

PSI Position on the Second Session of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee on Plastic Pollution INC-2

(29 May - 2 June 2023, Paris, France)

Public Services International (PSI) is the Global Union Federation representing public service workers worldwide. We unite more than 700 trade unions representing 30 million workers in 154 countries. We defend trade union and workers' rights and fight for universal access to quality public services. Our members - two-thirds of whom are women - work across the whole public services spectrum, including national, state, regional and local government administrations, municipal and community services, public utilities including water and sanitation, waste collection and management and related services. We represent health and social care workers; public emergency workers, firefighters and many others. PSI is a member of the Trade Union and Workers UN Major Group.

This PSI position paper is composed of three parts: the first part explains the critical connection between an effective elimination, reduction, re-use and recycling of plastic and public services workers in waste management and related services. The second part makes some overarching observations as PSI's contribution to the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee on Plastic Pollution process. Finally, the third part makes some specific observations and recommendations on the potential options for the outcome document. This paper complements the [ITUC submission to INC-1](#) and the [ITUC submission to INC-2](#) which PSI fully endorses and to which it has contributed - with the sectoral perspective of public service workers.

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PART I - PUBLIC SERVICE WORKERS ARE KEY ACTORS IN THE GLOBAL FIGHT AGAINST PLASTIC WASTE

Waste collection and management are essential public services for every country and community and are necessary for the protection of public health and the environment.¹ The access to a clean and healthy environment free from plastic pollution and contaminants threatening human health – either in the short or in the long run - is not only a human right, but a common good for humanity and for the planet.

1. Public service workers on the frontline of plastic waste pollution

Public policies and public services are implemented and delivered by workers. Beyond waste services, many public services occupations and professions are on the frontline of the fight against plastic pollution and its dangerous consequences. These include workers delivering the following services (non-exhaustive list):

- waste collection, transport, sorting, recycling and final disposal, including of medical waste, hazardous, chemical materials and single-use plastics
- road cleaning, street sweeping, public building/infrastructure cleaning and janitorial services (e.g. refuse bins, public transport stops, ticket dispensers, etc.)
- public water, wastewater treatment and sanitation, dealing with water pipes, muds and plastic waste in waterways
- public building and infrastructure maintenance
- public, green space, inland waterway and coastal space maintenance
- park rangers, forest guards, biologists – including in coastal and marine areas and reserves
- urban planning and waste service management in the responsible public administrations (e.g. environmental engineers overseeing incinerators, dumps, landfills, recycling plants, biogas infrastructures etc.)
- hospital janitorial services, medical waste disposal
- public emergency services, including firefighting and civil protection

2. Labour rights and working conditions of waste workers on the frontline of plastic pollution

Among the many public service occupations and professions exposed to the hazards and harms of plastics and its related pollution, public service workers in waste are among those who face the most direct risk. Besides, they are the custodians of public health and environmental protection. They make sustainability and the circular economy a reality, including the de-pollution of plastic waste, its recovery, disposal or re-use and recycling. They do so putting their health on the line every day as they work on the frontline of plastic pollution dealing with the consequences of plastic and microplastic waste in water and in the environment, as well as with the impact of extreme weather events hitting open-air, uncontained dumps, and areas contaminated by plastic waste and related chemicals. Workers in waste services are often ambassadors of sustainability in schools, in their households and local communities, as they can well explain the value of reducing plastic use, as well as its responsible use and management, and how it can be properly eliminated, reduced, recycled and reused.

Yet, waste and related public service workers often have to work under very difficult circumstances, with inadequate staffing levels, in extremely poor, dangerous and unhealthy conditions. Often employed directly or indirectly by municipalities and/or local governments, their jobs are often precarious. They suffer from insecure income, partial or no social protection coverage – especially when subcontracted to private providers or as informal workers. They frequently lack basic human and labour rights, including the right to a safe and healthy working environment and the right to join a union. Their professionalisation and recognition as public service workers is denied in many countries, which exposes them further to many vulnerabilities beyond the difficult nature of the job, including: poor or no social security coverage; lack of adequate working tools; no access to proper, gender-sensitive sanitation facilities and to personal protective equipment (PPE); lack of professional and occupational health and safety (OSH) training. Public service workers dealing with waste are often marginalised and stigmatised even when in formal employment, as their association with the handling of refuse is still looked down upon in many cultures and communities. These issues are exacerbated when there is no trade union recognition or collective bargaining with employers.

¹ Cibrario, D., “[To ensure sustainable waste services, we must value waste workers and make sure they are in decent jobs](#)”, Spotlight on Sustainable Development 2018

Below, some concrete cases of the challenges waste and related public service workers face dealing with plastic waste.



The women street sweepers of N'djamena, Chad

Street sweeping in the roads of N'djamena, the capital of Chad, is primarily carried out by women workers who are often widows, older persons, single mothers, with little or no education and/or from marginalised backgrounds. The job puts them particularly at a risk of sexual harassment and third party violence as they have to travel long hours in public transport to get to their workplaces and carry out their tasks early in the morning or late at night. They also have to endure and deal with the plastic waste contamination, ashes and the smoke from plastic waste fires that are frequently lit by dwellers as a means to get rid of the refuse. The National Municipal Workers' Union of Chad (SYNACOT) organises and defends the human and labour rights of these workers. *Source and photo credits: SYNACOT 2023*



Medical waste disposal workers during the Covid-19 epidemic

As a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, in 2021 the amount of medical waste has increased by as much as 40 per cent. The World Health Organization (WHO) estimates that 15 per cent of health care waste is hazardous and may be infectious, toxic, or radioactive. Among medical waste, single-use plastic making up medical devices, supplies, syringes and PPEs make up the largest share. Such waste is frequently dumped into the environment when waste systems are lacking. This causes water contamination, among other health and

environmental hazards, and exposes scavengers to contaminated waste. Health services often burn their waste, releasing toxic chemicals and, potentially, pathogens, into the air. Health workers are trained to manage these risks, but waste collectors' working conditions are vastly different. 'The staff who clean the hospital and collect the waste may often be at greater risk than medical staff who produce it,' 'They are usually poorly educated and trained, and little attention is paid to their comfort and safety. It is uncommon for them not to have vaccinations or proper protective equipment. Disposable latex gloves may be provided, but they are thin and offer little protection. In warmer climates, the majority of cleaners will only wear sandals.'" *Source: Jozwiack, G. "[Clinical waste collectors – unprotected, untrained, underpaid and undervalued](#)", Equal Times, 5 July 2021. Photo Caption: A cleaner throws medical rubbish into a large, open bin at the Guru Nanak Dev Hospital after in Amritsar, India on 11 June 2020. (AFP/Narinder Nanu)*



Tunisian municipal waste workers' fight for the recognition of their role as public service providers

On 28 April 2019, World Day for Safety and Health at Work, 2,000 municipal waste workers from all provinces of Tunisia responded to a call from the municipal branch of the Tunisian General Workers' Union (Union Générale des Travailleurs de Tunisie – UGTT) and marched down the historic Avenue Habib Bourguiba of Tunis demanding decent working conditions and a statutory recognition of their profession as a public service. The municipal waste workers were demanding safe and healthy working conditions, adequate protective gear for all, and the

recognition of their professional status at national level. In Tunisia, workers collect, transport and amass unsorted waste (plastic, medical, metal, glass, household and organic waste, and electronic and chemical waste, all mixed together), often without gloves or masks, and in conditions posing a severe risk to their health. Central government devolved waste services to municipalities following the country's 2011 revolution. However, adequate funding did not follow and reach municipalities. Infrastructures and staffing levels and conditions are inadequate, and the waste management systems is failing. As a result, plastic waste sorting and recycling are inadequate and plastic pollution has become a plague for the country. *Source: PSI website, "[Two thousand Tunisian municipal cleaners demand safe working conditions and statutory recognition for their profession](#)" 13 May 2019*



The dangers for workers of plastic waste in sewerage systems

Often invisible to the wider public, sanitation work is largely carried out underground through the hidden labyrinths of sewerage systems and in high-security water treatment plants and installations placed in a confined atmosphere to protect populations, local residents and the environment from effluents and contamination. Water and sanitation services are both critical to protect public health and the environment and work in synergy and coordination with each other, including with solid waste collection and disposal. The pandemic outbreak posed further health and safety threats for sanitation workers. As people increasingly resort to single use, disposable masks, plastic gloves and single-use disinfectant wipes, many regrettably flush them down toilets and throw them into gutters plugging sewage pipes, making the work of sewage workers heavier and more dangerous, adding to the large amount of dangerous plastic bags clusters that end up in water and gutters in regular times. Masks and plastic bag waste in sewage cluster together building

dangerous plastic ropes that can swing in the water, and strangle or swipe away sewage workers as they plunge. Source: Cibrario, D., [“Sanitation workers play a key role to break the contamination chain”](#), 17 April 2020. Photo: CGT SP



Stigmatisation of municipal waste workers in Brazil

Waste workers routinely experience prejudice in several communities and are looked down upon by some for the nature of their work. A Brazilian waste services union leader affiliated to PSI, referring to his distinctive municipal waste worker outfit, emblematically said: *“Every day I wear a colourful and bright uniform I am proud of. But when I have it on while working in the street I feel invisible.”* In 2020, during the Covid pandemic, the municipal waste workers of São Paulo had to go on “strikes for life” to get access to Covid vaccines. Source: PSI website, [“Sindicatos de América Latina exigen condiciones de trabajo dignas para el sector de gestión de residuos municipales”](#), 15 August 2017. Cibrario, D. [“Trade Union Rights, Employment Conditions and Labour Relations in the LRG Sector”](#) LRGNext2021, PSI 2021.



Dar-Es-Salaam, Tanzania: waste pickers or municipal waste worker?

Dar Es Salam generates close to over 4,700 tonnes of waste daily, of which only 50% is collected. Plastic, organic and medical waste are all mixed up on the same site. Municipal waste workers - among whom many women - work side-by-side with waste pickers.

In cooperation with its affiliate the Tanzania Local Government Workers Union (TALGWU) PSI organised a field visit to four sites, including the biggest dumpsite of the Tanzanian capital. No worker had PPE be them “formal” or informal. Municipal workers have to use their meagre pay to buy protective gears like gloves and boots, and were not covered by medical care unlike other local government workers. Road accidents and waste workers crushing during waste truck offloading and manoeuvring are common at the dumpsites. Women workers are at risk of gender-based violence as they live far from the sites and have to leave their homes before dawn to begin work by 6am.

Source and pictures: PSI website, [Waste workers’ rights and conditions in Tanzania](#) 3 January 2023 .



PART II - GENERAL COMMENTS, OBSERVATIONS and RECOMMENDATIONS

PSI welcomes the [UNEA Resolution 5/14 “End plastic pollution: Towards an international legally binding instrument”](#), which acknowledges the negative impacts plastic pollution is causing on the environmental, social and economic dimensions of sustainable development. It commends the leadership of many States with high ambition to put an end to the plastic pollution crisis that threatens the people and the planet alike. PSI wishes to bring to the attention of the negotiators the following important points so that they can be considered and incorporated into the final Instrument and the provisions for its implementation.

- 2.1 Waste workers, related public service staff and their working conditions must be at the heart of the discussion. While the technical aspects, technological fixes and “market-based” solutions related to plastic pollution have until now dominated the discussion around the Instrument, very little thought has been given to the role, staffing levels, and conditions of the workers who ultimately have to implement the policies that will be defined in the outcome document. While the importance and visibility of waste services is now clearly and widely acknowledged, it is disconcerting to note that the workers who deliver them daily to communities – be they municipal workers, private provider workers or informal waste workers (often referred to as ‘waste pickers’) – remain largely invisible, unrecognized and often without a voice at work. It is these workers who will have to de-pollute the world from plastic waste, protect public health and our commons.
- 2.2 Waste management is a public service primarily provided by waste and related public service workers. Waste pickers and informal waste workers carry out a fundamental public service role in many countries where formal waste management systems do not exist or are ineffective. They deserve all our attention and support, and their human and labour rights must be fully respected and realised, as mandated by Recommendation 204 of the International Labour Organisation (ILO) Transition from the Informal to the Formal Economy² and by the transformative commitment of the New Urban Agenda (NUA)³ to progressive transition of workers and economic units to the formal economy. However, beyond informal waste workers, it is public service workers in waste, sanitation utilities and related services (see part 1 for a sample list of frontline professions engaged in the fight against plastic waste and their conditions) who are on the frontline of the fight against plastic pollution, bearing the burden of negative externalities and are exposed to occupational health hazards, as well as to human and labour rights violations. These frontline workers – the same who have served during the Covid pandemic dealing with the surge in plastic waste caused by the increase in medical waste such as masks, protective aprons and gears, Covid tests and vaccines – have been so far largely invisible and neglected in the discussions so far. Their conditions in some countries of the Global South are very comparable to those of informal workers and waste pickers.
- 2.3 Little quantitative and qualitative data are available about waste workers and related public services who are key to fight and end plastic pollution. While waste and related public service workers are central in the fight against plastic pollution, they remain largely invisible to statistical data and therefore policy analysis. This is because these professions are largely dependent on local and regional governments (LRGs) and information and data on subnational government employment remains incomplete or undisclosed. There are few reliable statistics about these professions; most remain basically invisible to policy analysis.⁴ Without proper data and adequate collection systems the monitoring of targets – including the SDGs and the goals that the Instrument is meant to set - are impossible. Studies that look at the numbers of waste workers and related services, professions and conditions are rare and mostly carried out by trade unions.⁵
- 2.4 Waste management systems are dramatically underfunded and understaffed everywhere. Not only in the Global South - where there is an urgent need for effective, professional, safe, modern waste management infrastructures; but even in some developed countries, waste management utilities are dramatically underfunded and understaffed compared with the plastic waste crisis the world faces.
- 2.5 The concept of circular economy as it stands is intrinsically attached to a market-based approach and to the commodification of plastic waste that is going to perpetuate – not halt – the problem. Lack of public investment in effective waste collection, management and safe disposal infrastructure has delayed the ability of many countries in the Global South to achieve the level of public health and environmental protection they need to thrive and develop inclusive socio-economic development with Decent Work as per the ILO definition. Illegal dumps and waste

² ILO, [R204 - Transition from the Informal to the Formal Economy Recommendation](#), 2015 (No. 204)

³ Habitat III, [New Urban Agenda](#), Quito, 16 October 2016

⁴ Up to 2018, the labour data statistical database of the International Labour Organisation (ILO) ILOSTAT only managed partial LRG employment data for 49 countries, representing only a quarter of the world’s subnational government labour force. See: [PSI-UCLG Statement at the 20th International Conference of Labour Statisticians \(ICLS\)](#).

⁵ See and PSI and EPSU reports: [Waste management in Europe](#). EPSU-PSIRU (2023); [Municipal solid waste management services in Africa and the Arab countries](#) PSI-PSIRU (2018); [Municipal solid waste management services in Latin America](#) PSI-PSIRU (2017).

picking continue to dominate the plastic “circular economy” in the Global South, whereas the privatisation of waste services and utilities has resulted into more landfill and contamination, lower quality and fragmented services, poor working conditions with labour rights violations, environmental degradation and lack of capacity in many countries and cities to cope with the skyrocketing consumption and disposal of single-use plastic.

- 2.6** The privatisation and commodification of waste management services are sharpening waste service inequalities within cities, territories and between countries. The conditionalities to privatise public services and cut public sector employment attached to IMF and WB structural adjustment plans – but also to some development aid programmes - have exacerbated public service access inequalities across neighbourhoods in the same cities, across territories (e.g. urban-rural) and between countries, fostering the infamous plastic waste trade between developed and developing countries. This has caused particularly problematic outcomes for countries whose nascent national waste service management systems has been halted by such pro-privatisation policies. The market and the private sector are not how the world is going to resolve the global plastic waste pollution crisis. Private operators are not interested in long-term waste management infrastructure investment to protect public health and the environment. Plastic waste must be not only eliminated, but also de-commodified, as public policies only that can provide concrete, decisive solutions to the public health and environmental and biodiversity threat plastic waste represents. There is an urgent need to boost public investment in modern, adequate, safe infrastructure to prevent reduce and eliminate plastic waste and on staffing up and skilling up professional waste management systems and related workers to operate them on a public good approach. Only a de-privatised, publicly-led vision for a professional, safe, effective waste management systems operated on a public good approach can realistically halt public waste pollution and its harmful consequences.

Based on the above analysis PSI issues the following policy recommendations:

- **INCLUDE ALL WORKERS AND THEIR UNIONS IN THE PLASTIC SUPPLY CHAIN, INCLUDING WASTE AND RELATED PUBLIC SERVICE WORKERS.** Workers and trade unions’ expertise are essential to the achievement of a plastic pollution-free world. Decent working conditions in local public service workplaces – including in waste services - are not only a fundamental human right requirement and a transformative commitment of the 2030 Agenda and the New Urban Agenda, but also a pre-requisite to ensure equitable access to quality local waste services to everyone, anywhere. Therefore all workers involved in the plastic life cycle need to have a seat at the table and their voice needs to be properly heard and their representative organisations meaningfully involved from all stages of the negotiation and implementation of the Instrument.
- **UNEP CAN CAPITALISE ON THE FRONTLINE EXPERTISE OF WORKERS AND THEIR UNIONS ALONG THE PLASTIC LIFE CYCLE.** Several UN agencies (e.g. the ILO, the WHO and the IMO) do recognize the fundamental contribution, professionalism and expertise that workers and trade unions bring to their missions and have meaningfully involved them accordingly.⁶ Workers’ voices must be heard regardless of their status (formal/informal; permanent/precarious; employed by public or private sector operators) both upstream and downstream in the plastic waste value chain.
- **INCLUDE LOCAL AND REGIONAL GOVERNMENTS AND CAPITALISE ON THEIR EXPERTISE ALL ALONG.** Over 60 percent of the world population lives in cities and urban centres producing the bulk of plastic debris. Among governments, it is local authorities that overwhelmingly have the exclusive or shared jurisdiction for waste and related service deliveries, and have to deal with the concrete consequences of the health and environmental burden of plastic pollution. In developing countries especially, where municipal fiscal systems are often fragile and intergovernmental transfers do not always adequately follow devolution mandates, the cost of waste services can represent the largest share of municipal budgets. In African cities this figure can go up to 70%. It is therefore essential to include local authorities at all stages of negotiations and to ensure public policy coordination and coherence among different levels of governments, reconciling the responsibilities of different agencies (environment, health, public space management, labour, finance, etc.) in the development and implementation of relevant public policies.⁷

⁶ Bilsky, E., Cibrario, D. [“Inclusive multi-level governance: the case for the meaningful involvement of local and regional governments and public service trade unions in the multilateral system of the future”](#), in Spotlight on Global Multilateralism Perspectives on the future of international cooperation in times of multiple crises, Bonn/Geneva, May 2023

⁷ Cibrario, D., [“To ensure sustainable waste services, we must value waste workers and make sure they are in decent jobs”](#), Spotlight on Sustainable Development 2018

- **ENSURE PUBLIC INVESTMENT SOLUTIONS TO FUND ADEQUATE WASTE MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS, INCLUDING PHYSICAL INFRASTRUCTURE AND ADEQUATE STAFFING IN DECENT EMPLOYMENT.** Establishing and operating effective, adequate and professional waste management systems and infrastructures able to deal with the surge in plastic pollution under all its forms requires reliable, sustainable stream of public resources to cities, metropolises and regions. Such waste management system solutions that must be safe and fair for all workers regardless of employment status – as well as for communities as well as the environment – The practice of open, illegal dumps and wildcat landfills is dangerous and unsustainable. It is urgent to promote public sustainable investment in integrated waste sorting and recycling systems rooted in transparent and participative approaches; and ensure separate, safe routes for plastic as well as for toxic, medical and other hazardous waste in the interest of public health and the environment. Options to do so include progressive municipal tax systems including land value capture but also the use and/or establishment of public banks.⁸ To this end, there is an urgent need to address the issue of lost corporate tax and ensure appropriate recovery and re-channelling mechanisms to wire tax revenues back to the local governments and communities that are on the frontline of plastic pollution with their waste and related services.
- **SEIZE THE OPPORTUNITY OF THE PLASTIC POLLUTION CRISIS TO PROMOTE ACTIVE LABOUR MARKET POLICIES TO GENERATE DECENT EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES.** The labour-intensive nature of waste services and recycling – such as door-to-door pick up and plastic bottle deposit systems – provides major opportunities to generate decent, green quality jobs, and ensure the socio-economic inclusion of informal waste workers through their progressive formalisation. There is clearly an urgent need for more waste services and management workers everywhere and the jobs created must abide by the five pillars of the ILO's Decent Work framework. The inclusion of informal waste workers in national and local integrated waste management systems is a positive and necessary step; yet it is not enough as it does not tackle the root causes of informality. Informal waste work is often the only survival option for the poor and the marginalized, or a buffer for unprotected workers hit by economic downturn, but is by no means decent employment. Integrated waste management plans should encompass viable mechanisms to facilitate formalization – a transformative commitment of the NUA – and ensure full access to rights and decent work for informal waste workers so that they can sustainably lift themselves and their families out of poverty. When States and LRGs systematically resort to informal work that pays poverty wages in order to keep down the labour costs of providing regular municipal waste services, informal workers get locked into the poverty loop and everyone loses.
- **KEEP WASTE SERVICES IN PUBLIC HANDS; DE-PRIVATISE AND RE-MUNICIPALISE WASTE AND RELATED PUBLIC SERVICES; AND RUN THEM ON A PUBLIC GOOD APPROACH, NOT FOR PROFIT.** The failure of waste services run with private capitals, for-profit is under everyone's eyes. This is why many cities and communities are re-municipalising - and countries de-privatising - their public services in waste and related areas and investing and enhancing their waste utilities and staff to run them on a public good approach. Profit-extraction and competition among private operators need to be taken out of the equation of the global plastic pollution crisis. As of May 2023, the Public Futures database – the only global repository of public service de-privatisation cases – counts 60 cities that re-municipalised their waste services.⁹ Re-municipalisation and de-privatisation are public policies that are not only viable and legitimate but need to be prioritised among the policy toolkit of the Instrument as an effective and legitimate way to tackle the global plastic pollution crisis and to expand universal access to quality waste and sanitation services.¹⁰
- **NATIONAL AND LOCAL WASTE MANAGEMENT PLANS MUST INCLUDE WASTE AND RELATED PUBLIC SERVICE WORKERS AND THEIR UNIONS.** In the past, countries such as Brazil have developed national solid waste plans in a view to bolster recycling rates and include informal workers within the formal municipal waste systems. Some cities do the same in their own municipal plans and urban policies. While this certainly is a positive and necessary step, the role and needs of formal waste workers often do not receive the same attention, and bridges to facilitate the progressive transition of informal workers into formal waste service employment are limited. Truly inclusive plans need to encompass the participation of all waste workers, be they formal (public and private) or informal, along with their unions and associations; as well as of service users from all concerned neighbourhoods and communities, including those in disadvantaged areas and slums.
- **UPHOLD THE LABOUR RIGHTS OF WASTE WORKERS AND VALUE THE PROFESSION.** To ensure sustainable waste services it is fundamental that workers are in decent working conditions. Waste workers' conditions greatly improve when they can benefit from trade union representation and enter dialogue and collective

⁸ Marois, T., [The potential of public banks to fund local quality public services: A policy brief for workers and trade unions](#), PSI Policy Brief, (2023)

⁹ Public Futures Database <https://publicfutures.org/en>

bargaining with their employers. Governments and businesses alike have a human rights responsibility to provide decent working conditions to waste workers, including adequate health and safety, social security and a living wage. Conversely, they can greatly benefit from constructive dialogue with waste workers and their unions who know best the needs and expectations of the communities they serve and the challenges to ensuring quality waste services.

- **INCLUDE STRONG LABOUR RIGHTS AND DECENT WORK CLAUSES IN PUBLIC PROCUREMENT CONTRACTS.** Promote the inclusion of strong labour and decent work clauses designed in cooperation with waste workers' unions in public procurement contracts covering municipal and territorial waste services.
- **ENSURE STATE CAPACITY TO IMPLEMENT, MONITOR AND FOLLOW-UP AT ALL LEVELS OF GOVERNMENTS THROUGH NATIONAL AND LOCAL TRIPARTITE MECHANISMS.** Following the principles of just transition, capacity building and technical assistance are needed to prepare the workforce affected by the transition to stop plastic pollution as well as the public utilities and state entities at all level of government that are required to ensure the implementation, monitoring and follow-up. Capacity building of the workforce involves adequate staffing levels, skills development, implementing OSH provisions, appropriate tools to perform the work, and the upholding of fundamental labour and union rights. All measures related to capacity building and technical assistance should be developed in collaboration with the social partners in the sectors through quality social dialogue processes. The implementation of these measures can be guided by the broad expertise on these issues that is available at the ILO and its constituencies at all level of government (national, regional and local).

PART III – RECOMMENDED WORDING ON THE “POTENTIAL OPTIONS” DOCUMENT UNEP/PP/INC.2/4

Based on the above analysis PSI issues the following proposed changes to the text proposed under the ‘[Potential options for elements towards an international legally binding instrument, based on a comprehensive approach that addresses the full life cycle of plastics as called for by United Nations Environment Assembly resolution 5/14](#)’ UNEP/PP/INC.2/4 as follows:

ORIGINAL TEXT	PROPOSED TEXT OR ADDITION
B - Option 1 (p.5): PRIMARY PLASTIC POLYMERS	
(b) Options for regulating primary plastic polymers: (i) Impose a moratorium on primary production of plastic polymers or ban, limit or reduce the manufacture, export and import of virgin plastic polymers.	(b) Options for regulating primary plastic polymers: (i) Impose a moratorium on primary production of plastic polymers or ban, limit or reduce the manufacture, export and import of virgin plastic polymers. (ii) Systematically apply the precautionary principle to protect human health, biodiversity and the environment from the known and yet unknown effects of primary plastic polymers and their recycled materials.
B - Option 2 (p.5): PROBLEMATIC AND AVOIDABLE PLASTIC PRODUCTS	
(c) Option for economic tools: Set market-based measures such as price-based measures, production permits, licenses, removal of fiscal incentives and a mandatory fee, tariff or tax on virgin plastic production.	(c) Option for economic tools: Set market-based measures such as price-based measures, production permits, licenses, removal of fiscal incentives and a mandatory fee, tariff or tax on virgin plastic production. (d) fund public institutions to research and develop fully biodegradable and biocompatible alternatives (e) collaborate with waste workers and their representative organisations to raise awareness and educate residents, citizens, pupils and students, households and local communities about how to reduce, replace, re-use and safely dispose of problematic and avoidable plastic products.
B - Option 3 (p.6): CHEMICALS AND POLYMERS OF CONCERN	
12 (c) Options for accelerating and supporting the transition: (i) Establish measures to foster innovation and incentivize alternative and substitutes, including through sustainable or green chemistry and chemical simplification. (ii) Incentivize research and development of sustainable additives and polymers.	12 (c) Options for accelerating and supporting the transition: (i) Establish measures to foster innovation and incentivize alternative and substitutes, including through sustainable or green chemistry and chemical simplification. (ii) Incentivize public research and development of fully biodegradable and biocompatible alternatives sustainable additives and polymers.
B - Option 4 (p.7): MICROPLASTICS	
13 (b) (ii) Support innovative wastewater treatment mechanisms to prevent the release of microplastics into waterways.	13 (b) (ii) Support innovative wastewater treatment mechanisms to prevent the release of microplastics into waterways. (iii) Invest in the staffing and training of public water and sanitation utilities, including water quality laboratories
B - Option 5 (p.7): WASTE MANAGEMENT	
(iii) Develop guidance for areas such as: a. Encouragement of investment in waste management infrastructure	(iii) Develop guidance for areas such as: a. Encouragement of public investment in waste management infrastructure; including adequate staffing levels of professionally trained and equipped waste and related public service workers
(d) (ii) Set indicators for the plastic waste recycling rate, especially at the domestic level.	(d) (ii) Set indicators for the plastic waste recycling rate, especially at the domestic level. (iii) encourage countries to adopt cross comparable data system to account for their waste management systems and related service workforce data

(quantitative and qualitative) to ensure state capacity, good policy design and monitoring of the advancement of targets and goals that the Instrument is meant to set.

B - Option 10 (p.11): ADDRESSING EXISTING PLASTIC POLLUTION

(a) Options for addressing existing plastic pollution:

(a) Options for addressing existing plastic pollution:
(iii) Promote active labour market policies to generate decent employment opportunities in waste and related services to de-pollute and tackle the global plastic waste crisis. The labour-intensive nature of waste services and recycling provides major opportunities to generate decent, green quality jobs in waste and related public services, and to ensure the socio-economic inclusion of informal waste workers through their progressive formalisation.

B - Option 11 (p.12) : JUST TRANSITION

(a) Establish a mechanism to ensure a fair, equitable and inclusive transition for the industry and affected workers, informal waste workers and affected communities, particularly in developing countries;

(a) Establish a mechanism to ensure a fair, equitable and inclusive transition into decent work opportunities for the industry and all concerned workers, including waste and related public service workers, as well as informal waste workers and affected communities, particularly in developing countries;

(b) Promote active labour market policies to generate decent employment opportunities to de-pollute and tackle the global plastic waste crisis. The labour-intensive nature of waste services and recycling provides major opportunities to generate decent, green quality jobs in waste and related public services, and to ensure the socio-economic inclusion of informal waste workers through their progressive formalisation.

(b) Establish a requirement for private waste management companies to collect plastic waste from informal waste picker cooperatives or associations, where relevant, and establish gradual schemes for their formalization. As these cooperatives or associations formalise, the requirement for companies to collect from waste picker cooperatives or associations should be geared toward the formal ones.

(c) Establish a requirement for private waste management companies to collect plastic waste from informal waste picker cooperatives or associations, where relevant, and establish gradual schemes for their formalization. As these cooperatives or associations formalise, the requirement for companies to collect from waste picker cooperatives or associations should be geared toward the formal ones.

(c) Improve working conditions for workers, including waste pickers, including by providing legal recognition and support for informal waste pickers, such as access to health care, education and social security benefits.

(d) Improve working conditions for all concerned workers, regardless of their employment status (formal/informal; permanent/precarious; employed by public or private sector operators) both upstream and downstream in the plastic waste value chain including waste pickers; including by providing legal recognition and support for informal waste pickers, such as access to health care, education and social security benefits.

(d) Integrate the informal waste sector into the plastics value chain and promote a circular economy through a “just transition programme”.

(e) Integrate the informal waste sector into the plastics value chain and promote a circular economy through a “just transition programme”.

(e) Establish a requirement to use fees derived from EPR schemes to fund an upgrade of infrastructure and technical and management skills for informal waste pickers to function as waste collection and sorting companies.

(d) Establish a requirement to use fees derived from EPR schemes to fund an upgrade of infrastructure and technical and management skills for all waste workers, including informal waste pickers to function as waste collection and sorting companies.

B - Option 12 (p.12): HUMAN HEALTH

(a) ... (b) ...

(a) ... (b) ...

(b) Systematically apply the precautionary principle to protect human health, biodiversity and the environment from the known and yet unknown effects of plastic pollution.

C - Option 1 (p.13): FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE	
<p>(e) Explore innovative and other financing opportunities, nationally or globally, for tackling plastic pollution, where private-sector resources can play an enhanced role, including the following:</p> <p>(iii) Public-private partnerships: Foster public-private partnerships to fund and implement initiatives aimed at reducing plastic waste. Companies could contribute funding, expertise and resources to support projects that align with their sustainability goals and the instrument's objectives.</p> <p>(v) Funding through private-sector entities involved in the life cycle of plastic: Introduce a packaging fee.</p>	<p>(e) Explore innovative and other financing opportunities, nationally or globally, for tackling plastic pollution, where private-sector resources can play an enhanced role, including the following:</p> <p>(iii) Public-public private partnerships: Foster public-publicprivate partnerships to fund and implement initiatives aimed at reducing plastic waste. Companies could contribute funding, expertise and resources to support projects that align with their sustainability goals and the instrument's objectives. Facilitate public-public utilities partnerships and mutual learning among all level of governments. Strengthen local and regional government public financing to ensure they have adequate capacity to deal with the frontline effects of global plastic pollution crisis</p> <p>(v) Funding through private-public sector entities involved in the research and regulation of life cycle of plastic:</p> <p>(vi) Invest in public waste and related public service facilities to de-commodify plastic waste and ensure that public policy objectives are reached in the public interest of health and environmental protection, not for profit</p>
C - Option 2 (p.15): CAPACITY BUILDING	
<p>(b) Provide for the governing body to develop a capacity-building strategy or mechanism to:</p>	<p>(b) Provide for the governing body to develop a capacity-building strategy or mechanism to:</p> <p>(iii) Collaborate with waste and related service workers and their representative organisations to raise awareness and educate households and communities about how to reduce, replace, re-use and safely dispose of problematic and avoidable plastic products.</p>
<p>(c) Provide for the development and implementation of training and education programmes to enhance the knowledge and skills of government officials, industry representatives and other stakeholders on issues related to the instrument, including waste management, EPR and sustainable consumption and production.</p>	<p>(c) Provide for the development and implementation of training, occupational health and safety and education programmes to enhance the knowledge and skills of government officials, waste and relates public service workers, industry representatives and other stakeholders on issues related to the instrument, including waste management, EPR and sustainable consumption and production.</p>
E - Option 1 (p.21): AWARENESS-RAISING AND EDUCATION	
<p>(b) In relation to the mechanism(s), the instrument could include provisions for:</p>	<p>(b) In relation to the mechanism(s), the instrument could include provisions for:</p> <p>(x) collaborate with waste workers and their representative organisations to raise awareness and educate residents, citizens, pupils and students, households and local communities about how to reduce, replace, re-use and safely dispose of problematic and avoidable plastic products.</p>
E - Option 3 (p.23): RESEARCH	
<p>37. (a)...(b)...</p>	<p>37. (a)...(b)...</p> <p>(c) Adequately fund and incentivize public, independent research and development of fully biodegradable and biocompatible alternatives. Shield public health and environmental goals from private and commercial interests.</p>