



INTERNATIONAL  
ALLIANCE OF  
WASTE PICKERS

# FIRST INTERGOVERNMENTAL NEGOTIATING COMMITTEE - INC1 REPORT-ENGLISH

DECEMBER 2022

## SUMMARY

THE FIRST SESSION OF THE INTERGOVERNMENTAL NEGOTIATING COMMITTEE (INC) TO DEVELOP AN INTERNATIONAL LEGALLY BINDING INSTRUMENT ON PLASTIC POLLUTION, INCLUDING IN THE MARINE ENVIRONMENT, TOOK PLACE IN THE PUNTA DEL ESTE CONVENTION AND EXHIBITION CENTRE FROM 28 NOVEMBER TO 2 DECEMBER 2022. THE INTERNATIONAL ALLIANCE OF WASTE PICKERS WAS PRESENT WITH A DELEGATION OF WASTE PICKER LEADERS AND ATTENDED SEVERAL IMPORTANT MEETINGS AND EVENTS, HIGHLIGHTED BELOW IN THIS REPORT.

FIND ALL UPDATED INFORMATION AT OUR [PAGE DEDICATED TO THE EVENT.](#)



INTERNATIONAL ALLIANCE OF WASTE PICKERS

MEET OUR DELEGATION #INC-1



**SILVIO RUIZ**  
ARB - WASTE PICKERS ASSOCIATION OF BOGOTA - COLOMBIA



**SOLEDAD MELLA**  
RED LACRE - CARIBBEAN AND LATIN AMERICAN WASTE PICKERS NETWORK



**ESTELA MARY RECALDE**  
UCRUS - UNION OF SOLID URBAN WASTE CLASSIFIERS - URUGUAY



**ADJA MAME DIOP**  
BOKK DIOM ASSOCIATION - SENEGAL



**BARBRA WEBER**  
GROUND SCORE ASSOCIATION - USA



**JOHN CHWEYA**  
KISUMU WASTE PICKERS WELFARE ASSOCIATION - KENYA



**MADITLHARE KOENA**  
SAWPA - SOUTH AFRICAN WASTE PICKERS ASSOCIATION



**LUIS ALBERTO CATALANO**  
UCRUS - UNION OF SOLID URBAN WASTE CLASSIFIERS - URUGUAY



**INDUMATHI**  
HASIRU DALA INDIA



The official delegation of Waste Pickers that flew to Punta del Este, Uruguay, to represent the Intl. Alliance during the event.

We included Natalia Carrau, of TUCA-CSA, who was representing ITUC at INC1, as part of our group through the trainings and treaty negotiations. The representatives of the ITUC and IndustriALL were part of the preparation process of waste-pickers delegation, provided critical insights to ensure that the wider concerns of labour are all aligned with waste-pickers and vice versa.

First event of the week's activities before INC: a conversation on the prospective Plastics Treaty, organized by the local union federation. Our delegates learned about the local challenges of plastics waste management.



As we prepared for INC, our delegation took the time to visit a sorting plant for non-returnable containers in Montevideo. The plant is located on Camino Géminis between Rosario and Chacarita de los Padres.



Our delegation of waste pickers also visited the 5bis plant at the Felipe Cardoso landfill. They met Luca, who said he has been a waste picker for 50 years at this site.



WIEGO's International Negotiation and Strategy Course for Waste Pickers: "It's important that every country understand who Waste Pickers are, and what it is that we do." — Maditlhare Koena

WIEGO's preparatory workshop for the participation of our delegates in the working group on Plastics at the INC-1. The workshop is facilitated by Pat Horn





Our delegation participated in a multistakeholder forum in the lead up to the Plastics Treaty negotiations. The event opened with statements by scientists, and then Waste Pickers' delegates joined breakout groups to discuss key issues with other stakeholders, and to demand recognition of their occupation and definition of Just Transition.



Member states from more than 30 countries referred to waste pickers and informal work arrangements in plastic waste management and recycling in their opening statements.



Kabir Arora, the representative of the International Alliance of Waste Pickers moderated one room, and reported the discussions. He was asked to comment on waste pickers' mobilization for the prospective plastic treaty. Luis, Estela, Indumathi, Barbra, Soledad and Silvio (our delegates) spoke from the floor during the plenary and highlighted that waste pickers have come prepared to participate in the INC. Every time waste pickers spoke, they were applauded by member states representatives, environmental organizations, scientists, private sector and others.



**Indumathi**  
At Plastics Treaty INC1, Punta del Este, Uruguay

One of our delegates, Indumathi, from Hasiru Dala, spoke at the multi stakeholder meeting: "The United Nations Environment Programme should study who Waste Pickers are, and bring in a uniform definition for the waste pickers, as well as how they can be a strong presence in the PlasticsTreaty."

**Meeting w/ Sheila Aggarwal-Khan, Executive Director of the Economic Division of UNEP.**  
She met our delegation on behalf of Inger Andersen, ED of UNEP. Waste pickers were asked to share their perspectives on what a Just Transition should look like.





Soledad Mella gave an emotional speech about how 20 million waste pickers worldwide are taking care of our waste and who were the first to take action on avoiding plastic pollution, generations ago. She also explained how toxins associated with plastics and fumes affect the health of waste pickers all around the globe. The plastic pollution crisis is a chemical crisis.

It was inaugurated the 'Group of Friends of Waste Pickers', which will be a platform to hear waste pickers' concerns in the ongoing negotiations. More than 24 member states representatives from Asia, Africa, North America and Europe were present in the room. This moment marks an unprecedented recognition of the informal waste sector's rights, skills and importance. Never before have countries formally committed to advocating on behalf of Waste Pickers in the context of international negotiations."



**A Seat at the Table**  
**The Role of the Informal Recycling Sector in Plastic Pollution Reduction, and Recommended Policy Changes**

**Event Information**  
 Date: Tuesday, November 29, 2022  
 Time: 1:30–2:30 p.m. (Punta del Este - GMT-3)  
 Location :Hotel L'Auberge, Punta del Este, Uruguay



Our delegates Soledad Mella (RedLacre - Chile) and Taylor Cass Talbott (WIEGO) spoke at GRIDA Rendal's discussion on the role of the informal recycling sector — and the need for a fair Plastics Treaty.

Led by INC Chair Gustavo Meza-Cuadra, from Peru, delegates began discussions on the elements that will shape the future treaty, including:

- Its Scope, objectives & structure;
- Core obligations, control measures, and voluntary approaches;
- Means of implementation.



### **UN Human Rights called for a Plastics Treaty that:**

- Advance realization of human rights, incl. the right to a Healthy Environment For All
- Hold polluters accountable
- Safeguard the Human Rights of those who suffer the most from Plastics Crisis

This is a huge deal for Human Rights and the future Plastics Treaty.

**READ:** <http://ohchr.org/sites/default/files/documents/issues/climatechange/2022-12-01/OHCHR-inputs-INC1.pdf>

The Kenyan delegation declared the "Just Transition Initiative" to work with The International Alliance of Waste Pickers, South Africa and other workers in the plastic value chain, for the inclusion of the informal sector in a Global Plastics Treaty – a huge win for waste pickers inclusion. The project seeks to foster the element of a just transition within the letter and spirit of the proposed legally binding instrument.



At INC-1 to develop an international legally binding instrument on plastic pollution, including in the marine environment.

**"Mr. Chair, Kenya would also like to take this opportune moment to inform the plenary of the "Just Transition Initiative" which is a joint initiative with the delegation of South Africa and the International Alliance of Waste Pickers and other stakeholders, that seeks to foster the element of a Just transition within the letter and spirit of the proposed legally binding instrument."**



At INC-1 to develop an international legally binding instrument on plastic pollution, including in the marine environment.

**"Distinguished delegates, the Kenyan delegation would like to invite interested Member states who wish to secure an all-inclusive Legally binding instrument that ensures the Spirit of "leaving no one behind", to approach the Kenyan or South African delegations for further engagement moving forward."**



The report “Leaving no one behind: How a global instrument to end plastic pollution can enable a just transition for the people informally collecting and recovering waste” by the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) and the Norwegian Institute for Water Research (NIVA) was launched in Nairobi, Kenya. The ‘Leaving No-one Behind’ report is a welcome addition to our understanding of the work of waste-pickers and the wider informal waste and recycling sector. It fills a gap in the existing understanding of the sector and highlights the role and scale of the participation of various actors, said Kabir Arora (Qabeer Jalandhari), Asian Regional Coordinator, WIEGO, International Alliance of Waste-pickers at the launch event.

Our delegates met with Jyoti Mathur-Filipp, the Executive Secretary, Secretariat of INC-1, to talk about the importance of a fair and inclusive design of this new Plastics Treaty, as well as how essential the role and contribution of Waste Pickers is for ensuring its effectiveness.



**Globalrec - Nov 2022** - Waste Pickers attend the 1st Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee (INC-1) on Plastic Pollution in Uruguay.

**Globalrec - Nov 2022** - Group of Friends of Waste Pickers' is inaugurated during the INC-1 in Uruguay.

**Globalrec - Dec 2022** - Kenya And South Africa Announce Just Transition Initiative For Waste-pickers & Other Workers In The Plastic Value Chain

**CIEL - Dec 2022** - Center for International Environmental Law Staff Respond to Developments During First Round of Plastics Treaty Negotiations

**Washington Post - Nov 2022** - Countries are negotiating a global plastics treaty. It won't be easy.

**Phys Org - Nov 2022** - Waste pickers risk their lives to stop plastic pollution—now they could help shape global recycling policies

**BFFP - Dec 2022** - "Leaving no one behind": Report launched in Nairobi

**BFFP - Dec 2022** - First Global Plastics Treaty Intergovernmental Meeting Concludes With a Mix of High and Low Points

**Packaging Insights - Dec 2022** - Waste pickers on the world stage: Plastic pollution treaty negotiations officially recognize informal collectors

**ADJA MAME SENY PAYE DIOP**

Adja Mame Seny Paye Diop is the vice-president of Bokk Diom (Senegal) and has been working as a waste picker since 1998. "For a successful just transition, waste pickers have to be considered first."

Adja has participated in local events in Senegal, such as UNEP's Ad hoc open-ended working group (OEWG) held in Dakar, and is now part of our delegation representing millions of waste pickers at INC1.

**MADDIE KOENA**

Maddie Koena is the National Coordinating and Committee Member of SAWPA – South African Waste Pickers Association – and has been a waste picker for the past 10 years. She was an active member of the writing and discussing groups of the International Alliance of Waste Pickers' constitution and of their EPR policy discussions.

"Waste pickers contribute to the value chain and economy of their respective countries. We deserve to be treated like any other tax payer. We deserve to have our work formalized, in a way that gives us the same rights and benefits of any formal worker."

**BARBRA WEBER**

Barbra Weber is the co-founder of Ground Score, an association of informal recyclers, dumpster divers and other environmental workers who create and fill low-barrier waste management jobs. Based in Portland, Oregon, the association is collectively-organized and seeks to be radically inclusive, prioritizing work opportunities for those facing work and housing insecurity.

She has been working as a waste picker off and on for the past 38 years. Since 2021, she has been an official delegate of the International Global Alliance of Waste Pickers to the Global Plastics Treaty process, and attended the Nairobi meetings virtually. She is now in Uruguay to represent the International Global Alliance of Waste Pickers in person.

"A Just Transition must be done in a way that is fair and as inclusive as possible to everyone concerned, creating decent work opportunities and leaving no one behind."

**JOHNSON DOE**

Johnson Doe is the president of Kpone Landfill Waste Pickers Association, based in Accra, Ghana. He has been working as a waste picker for 21 years at the Landfill and participated in the UNEA 5.2, as well as in the International Alliance of Waste Pickers Conference in Buenos Aires.

"My life has changed positively as a waste picker. This work has really enhanced my knowledge in terms of how to fight together as workers, about waste management and recycling."

## SILVIO RUIZ GRISALES

Silvio Ruiz Grisales is a waste picker from the National Association of Waste Pickers of Colombia (ANR). He has been working as a recycler for 40 years and has participated in events such as the UN-Habitat United Arab Emirates pre-summit (1996), Climate Change summits in Mexico, ILO 2019 conference, UNEA 5.2 in Kenya (2022) and the World Conference of Waste Pickers in Colombia (2008).

"We have generated with our trade an important part of the solutions to pollution for more than 80 years of work as Trade Recyclers. That is why it is important to recognize the Recyclers and consult them to design solutions and feasible processes as part of the solutions in the Transition processes."

## SOLEDAD MELLA VIDAL

Soledad Mella Vidal is president of the Asociación Nacional Movimiento de Recicladores de Base de Chile (ANARCH) and has been working as a waste picker for 17 years. She was a spokesperson at UNEA 5.2 (Nairobi) and UNEA 5 (Dakar) and is also part of our delegation at INC-1.

"Just transition means respecting our trade and guaranteeing the permanence of this work that we invented and recognizing that we are workers. We must invest directly in waste pickers, improving working conditions and paying a living wage for our service."



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