirements that provide consumers with vital information on recycling instructions, material composition and environmental impacts to promote responsible waste management.

To ensure effective management and regulation, Parties are required to monitor and track the production, imports and exports of chemicals and polymers used in plastic production, enabling assessment of usage patterns and targeted interventions to reduce environmental risks. Standardized reporting of collected information, including data on chemical usage and recycling facilities, facilitates data sharing, analysis and progress benchmarking in plastic pollution mitigation efforts, promoting transparency and accountability across stakeholders.

Overall, these provisions establish a robust framework for transparency, traceability and accountability in plastic management, addressing critical aspects of plastic pollution mitigation from production to disposal. Outlined measures aim to empower consumers with information, drive improvements in plastic supply chain practices, and facilitate international cooperation in combatting the pervasive challenges posed by plastic pollution.

CROSSCUTTING ISSUES

Transparency, tracking, monitoring and labelling

- Other countries (not part of the analysis)
- No intervention
- Proposed ambitious additions
- Proposed lower ambitions
- Accept measures as it is
- Don't want this option

PSIDS

OPEC nations

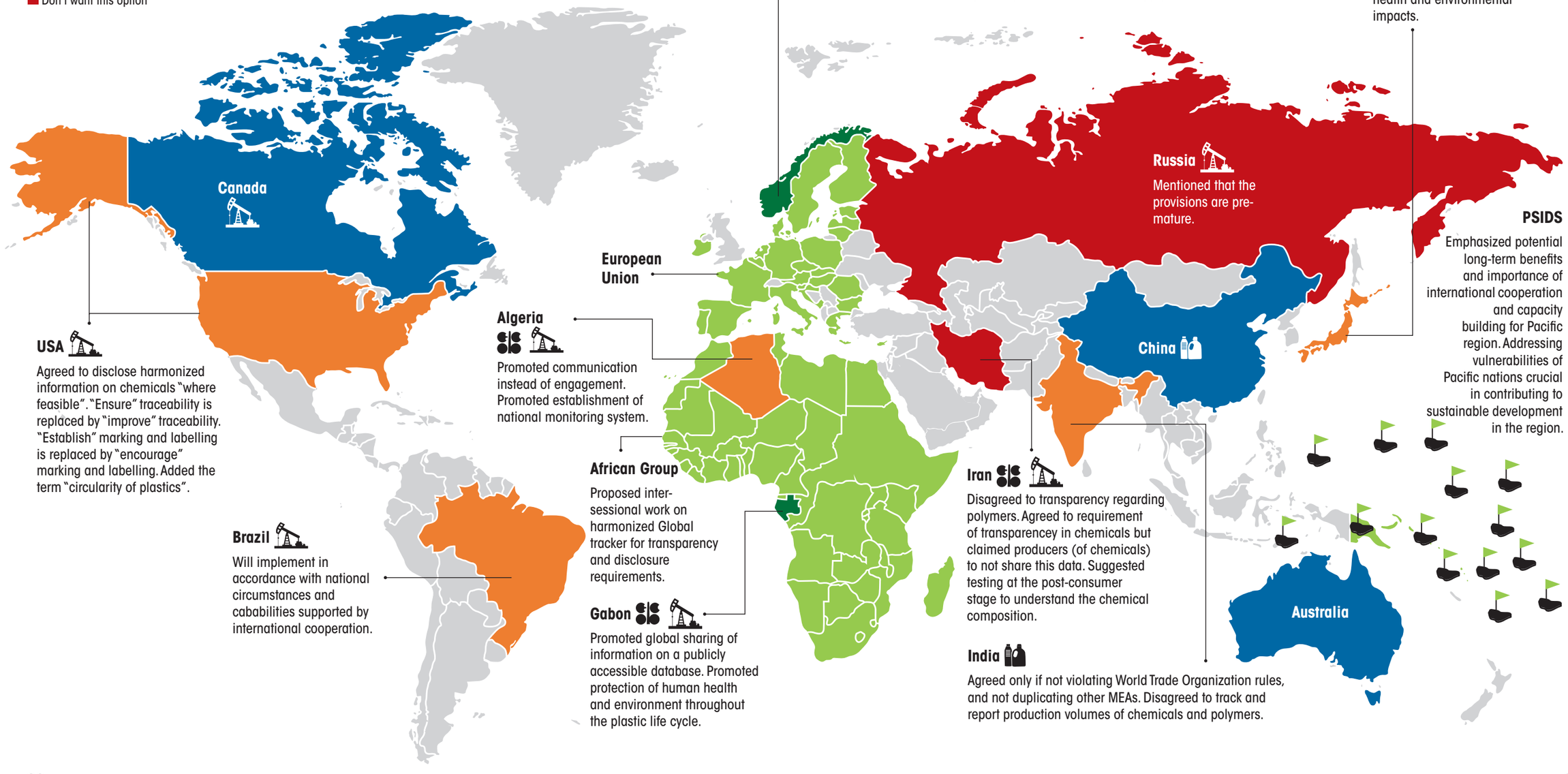
Plastic producer

Oil producer

OIL PRODUCING NATIONS

African Group

Algeria | Gabon
Congo | Libya
Equatorial Guinea | Nigeria



USA

Agreed to disclose harmonized information on chemicals "where feasible". "Ensure" traceability is replaced by "improve" traceability. "Establish" marking and labelling is replaced by "encourage" marking and labelling. Added the term "circularity of plastics".

Brazil

Will implement in accordance with national circumstances and cababilities supported by international cooperation.

European Union

Norway

Advocated global disclosure by primary and secondary plastics producers of polymer types, quantities and chemical usage in a public database. Suggested new measure for mandatory disclosure by large businesses, including the financial sector, of activities, risks, opportunities, impacts and financial flows related to plastic pollution across their supply chains.

Algeria

Promoted communication instead of engagement. Promoted establishment of national monitoring system.

African Group

Proposed inter-sessional work on harmonized Global tracker for transparency and disclosure requirements.

Gabon

Promoted global sharing of information on a publicly accessible database. Promoted protection of human health and environment throughout the plastic life cycle.

Russia

Mentioned that the provisions are pre-mature.

Iran

Disagreed to transparency regarding polymers. Agreed to requirement of transparencey in chemicals but claimed producers (of chemicals) to not share this data. Suggested testing at the post-consumer stage to understand the chemical composition.

India

Agreed only if not violating World Trade Organization rules, and not duplicating other MEAs. Disagreed to track and report production volumes of chemicals and polymers.

Japan

Promoted disclosure of harmonized information throughout the business supply chain to ensure traceability taking into account confidential business information, and human health and environmental impacts.

PSIDS

Emphasized potential long-term benefits and importance of international cooperation and capacity building for Pacific region. Addressing vulnerabilities of Pacific nations crucial in contributing to sustainable development in the region.

FINANCING

The provisions outlined in the text aim to establish key obligations and requirements for Parties to effectively combat plastic pollution through a comprehensive framework.

Firstly, Parties are mandated to allocate necessary resources, including domestic and international funding, to support national activities for implementing the instrument. Private sector financing is encouraged to supplement these efforts, facilitating funding for critical initiatives aimed at mitigating plastic pollution.

Secondly, there is a strong emphasis on supporting developing countries, with Parties and multilateral organizations urged to increase support through finance, capacity-building and technology transfer. Special attention is given to the needs and circumstances of Small Island Developing States (SIDS) and least developed countries (LDCs), ensuring that they receive tailored assistance to combat plastic pollution.

Establishment of a dedicated financial mechanism forms a cornerstone of this framework. It is designed to provide predictable, sustainable and adequate resources to support implementation efforts in developing countries, particularly SIDS and LDCs. This mechanism is funded by contributions from all sources, encompassing both domestic and international public and private funding.

Moreover, each Party is required to establish a plastic pollution fee to be paid by plastic polymer producers within their jurisdictions. The modalities and procedures for implementing this global plastic pollution fee are determined by the governing body, contributing to the financial mechanism established to combat plastic pollution effectively.

Lastly, the provisions highlight the importance of managing financial flows effectively, directing resources away from projects that contribute to plastic emissions and releases while increasing support for initiatives that prevent or reduce plastic pollution and enhance development of waste management infrastructure. Together, these provisions underscore a comprehensive approach to combatting plastic pollution, promoting financial support, capacity-building and regulatory measures with a global focus on sustainable solutions.

FINANCING, CAPACITY BUILDING AND TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER

Financing

- Other countries (not part of the analysis)
- No intervention
- Proposed ambitious additions
- Proposed lower ambitions
- Accept measures as it is
- Don't want this option

PSIDS

OPEC nations

Plastic producer

Oil producer

OIL PRODUCING NATIONS

African Group

Algeria
Congo
Equatorial Guinea
Gabon
Libya
Nigeria

European Union

Advocated increased private funding, welcomed World Bank and IMF contributions. Suggested removing mention of various funding sources and promoting private sector financing. Urged adequate support over increased support from Parties and multilateral organizations. Recommended timely financial resources instead of establishing new mechanisms. Proposed mentioning the Global Environment Facility instead of "existing financial arrangement". Added a clause to make finance flows consistent with ending plastic pollution. Suggested replacing "decrease" with "phasing out" and changing "projects" to "activities" in measures each Party takes.

India

Agreed only to establish dedicated fund, disagreed to plastic pollution fee (to be paid by plastic producers). Did not agree to change in production practices in terms of emissions and releases into the envrionment.

Norway

Added another option: Mechanisim shall consist of exisitng financial arrangements. Suggested reviewing of level of funding from all sources. The financial flow shall be made consistent.

Russia

Disagreed to establishing a dedicated fund and plastic pollution fee (to be paid by polymer producers). Disagreed to change in production practices in terms of emissions and releases into the environment.

Canada

USA

Proposed that each Party should mobilize their own resources such as domestic funds, bilateral funds and national budgets for national activities. Denied the possibility of a dedicated fund, pushed instead for a mechanism to be supported by all Parties.

Ghana

Proposed Global Plastics Pollution Fee (GPPF) to provide reliable funding for developing countries, addressing costs of ending plastic pollution, supporting national EPR schemes, and aiding just transition for vulnerable groups.

Japan

Iran

Advocated for mandating developed countries for financing to countries whose economies are highly dependent on income generated from fossil fuels and associated energy intensive products. Not agreed to adopt modalities for implemanting global plastic pollution fee.

PSIDS

Brazil

Algeria

Disagreed to plastic pollution fee. Instead, agreed to exploring its feasibility. Opposed to cutting financial support from domestic and international public and private sources for projects causing plastic emissions and releases, including microplastics throughout their life cycles.

African Group

Dedicated Multilateral Fund is hereby established to provide financial resources to developing countries and countries with economies in transition to meet their commitments under the instrument.

Australia

China

Agreed to establish dedicated fund: Proposed that the fund be chanellized from developed countries and other countries on voluntary basis. Disagree to plastic pollution fee (to be paid by producers).

CAPACITY BUILDING, TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AND TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER

The provisions outlined emphasize key obligations and requirements related to capacity-building, technical assistance and technology transfer to address plastic pollution comprehensively and effectively, particularly in developing countries, LDCs and SIDS.

Firstly, Parties are mandated to cooperate in providing timely, sustainable and comprehensive capacity-building and technical assistance to these countries. The assistance is tailored to support implementation of obligations under the instrument while ensuring that the built capacity endures for long-term effectiveness in combatting plastic pollution.

Secondly, the governing body assumes responsibility for reviewing and promoting capacity-building and technical assistance efforts to bolster instrument implementation. This includes fostering cooperation with other multilateral environmental agreements and initiatives to enhance effectiveness and avoid duplicative efforts, reflecting a collaborative approach to tackling plastic pollution on a global scale.

Additionally, Parties are tasked with promoting and facilitating the development, transfer and access to environmentally sound technologies aimed at addressing plastic pollution. This encompasses promoting safe and sustainable alternatives to plastics and encouraging innovation and investment in new technologies and solutions. The provisions stress the importance of ensuring equitable access to essential technologies, including financial resources and proprietary rights, to foster innovation and drive progress towards sustainable plastic management practices worldwide.

These provisions underscore the significance of capacity-building, technical assistance and technology transfer in empowering developing countries, LDCs and SIDS to implement effective measures against plastic pollution. By promoting cooperation, innovation and access to sustainable technologies, the provisions aim to advance a resilient and sustainable approach to plastic management that benefits all Parties involved in combatting this global environmental challenge.

FINANCING, CAPACITY BUILDING AND TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER

Capacity building, technical assistance and technology transfer

- Other countries (not part of the analysis)
- No intervention
- Proposed ambitious additions
- Proposed lower ambitions
- Accept measures as it is
- Don't want this option

PSIDS

OPEC nations

Plastic producer

Oil producer

OIL PRODUCING NATIONS

African Group

Algeria
Congo
Equatorial Guinea
Gabon
Libya
Nigeria

Russia

Proposed separate provision on technology transfer focusing on plastic waste management. Freedom of trade of technology to implement instrument.

Norway

European Union

Agreed to "timely and adequate" capacity building of stakeholders like women and youth workers in the informal (waste) sector, Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities (IPLC), and other vulnerable groups. Deleted "sustainable and comprehensive" from nature of capacity building.

USA

Expressed that the governing body should review the capacity building and technical assitance no later than its thrid meeting.

Canada

Encouraged involvement of private sector, civil-society organizations and local communities in capacity-building activities, including through public-private partnerships and other multi-stakeholder initiatives.

Brazil

Disagreed to the text. Proposed a cooperation mechanism instead.

African Group

Dedicated Multilateral Fund is hereby established to provide financial resources to developing countries and countries with economies in transition to meet their commitments under the instrument.

Iran

China

India

Japan

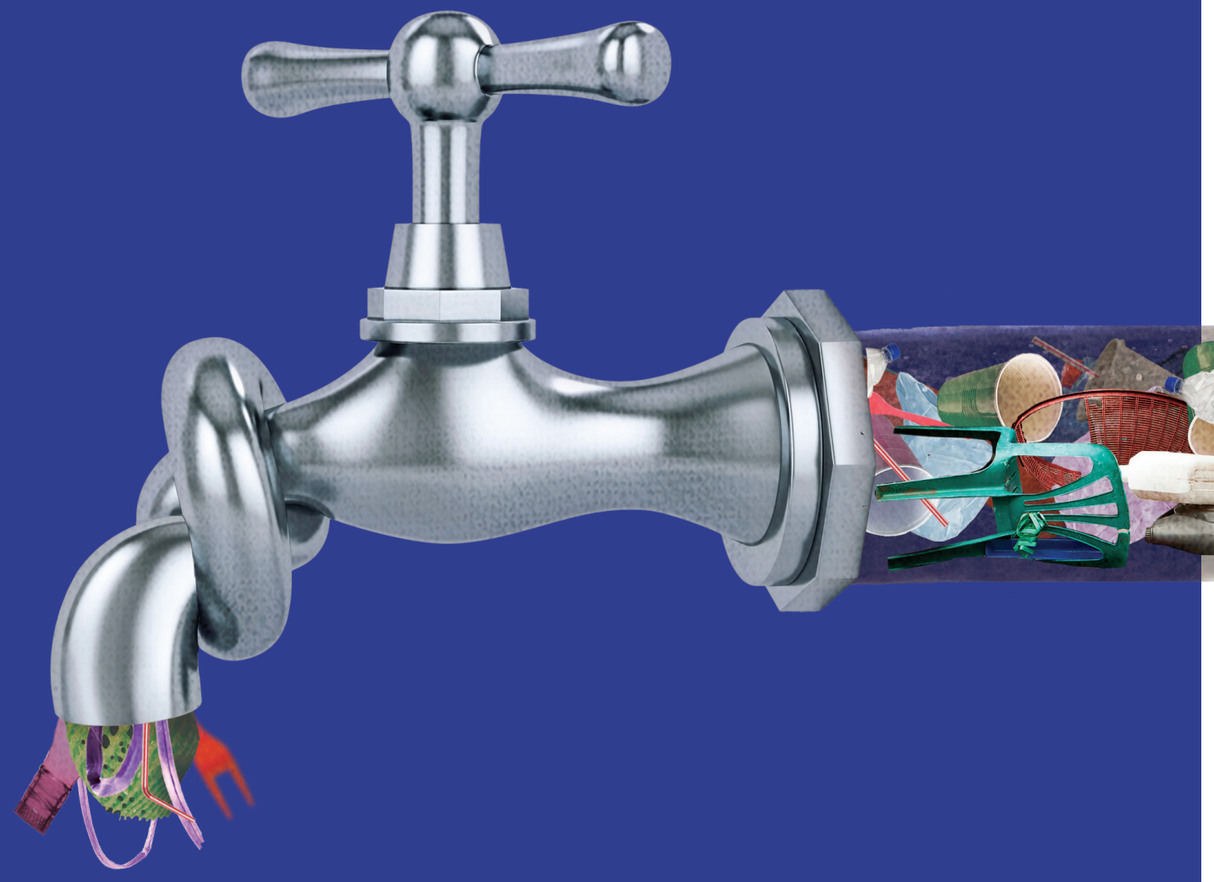
Removed: "sustainable, comprehensive and adequate", and expressed the desire to retain such capacity once built.

Australia

3

THE WAY FORWARD

WHAT TO EXPECT FROM INC-4?



The way forward: What to expect from INC-4?

The third round of negotiations based on the zero draft witnessed member states suggesting alternate options and texts for each of the provisions listed. This resulted in a bloated revised draft that is over twice the size of the original zero draft.

The fourth session will highlight the importance of refining the draft text on plastic pollution. The goal will be to identify areas of agreement and address remaining differences through textual negotiations, focusing on both substance and structure of the proposed instrument. Various alternative draft proposals will be consolidated into a streamlined and cohesive document that can be finalized in legal terms by the fifth session.

The discussion will happen in two contact groups which will be further divided into 5 sub-groups that negotiate in the format given in the table in the next page.

The revised zero draft document is most likely to get more complicated in an effort to express the views of all member states in the fewest possible options.

The revised zero draft document will be the basis of the negotiations at the fourth meeting of the INC. In the note released by the INC secretariat, the phrase "without prejudice to the right of any Member to propose additions, deletions, or modifications" explicitly indicates that member states retain the freedom and authority to suggest changes to the text as part of the negotiation process.

This means that the revised draft text agreed upon at the third session serves as the starting point or foundation for discussions during the fourth session. However, it is not final or binding in its current form. Member states have the opportunity to participate actively in the negotiation process during the fourth session by proposing amendments or adjustments to the text based on their perspectives, priorities and concerns.

The intent behind this provision is to facilitate an open and inclusive negotiation process where member states can collaboratively refine and tailor the draft text to better reflect shared objectives and accommodate diverse viewpoints. Ultimately, this approach aims to foster consensus-building and ensure that the final text of

Contact Group 1			Contact Group 2	
Subgroup 1.1	**Subgroup 1.2**	**Subgroup 1.3**	**Subgroup 2.1**	**Subgroup 2.2**
Preamble	Primary plastic polymers	Extended producer responsibility	Financing	National Action Plans
Objectives	Chemicals and polymers of concern	Emissions and releases of plastics across their life cycles	Capacity building, technical assistance and technology transfer	Implementation and Compliance
Definitions	Problematic and avoidable plastic products, including short-lived plastics, single-use plastics and intentionally added microplastics	Plastic waste management		Reporting on progress
Principle	Microplastics and nanoplastics	Transboundary movement of [non-hazardous] plastic waste		Periodic assessment
Scope	Exemptions available to a Party upon request	Existing plastic pollution, including in the marine environment		International cooperation, information exchange, awareness raising, stakeholder engagement and health risks
	Product design, composition and performance			Governing body, subsidiary body, Secretariat
	Non-plastic substitutes			Possible annexes to the instrument
	Fishing gear			
	Trade in listed chemicals, polymers and products			
	Transparency, tracking, monitoring and labelling			

any agreement or resolution accurately represents the collective decisions and agreements reached by the committee.

Members and groups have been working independently to find common ground and develop compromise text, which will be encouraged to facilitate further consolidation and streamlining. The session will aim to produce a draft text that is streamlined and ready for finalization in legal language by the fifth session.

However, some complex issues may require further resolution beyond the current negotiation timeframe. Therefore, there will be a need to identify processes for addressing any outstanding issues after agreement on the text at the fifth session.

The draft rules of procedure: The Pandora's box which won't be touched in this session

Another issue that has been pending since the second meeting of the INC is the "Rules of Procedure". The rules of procedure in the ongoing negotiations to end plastic pollution typically refer to the established guidelines and protocols that govern the conduct of these negotiations among participating Parties. These rules are essential for ensuring orderly, fair and effective deliberations during international negotiations aimed at addressing plastic pollution.

While specific rules may vary depending on the negotiating forum, Rule 38.1 on decision making has faced massive pushback from a handful of countries, most of which have economic interests in keeping the plastic production tap open. While the rule advocates for voting in a situation of a deadlock, these countries have been demanding a consensus-based approach to arrive at decisions.

In the second meeting, the committee developed an interpretative text around Rule 38.1. This interpretative text indicates that there is disagreement among members of the intergovernmental negotiating committee regarding the application of Rule 38, Paragraph 1, from the draft rules of procedure. The provisional application of this rule has been a topic of debate, suggesting that there is uncertainty or contention surrounding its use before the rules are formally adopted.

The interpretative text implies that if Rule 38, Paragraph 1, is invoked (i.e., used or applied) before the formal adoption of the rules of procedure, members of the committee should remember and acknowledge the lack of agreement or consensus regarding its application. In essence, this statement serves as a reminder that the committee members hold differing views on how Rule 38, Paragraph 1, should be interpreted or implemented, particularly during the initial stages of their negotiations.

This interpretative text highlights the complexity of negotiations within the intergovernmental committee, where procedural matters like the application of rules can be contentious and subject to varying interpretations. The interpretative text also indicates that decisions on core issues like "primary plastic polymers" cannot be taken based on the "Draft Rules of Procedure".

In all likelihood, the discussion on rules of procedure will not be opened at the fourth meeting of the INC.

High likelihood of inter-sessional work

At the third meeting, the committee could not agree on the provisions for which inter-sessional work would be needed between the third and the fourth sessions. The biggest challenge for the fourth session is to have a mandate for inter-sessional work from the committee.

The group discussed potential topics for inter-sessional work, broadly categorized into technical aspects and financial considerations. Technical aspects included chemicals and polymers of concern, primary plastic polymers, design criteria, plastic circularity, extended producer responsibility, waste management, fishing gear, and downstream impacts in underdeveloped countries. Financial considerations focused on mapping public and private financial flows related to the future instrument's objectives, examining existing financing approaches and mechanisms, and exploring innovative financing methods based on the polluter pays principle.

The consensus was to focus on realistic and inclusive inter-sessional activities that could aid negotiations and enhance understanding among members without predetermining decisions, aiming to produce informative documents for INC-4.

New obligations and provisions which have been introduced in the revised zero draft

Provisions on health aspects, nanoplastics and "circularity approaches" feature in the revised zero draft.

For instance, while the article on health is crucial in the current discussions, it is equally important to understand how health protection will be implemented. The provisions aim to develop and implement strategies to protect vulnerable populations from the risks of plastic pollution. This includes adopting science-based health guidelines, setting exposure reduction targets and conducting public education with input from public health sectors.

The obligation mentions that the future governing body will consider health-related issues by consulting and collaborating with the World Health Organization (WHO) and other relevant stakeholders.

The provision on nanoplastics has been assigned a placeholder. Terminologies like "circularity approaches" have been used in the revised draft but there is no clarity on what this means and may require to be considered for inter-sessional work.

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