Thank you Mr Chair.

Inuit Circumpolar Council is encouraged by the support of member states’ for Indigenous Peoples’ rights and knowledge. The Arctic marine ecosystem, coastlines, sea and ice are very much the foundation of our culture, our knowledge, livelihoods and food security.

When waste is created in the Arctic, it stays there. We live in a very remote region where shipping waste to other places is difficult. Often, waste is burned and exposes us to toxic fumes. Burying waste is not a solution due to permafrost and leaching of toxic chemicals to the environment. Therefore, plastic management has to start with limiting the amount of plastic that makes it into the Arctic in the first place. We must protect the Arctic from becoming a dump of plastic pollution!

The contamination due to plastics and other contaminants is impacting our human right to live a healthy life and the protection of the environment. These rights are outlined in several documents, such as the UN General Assembly resolution from July 2022, the Rio principles, as well as United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. This treaty needs to be built on human rights, which means not only a mention in the preamble of the treaty text, but also through meaningful actions in the provisions and holding parties accountable in the implementation of the treaty.

ICC supports intersessional work that is necessary to ensure a robust and effective treaty that addresses the full life cycle of plastic. Indigenous Peoples must be able to fully and effectively participate in the intersessional work. We are studying plastics in our environment already, and have a wealth of knowledge to contribute. We encourage the secretariat and member states to take the contributions of Indigenous Peoples seriously and include Indigenous Knowledge in all of the work.

Thank you.