Excellencies, delegates, ladies and gentlemen:

I would like to deliver the following statement on behalf of the International Network for Bamboo and Rattan (INBAR).

Plastics are important materials in modern day lives, due to its versatility and diverse application. However, their widespread usage, long life span to degrade and lack of plastic waste management systems has resulted in detrimental consequences to people and planet. Micro plastics are now pervasive, detected in human tissues from early developmental stages, highlighting the urgency of addressing this issue.

In light of these challenges, it is imperative for governments, organizations, and citizens worldwide to unite in undertaking technological innovation towards sustainable alternatives. Nature-based solutions present a promising avenue for reducing and gradually substituting plastic usage across various sectors, where possible with biodegradable natural materials.

In pursuit of this goal, INBAR is spearheading the Bamboo as a Substitute for Plastic Initiative (BASP). This initiative seeks to harness the diverse array of bamboo species found in the global South to develop biodegradable alternatives to plastic products. Through collaboration with its 50 member states and a wide array of stakeholders, INBAR aims to leverage bamboo's versatility, physical properties, and chemical composition to offer sustainable alternatives to plastic.

While the task ahead is daunting, each step towards sustainable alternatives brings hope for a cleaner, more responsible future. INBAR extends an invitation to all nations, civil society organizations, and international bodies to embrace initiatives that promote environmental preservation and the well-being of future generations.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.