Opening statement INC-4

Ottawa, 23 April – 29 April 2024

Dear Mr. Chair,
Dear Excellencies,
Dear colleagues,

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union and its 27 Member States, as well as Georgia, North Macedonia, Republic of Moldova and Ukraine.

It cannot be stressed enough; plastic pollution is one of the most pressing environmental issues we are facing today. We are therefore very pleased to be here today in the lovely city of Ottawa and wish to thank Canada for hosting INC 4. We also thank Canada for bringing ministers together and for organising together with WWF the Partnership Day ahead of the official meeting. For the final stages of the negotiations, we will need additional political momentum and we therefore would support reinforced and inclusive ministerial involvement.

We are here to speed up our common work towards a treaty which will address the whole life cycle of plastics in order to stop the negative impact that plastic pollution has on our planet, our environment and our health.

A paradigm shift, especially in the upstream parts of the value chain, is essential to ensure sustainable production and use of plastics.

Mr. Chair,

The European Union and its Member States would like to thank you for the revised draft, for the scenario note and for the extensive outreach that you have carried out over these last months and weeks. This has helped our preparations and has allowed us to hit the ground running at this 4th session of the INC.

At this INC our discussions will have to shift to a higher gear. The time for real textual negotiations has arrived and we are prepared for this step in the process. We are looking forward to share our views, to listen to proposals from others and to work together to find common and ambitious ground in working towards our common goal of ending plastic pollution.

Mr. Chair,

The European Union and its Member States support the methods and modalities of work that you have set out in your scenario note. We are ready to discuss
possibilities for streamlining of the revised draft in the contact groups and moving on to working on text in the subgroups as soon as possible. The EU and its Member States expect this session of the INC to address all the different parts of the draft Treaty text, with proportionate time allocated to each part. We expect this INC to produce a consolidated text that puts us into a position to finalise the Treaty by the end of this year, as foreseen in resolution 5/14. Furthermore, we expect INC4 to agree on targeted, inclusive and formal intersessional work and to set up a legal drafting group with a clear mandate.

The European Union and its Member States are looking forward to starting this work with you, Mr. Chair, with your co-chairs, co-facilitators and with all delegates.

I thank you, Mr. Chair, for your dedication and hard work and wish us all fruitful, constructive and ambitious debates in the coming days.