Closing statement INC-4 – European Union and its Member States

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.

Let me start by thanking the Chair, Ambassador Luis Vayas Valdivieso, the Co-Chairs and the co-facilitators for their tireless efforts to facilitate our discussions the past week. We also want to thank the Secretariat for all their hard work and the government and people of Canada for their hospitality.

We came to Ottawa with high expectations. The world also had high expectations for all of us. We thank all those who opened their hearts to us about the daily impacts they experience of unsustainable production processes. It therefore pains us to say it, but, although we did make some progress, but not enough.

We need to do better. We need to do everything in our power to prevent a tipping point where we might have no remedies to address plastic pollution anymore.

Dear colleagues, let’s face it. We get 7 more months to do it right. 7 months:

• To address the full plastics life cycle and plant a seed for the circular economy of tomorrow, one that will improve the livelihoods of millions, create opportunities for dignified jobs, and that is respectful of the environment and human health.

• To explore and open the way for innovative approaches to resource mobilization, that reflect the responsibilities for the costs of pollution prevention appropriately, in addition and not as a diversion from fair burden sharing.

We did not reach the progress we need, but have listened, have exchanged ideas, explained ours and gained understanding. We made sure that the text we will have in front of us at the next session is a basis for future negotiations.

We are pleased to have agreed on technical work in the intersessional period.
This should ensure that we further ground the scientific basis on chemicals on concern, problematic and avoidable plastic products alongside our work on resource mobilization.

Mr Chair: We do regret the omission of primary plastic polymer production from formal intersessional work. But rest assured – the EU and its MS remain convinced that addressing unsustainable levels of plastic production is needed, if we are serious about ending plastic pollution. We are also pleased to announce that the EU intends to join the “Bridge to Busan Declaration” launched this week, and welcomes its aim for a global objective regarding the sustainable production of primary plastic polymers.

Looking forward to the next sessions, we will need additional political momentum and we therefore would support reinforced and inclusive ministerial involvement during the negotiations, in particular at INC5.

We are up for the challenge. We believe we can all come together in Busan and decide on ambitious measures to end plastic pollution in order to save our health and our planet.

The world is watching us. Civil society, scientists, future generations and those already most affected by plastic pollution count on us!