African Group Opening Statement

INC 4, Ottawa, Canada

23rd April 2024

Mr. Chair

Your Excellences

Distinguished delegates, ladies, and gentlemen

1. It is a great honour for me to deliver this statement on behalf of the African Group Member States.

2. The African group wishes to extend its sincere gratitude to the Government of Canada for hosting the Fourth Session of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee (INC-4) meeting in this beautiful city of Ottawa.

3. We welcome the incoming INC-Chair, Mr. Luiz Vayas Valdivieso, and wish you successful chairing in guiding us towards the new instrument.

4. We commend the INC Chair, the Bureau, and the INC Secretariat for the successful organization of the meeting so far. We have confidence in your leadership and look forward to continued collaboration and would like to express our full support to the INC Chair and Secretariat.

5. We thank you Chair, for the Revised Zero-draft text of the instrument, which is paving the way towards the finalization of the instrument before the end of this year.

6. The African Group reaffirms its commitment to Sustainable Development Goal 12 and commits to supporting measures to achieve sustainable consumption and production of primary plastic polymers and eliminating specific problematic polymers, chemicals, products, and applications of concern. We also emphasize the application of the relevant Rio principles within the provisions of the instrument, mainly the Common But Differentiated Responsibilities.
7. As a region, we embrace product design enabling a full lifecycle approach to prevent plastic pollution, and call for measures that ensure transparency and information disclosure along the entire plastic value chain.

8. On the principle of Just Transition, Africa acknowledges that implementing the future instrument may lead to job and livelihood losses, as well as other socio-economic impacts along the plastic value chain. Therefore, we call for an instrument that takes into account the national circumstances and priorities to ensure a fair, equitable, and inclusive transition, for affected populations, with special consideration for communities in vulnerable situations such as waste pickers.

9. On Waste Management and Legacy Plastic Pollution, the African group calls for an instrument that operationalizes the waste hierarchy by prioritizing waste prevention and reduction before non-toxic recycling and disposal. We further call for effective measures that ensure environmentally sound waste management practices along the entire value chain, and the lifecycle of plastics.

10. Over the years the African region has become the target of choice for illegal traders of plastic waste as a global hiding place. For an effective instrument, it is highly imperative that we gather efforts to tackle illegal traffic and dumping of plastic waste.

11. On the Financing mechanism, Chair, the African group stresses the need for a new dedicated Multilateral Fund to provide the necessary, predictable, sustainable, adequate, and readily accessible financial resources to enable developing countries meet their commitments and obligations under the instrument.

12. In line with the UN's integrated financial mechanism, we call on the private sector to demonstrate responsibility, transparency, participation, and engagement through contributions to address plastic pollution.

13. Regarding Capacity building/development and infrastructure: the Africa group wishes to emphasize the need for technology transfer, technical assistance, and capacity building for the effective implementation of the future instrument.
14. On Research, innovation, awareness, and education: the Africa group calls for an instrument that promotes information and knowledge exchange, international cooperation, and coordination, based on best available science.

15. For Private Sector and Stakeholder Engagement: we encourage parties to promote actions that will stimulate public private partnerships and private sector investments in circular economy along the plastics value chain.


17. Mr. Chair, the African group welcomes the establishment of the legal drafting group and other subgroups put forth to expedite the negotiation of the instrument. The Africa Group volunteers to chair the legal group.

18. Finally, Mr. Chair, considering that we are already past halfway through the timeframe allocated for this negotiation process, we look forward to progressing with the negotiations to further refine the options in the revised zero draft and to identify areas of common understanding. We anticipate that a formal mandate for a participatory and inclusive intersessional work will be established in this INC session.

WE THANK YOU!