The Nature Conservancy – California Chapter
Statement for INC-4, U.N. Plastics Treaty, Agenda Item #4

Thank you Chair, Excellencies, delegates, esteemed colleagues. My name is Dr. Alexis Jackson with the California Chapter of The Nature Conservancy.

UNEA Resolution 5/14 has charged us with ‘ending plastic pollution’, a charge critical to tackle the biodiversity, climate, and public health crisis that increased plastic production and consumption present to people and nature. The good news is that at INC-3 we heard that the global majority is in favor of advancing a high ambition treaty that is comprehensive in reducing plastic pollution across multiple sectors, and that accounts for thoughtful interventions across the life cycle of plastics, with a prioritization of upstream interventions. We must maintain this momentum!

To move swiftly and efficiently in treaty development and implementation, The Nature Conservancy would strongly encourage the following considerations based on our insights from advancing plastic policy initiatives at the subnational level:

- **First, a legally binding, reduction measure is still key to treaty success** given the scale and gravity of the plastic pollution crisis, the mounting threat of microplastics, and the urgent actions required to combat climate change. We cannot get to elimination of plastic pollution without a commitment to make less plastic. We know this from both modeling efforts and real-world application. Source reduction can be one of the viable paths forward on this. It also provides flexibility to nations on the approach – from outright elimination to thoughtful product redesign and broadscale adoption of reuse-refill systems. And if structured similar to California’s policy, mandatory data reporting would allow tracking of progress against a global baseline.

- **Second, we must leverage existing plastics policies as blueprints.** Recognizing the plastic problem is only continuing to get worse, we must work smarter and faster. We can learn from the challenges and successes in local, regional, and federal adoption of plastics policies, and utilize existing definitions, principles, and adaptive frameworks that feed in best available science as it becomes readily available, rightsizing these solutions to the international context where necessary.

- **And third, we must ensure that we maintain environmental outcomes gained once a time-bound goal is realized.** California’s legislation included protections to ensure environmental gains are maintained into perpetuity, with policy levers included by which more stringent actions can be imposed if any increase in plastic production is observed.

In closing, we have limited time and no shortage of work to be done to achieve our collective mission. But if there’s anything we’ve learned from drafting and negotiating the single-use plastics legislation in California, moving quickly does not have to mean dropping ambition. It just requires frequent dialogue and technical exchange between all parties, and collaborative drafting in the intersessional period will be paramount. So, let’s seize this moment, and not fall short of our mandate to end plastic pollution together. Thank you.