GREEN AFRICA YOUTH ORGANIZATION (GAYO) OPENING STATEMENT AT INC 4

Distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen,

My name is Muzzafar DIn Essel and it is my absolute honor to read this statement on behalf of the Green Africa Youth Organization, a youth led non-profit with footprints in sub saharan Africa. We are a GAIA member.

We thank the government and people of Canada for hosting the fourth session of the INC and we are hopeful for a fruitful round of negotiations.

Indeed the UNEA resolution 5/14 mandates the committee to “end plastic pollution based on a comprehensive approach that addresses the full life cycle of plastic”, acknowledging that pollution commences from resource extraction through to waste management hence we cannot wiggle our way out of the crisis or fulfill the mandate of the UNEA resolution by focusing on downstream measures only. There must be significant cuts to plastic production as proposed by over 100 member states over the course of the INCs.

In operationalizing the polluter pays principle, it is imperative to develop an Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) scheme that takes into considerations the role of waste pickers, workers in cooperative settings and youth who are instrumental in ridding our environment of plastic waste and provide them with the necessary funding to continue their monumental work in diverting waste form open burning sites, incinerators and chemical recycling plants.

In conclusion, we cannot address plastic pollution without cutting down plastic production and eliminating toxic chemicals and polymers of concern in plastics.
The committee cannot and must not fail Africa’s youth!