TO: UNEP INC-4  
FROM: Sarah Martik, Executive Director  

RE: Production Reduction, Human Health, and a Just Transition 
Submitted electronically  

Honorable Chair and Esteemed Delegates,

I am grateful for the opportunity to submit this intervention on behalf of over 5,000 members and supporters throughout southwestern Pennsylvania in the United States.

There can be no ambiguity as to the dire climate consequences of allowing plastic production rates to grow at their current pace: by 2050, GHG emissions from plastic production would be the equivalent to emissions from 1.1 billion gas-powered cars. Very clearly, plastic is not a climate solution. A production reduction target of 40% that aligns with the Paris Agreement is the minimum target we can afford with our remaining carbon budget. Even more critically, we must set these substantial production limits if we are to protect the frontline and fenceline communities who are, right now, struggling to survive beneath intergenerational adverse health outcomes and environmental degradation from the extraction and petrochemical manufacturing of plastic products.

This must mean more than global obligations to craft individual national action plans, which serve as a loophole for producing countries to shirk their obligation to address this crisis. We also need firm commitments to a Just Transition framework. Workers - from petrochemical workers to waste pickers - are more than just workers: they are members of their communities, and their labor contributes to the social and economic wellbeing of their families, friends, and neighbors. Globally, fossil fuels are subsidized at an astronomical rate of around $7 trillion. By

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1 Report from Berkeley Lab, “Climate Impact of Primary Plastic Production.”

2 IMF Data on global fossil fuel subsidies.
https://www.imf.org/en/Topics/climate-change/energy-subsidies#~text=Globally%2C%20fossil%20fuel%20subsidies%20were%20supported%20by%20surging%20energy%20prices.
shifting these subsidies away from fossil fuels toward sustainable solutions, we free up the opportunity to invest in community-specific initiatives.

This Treaty must be comprehensive and ambitious in spirit: anything less will fail our people and planet. Thank you for your attention and consideration.