

Opening Plenary Statement
INC 5.2: Final Round of Negotiations of a Global Plastic Treaty
August, 5th, 2025
Juan Carlos Monterrey Gomez
Special Representative for Climate Change
Ministry of Environment, Republic of Panama

Thank You Chair,

Colleagues,

In this room, every continent, every language, every faith is represented.
We come from deserts and forests, from megacities and mountain villages.
And yet one thing unites us, not by choice, but by neglect: microplastics.

They are in our blood. In our lungs. In the first cry of a newborn child.

Our bodies are proof of a system that profits from poisoning us.
Behind every microplastic lies a macro-lie: that recycling alone will save us.
It will not.

We cannot recycle our way out of this crisis.
We cannot mop the floor while the pipe is gushing.
We cannot tell our people “later” when the poison is inside us now.

Halfway through these negotiations, we are still circling safe talking points while people and wildlife choke on plastic.

We are not here for diplomatic tourism.
We are here to negotiate. To engage. To get to a deal, one that ends plastic pollution across its entire life cycle.

That means addressing production.
That means fair, clear rules that give industry the certainty to innovate, the same clarity that unleashed revolutions in solar, electric mobility, and renewable energy.

Let's be clear: half of all plastics are used once and discarded. That is not innovation. That is arrogance, the kind that poisons rivers and robs our children of a safe tomorrow.

A treaty without production measures will be built on sand.
Without chemical controls, soaked in denial.
Without product design, engineered to fail.

To the waste pickers cleaning our streets while leaders delay: we see you.
To civil society, Indigenous peoples, and scientists: you are not guests, you are the conscience of this process.
To the media: keep shining the light. Make it impossible for obstruction to hide.

To the billions outside these walls: this is your right to clean air, clean water, fertile soil, and a body free of poison. Demand answers now. Call. Write. Show up. Make it harder for your leaders to do nothing than to do the right thing. Public pressure moves mountains, and moves negotiators.

We agree with the EU, island states, Chile, Colombia, Peru.

Chair, your participation in informal consultations is essential. We must leave this plenary with a clear path forward, Progress has been slow. Simply put: the current setup is not working. Any new proposals must come with deletions or mergers to reduce text, not grow it.

We have one week to choose courage over convenience. Truth over delay. A living planet over a disposable one.

NO MORE STALLING. NO MORE EXCUSES. STEP UP, OR STEP ASIDE.