Fourth Session of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee to develop an international legally binding instrument on plastic pollution, including in the marine environment on 23–29 April 2024, Ottawa, Canada

Statement on Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR)

Mister Chair,
Excellencies,
Distinguished delegates,
Colleagues,

My name is Chochoe Devaporihartakula, and I am representing the Institute for Global Environmental Strategies (IGES).

IGES is a prominent policy think tank in the Asia-Pacific region with expertise in sustainable consumption, production, and waste management. It leverages its extensive experience, collaborations, and capacity-building initiatives to provide invaluable insights, regional context, and practical strategies that enhance the effectiveness of measures addressing marine plastic pollution.

We value the opportunity to contribute to the INC process. Our research and regional dialogues on plastic pollution underscore the need for a transformational approach to Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR). This approach requires not only improved implementation arrangements but also careful consideration of existing national policy conditions and the market for recyclables, particularly within the dynamic and diverse context of Asia.

In Asia, the urgent need to address plastic pollution is underscored by rapid urbanisation, expanding consumer markets, and complex socio-economic systems that characterise the region. While some countries have made strides in integrating EPR into their waste management and recycling frameworks, it is crucial to also promote Design for Environment principles. These principles ensure that products are designed with minimal environmental impact in mind, complementing EPR strategies. Recognising that EPR is not a simple, one-size-fits-all policy that can easily be replicated and implemented is important. Instead, it presents common challenges which necessitate tailored approaches that include thoughtful product design and effective waste management practices.

To enhance an effective plastics treaty and make EPR a cornerstone in our collective effort against plastic pollution, we propose the following areas of further considerations:

1. To effectively implement EPR, it’s essential for policymakers to identify specific challenges, customise EPR policies to country-specific contexts, assign clear stakeholder responsibilities with incentives for compliance, and coordinate regulations, especially focusing on minimising the environmental and health
2. Prioritise **capacity building and technology transfer** to enhance waste management infrastructure and technical know-how to implement effective EPR programmes.

3. It’s crucial to align EPR systems with **economic incentives** to ensure stakeholders participation and compliance.

4. We recommend progressively increasing the **ambition and product scope** under the EPR scheme, rather than aiming for broad coverage from the outset.

5. **Consider international aspects of EPR in the trade of products and recyclables.** Harmonising EPR frameworks with international standards while allowing for local adaptability can enhance cross-border cooperation and prevent the displacement of plastic waste issues.

6. Strengthen the role of **public-private partnerships** in EPR schemes by leveraging industry innovation and resources for systemised waste collection, sorting, and recycling processes.

7. Implement comprehensive **education and awareness campaigns** to foster a recycling culture among consumers.

8. Ensure the **inclusive engagement of all stakeholders**, including informal waste workers into formal EPR schemes to improve efficiency and equity.

9. Establish robust **Monitoring, Reporting, and Verification (MRV)** mechanisms to track EPR progress, ensure compliance, and inform policy adjustments as needed.

In light of these important discussions, the Economic Research Institute for ASEAN and East Asia (ERIA) and IGES are in the early stages of setting up a dedicated **EPR Working Group in the ASEAN Region** to drive innovation, collaboration, and advancement that will mark significant step towards our collective sustainable future.

Thank you for your attention.