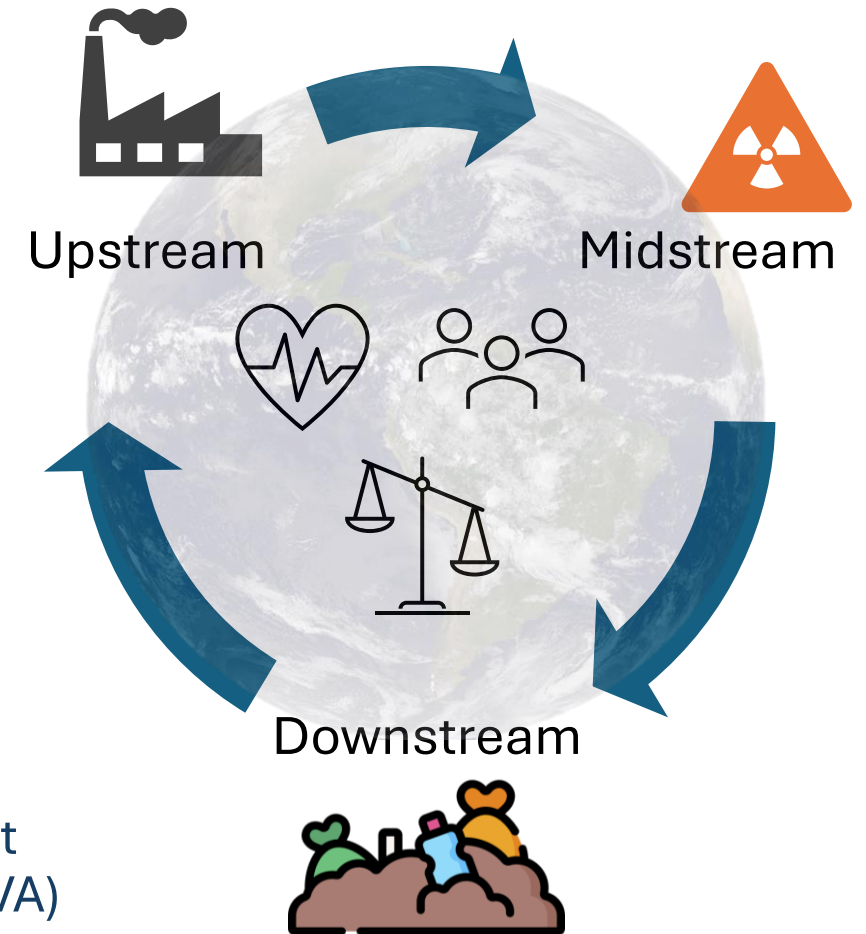


# A lifecycle perspective on just transition

## Principles, provisions, and practical implications in the global plastics treaty

- Just transition – an evolving and contested concept
- Standalone provision and cross-cutting principle
- Applies across the plastics lifecycle



**Emmy Nøklebye** | Research Scientist | Section for Environment and Development, Norwegian Institute for Water Research (NIVA)

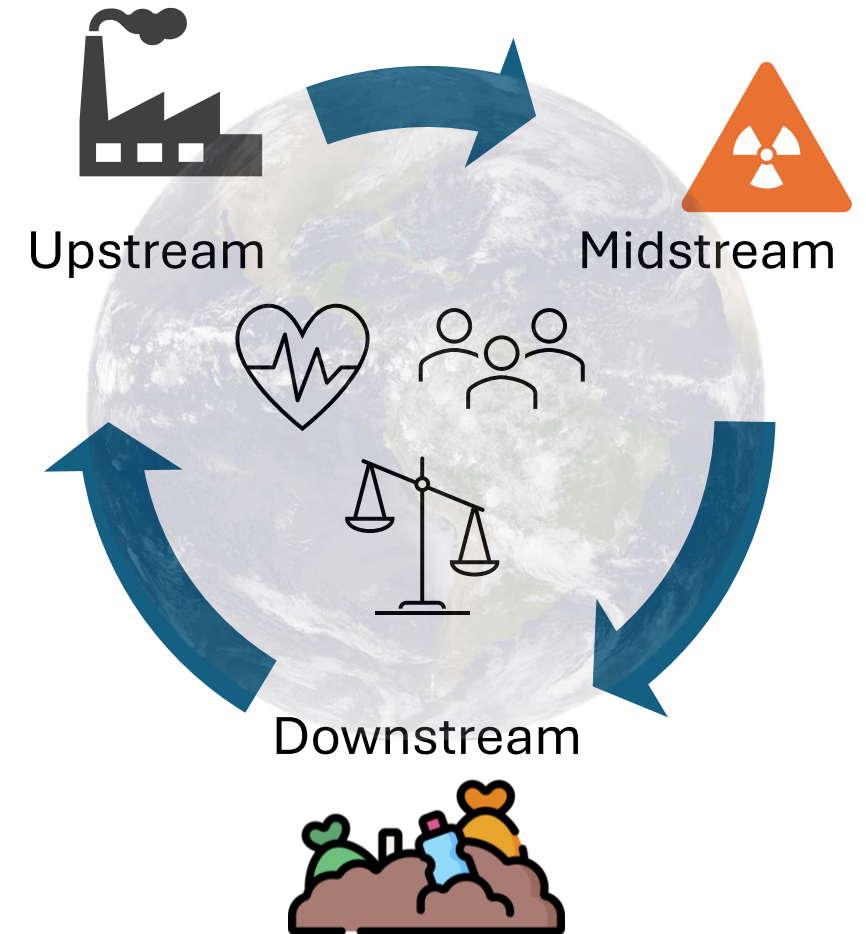
*This presentation builds on research conducted as part of the 'India Norway cooperation project on capacity building for reducing plastic and chemical pollution in India' (**INOPOL**)*

# A lifecycle perspective on just transition

## Principles, provisions, and practical implications in the global plastics treaty

*“Ensuring that measures taken to end plastic pollution are fair, equitable and inclusive for all stakeholders across the plastic lifecycle by safeguarding livelihoods and communities impacted by plastic pollution and corresponding control measures”*

(O’Hare and Nøklebye 2024)



# Evolution of just transition in the plastics treaty

From implicit equity framing to explicit provision

Early focus: Informal waste sector and waste pickers

Broader framing in Chair's text: Multiple affected stakeholders

Implementation details unclear and open to negotiation

## Options paper (INC-2)

11. Possible core obligation: **facilitating a just transition, including an inclusive transition of the informal waste sector**

*Comment: Environment Assembly resolution 5/14 recognized the significant contribution made by workers in informal and cooperative settings to the collecting, sorting and recycling of plastics in many countries. A just transition towards an environmentally sustainable economy can contribute to the goals of decent work for all, social inclusion and the eradication of poverty.<sup>17</sup>*

## Zero Draft text (INC-3)

### 12. **Just transition**

1. Each Party shall promote and facilitate a fair, equitable and inclusive transition for affected populations, with special consideration for women and vulnerable groups, including children and youth, in the implementation of this instrument\*. This may include:
  - a. Designating a national coordinating body for engagement with relevant stakeholders, including public authorities, non-governmental organizations and local communities;

## Chair's text (INC-5.2)

### **ARTICLE 10 JUST TRANSITION**

1. In implementing this Convention, each Party should promote and facilitate a just transition, taking into account national circumstances and capabilities, including development priorities, needs, challenges and different pathways, with a view to ensuring that no one is left behind.
2. In taking measures to implement paragraph 1 of this article, each Party should take into account the situation of and engage workers in the formal and informal sectors, including workers in the plastic industry, waste pickers, artisanal and small-scale fishers, small and medium enterprises, as well as communities and groups disproportionately affected by such transition across the full life cycle of plastics, including Indigenous Peoples, local communities, women and children.
3. Each Party is encouraged to report, monitor and evaluate measures taken to implement this Article in its national report pursuant to Article 15.

# Process matters: Transparency and participation

Limited spaces for  
observer participation

Process affects legitimacy  
and inclusivity

Just transition depends on  
meaningful involvement of  
affected groups



**IPEN**  
for a toxics-free future  
NOVEMBER 2024

**IPEN QUICK VIEWS ON THE FIFTH SESSION OF THE INTERGOVERNMENTAL NEGOTIATING COMMITTEE TO DEVELOP AN INTERNATIONAL LEGALLY BINDING INSTRUMENT ON PLASTIC POLLUTION**

**WHY PARTICIPATION OF CIVIL SOCIETY IS CRITICAL**

The Treaty negotiations have been accompanied by repeated limitations to participation of civil society and rightsholders. During the intersessional period, both official and unofficial work were carried out behind closed doors.

Participation of civil society is key for the realization of the human right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment. Both the Aarhus and Escazú Conventions provide international obligations for their Parties to ensure public participation in the negotiation and implementation of international agreements.

**Scientists' Coalition** for an Effective Plastics Treaty

Executive Secretary of the INC Secretariat:  
Mr. Andrés Gómez

11 Feb 2025

## Call for protections and assurances for observer participation at INC 5.2

Dear Bureau members,

Members of the Scientists' Coalition for an Effective Plastics Treaty have actively supported delegates at the Global Plastics Treaty Negotiations since the beginning of this important process. We have

# Broadening the lens on just transition



**Who participates in transition processes, under what conditions?**



**Whose knowledge and experiences are recognised and valued?**



**How are benefits and burdens of the transition distributed?**



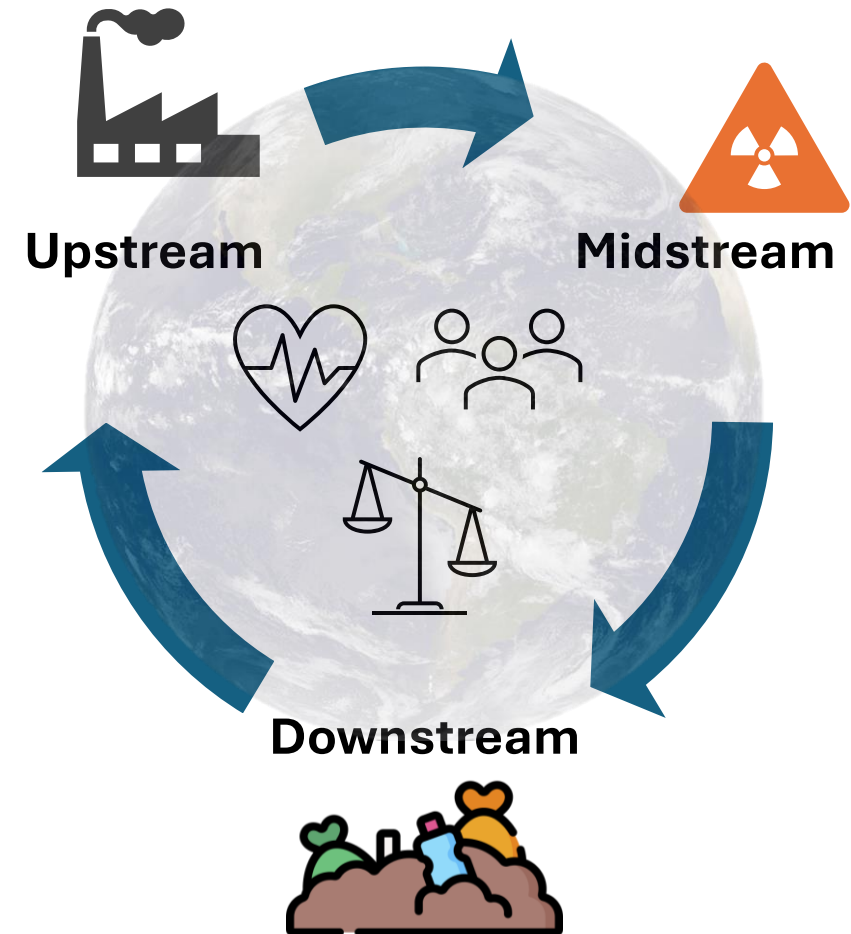
**What historical harms are acknowledged or ignored?**



# Justice across the plastics lifecycle

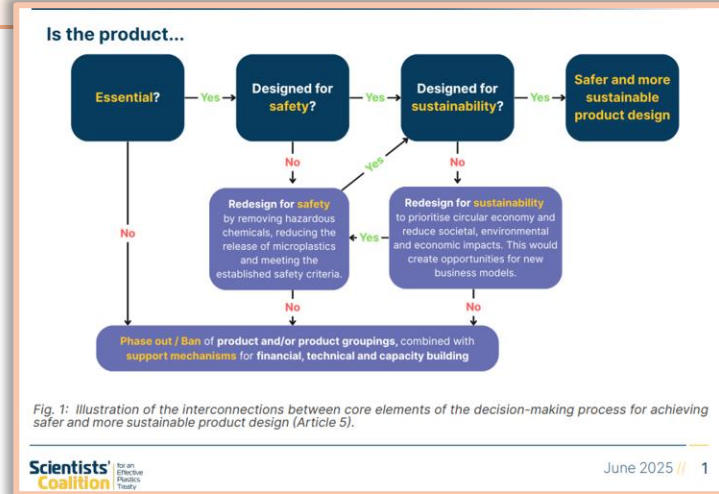
- **Upstream:** Environmental and social justice, land rights, intergenerational justice
- **Midstream:** Chemical exposure from plastic products, raising issues of health equity, consumer protection, and information access
- **Downstream:** Workers in waste management and nearby communities, coastal communities

**Crosscutting:** Structural inequalities, human health, human rights

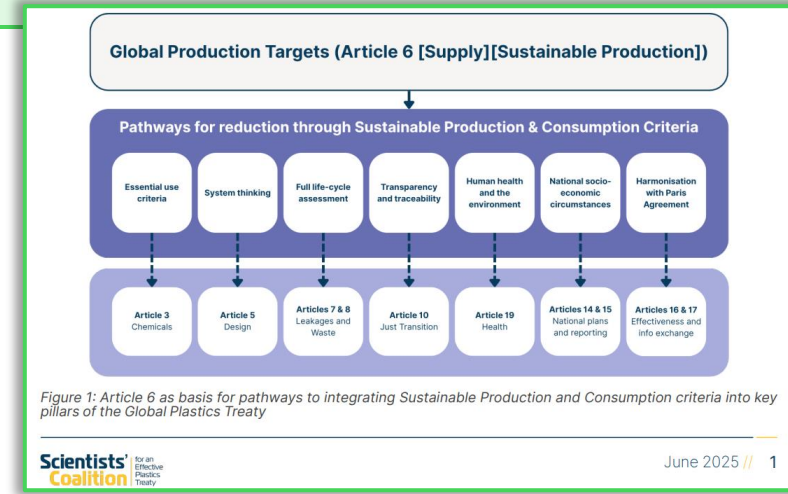


# Justice dimensions across the treaty

**Article 5: Plastic product design** decisions determine circularity, safety, and who bears the risks and costs associated with hazardous plastic products



**Article 6: Supply/Sustainable Production** reducing production of primary plastic polymers affect human health and the environment



**Article 8: Waste management** must ensure workers' rights and safeguards



Solid waste management in the UN Plastics Treaty — Version 2 for INC-5

## Solid waste management in the UN Plastics Treaty

A report which highlights why solid waste management is crucial to ending plastic pollution, and includes recommendations for UN Plastics Treaty discussions

2024 | Available in English

**Article 11: Finance** must be accessible, inclusive, and need-responsive



## The plastics treaty finance mechanism

A report for plastics treaty negotiators regarding access to finance for waste pickers and other grassroots groups.

2025 | Available in English

**Article 19: Health equity and rights** across the life cycle

Policy brief | Article 19 of the draft global plastics treaty text

## Human health in the global plastics treaty: Summary ahead of INC 5.2

### Why is human health important in the Global Plastics Treaty?

- The right to enjoy the highest attainable standard of health,<sup>1</sup> and to a safe, clean, healthy, and sustainable environment<sup>2</sup> are fundamental human rights.

used to make plastics<sup>14</sup> and eliminating hazardous substances, for example by restricting entire groups of concern (Articles 3 and 5).

- Establishing safety of their alternatives including safe produ...

Scientists' Coalition for an Effective Plastics Treaty

# Justice in practice: Participation, implementation, and the road ahead

Diverse groups bring distinct but shared justice priorities

Inclusion must go beyond recognition to real influence

Implementation tools matter: guidelines, working groups, national plans

Participation will be key to just and effective outcomes

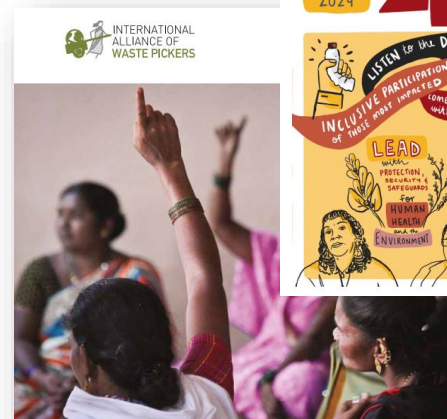


## UNOC3: Indigenous voices call for plastics treaty with justice at its core

Legally binding treaty on plastics backed by 95 countries; for communities on the frontlines, it's a battle for survival & recognition



Joint Statement from Just Transition Coalition of Indigenous Peoples, waste pickers and other frontline communities  
29 April 2024 - INC4



IAWP's Vision for a Just Transition for Waste Pickers under the UN Plastics Treaty

<https://globalrec.org/document/just-transition-waste-pickers-un-plastics-treaty/>

## Fisherfolk on the Frontlines

Greenpeace Philippines  
November 22, 2024 • Comments

