Your excellencies, distinguished delegates and fellow civil society members,

I am making this statement on behalf of Citizen consumer and civic Action Group (CAG), a 38-year-old non-profit, non-political organisation based in India working on consumer, civic and environmental issues.

A robust binding global plastics treaty can be achieved only with the sustained and concerted efforts of all stakeholders involved, especially the governments, industry and civil society.

We assert that, in letter and spirit, the treaty should ensure that the long-term impacts to the environment, human, animal, marine health and human rights are prioritised over short-term financial and geopolitical interests accrued by the BAU scenario.

This requires the employment of binding language throughout the treaty and agreeing that the scope of this treaty encompasses the entire lifecycle of plastics starting with extraction of fossil fuels to final disposal of plastic waste.

It is imperative that we rethink the false narrative that plastics are simply a litter and a waste management problem and accept the reality that plastics are also a geopolitical and socio-economic issue. As the volume of plastic production and post-consumption waste is highly alarming, we are urging the negotiators to acknowledge that the only real solution is to reduce production. As we are bombarded with irrefutable evidence (theoretical and empirical) that hazardous chemicals in plastics are endangering human, animal and marine health, the treaty should aim for the ban, phase out and regulation of groups of hazardous chemicals.

Owing to the ubiquity of plastics, it has become virtually impossible to completely rid the planet of its presence, however we need to start by eliminating problematic plastics such as single-use plastics including multi-layered plastics. We believe that identifying the hard-to-abate sectors, and taking effective measures for the phase out and ban of problematic plastics at the production level in all the other sectors is a good starting point.
The treaty and governing body need to ensure that in the name of ending plastic pollution, false solutions such as plastic offsetting, credits, incineration, energy recovery technologies, and bio-based plastics are neither promoted nor permitted within the scope of the treaty.

The treaty shall necessitate accountability and transparency from producers and ensure that communities affected by plastics throughout the lifecycle are compensated, rehabilitated and protected and those whose livelihoods depend on plastics are justly transitioned in view of upholding human rights. An effective financial mechanism to facilitate the flow of financial resources needs from the developed to the developing countries is at the heart of this treaty. Financial mechanisms should strictly adhere to the zero waste hierarchy and should make funds available for facilitating just transition. The success of the treaty can only be ensured and achieved if adequate reporting and monitoring mechanisms are in place.

We urge and beseech the delegates and all other stakeholders to negotiate this treaty in good faith as the consequences of this treaty are far reaching. Let us summon every ounce of humanity left and take responsibility to ensure that a mere 100 years of development doesn't irreversibly jeopardise the health of the 4.5 billion year old planet.

Thank you for your time and attention.