Thank you, Chair, and good afternoon Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates, dear Colleagues, Ladies, Gentlemen, and all Gentlepersons.

Many of you will recall the excitement, euphoria, and hope that filled the room when Resolution 5/14 was gavelled at UNEA5.2. Now, more than two years later, we are here kicking off the fourth negotiation session, and while much work has been done, we have fallen far short of the ambition we all knew was necessary to achieve this monumental task for the sake of humanity.

The tide of plastic pollution rises with each passing day, threatening the health of our planet and ourselves.

We MUST pick up the pace, and we MUST get this done.

Unfortunately, as I – as well as many of my colleagues – have stated numerous times, conflicts of interest exist in these proceedings, and some parties are obstructing our progress. It is imperative that we all work in good faith, and that we proceed with already provisionally agreed as well as time-honored voting procedures in the absence of consensus. Insisting on consensus for substantive matters is akin to allowing a singular veto, and strips this process of ambition.

It’s been said many times before that we want to leave no one behind; however there is only so much we can do if some simply refuse to move forward from the status quo. Like a child who wants to have their ice cream before they eat their vegetables, we simply cannot cave to those who refuse to allow progress.

We MUST do what is right for everyone, and everyone must eat their veggies, whether or not they accept that it is for their own good.

Indeed, it is in all of our interests. Our lives – ALL our lives – are directly impacted – and the very future of our planet depends on our work.

By uniting our expertise and unwavering commitment, we can forge a future free from plastic pollution, a future where the health of our planet and all its inhabitants thrives.