Opening statement, INC-4: Delivered by Pamela Miller, IPEN co-chair

Thank you, Mr. Ambassador and congratulations on becoming the INC-4 chair. Good morning to all. My name is Pamela Miller, and I serve as Co-Chair of IPEN, a network of more than 600 civil society organizations from over 120 countries, and also as executive director of Alaska Community Action on Toxics. The Arctic is particularly vulnerable to plastics and the chemicals associated with their production. Plastics and chemicals produced all over the world deposit and accumulate in the Arctic, making the Arctic a “hemispheric sink” for chemicals and plastics. This concentration of plastics and chemicals threatens food security, the environment, and the health and human rights of Arctic Indigenous Peoples.

That is why we urge this INC-4:

1. To clearly recognize that more plastic production means more plastic pollution. Without curbing plastic production, it will be impossible to end plastic pollution.
2. To implement the health objectives of the treaty by eliminating the many hazardous chemicals that are used in plastic production and can be safely substituted.
3. To ensure a toxic-free circularity by preventing the use and presence of hazardous chemicals in plastics. Promoting recycling of plastics with hazardous chemicals will increase exposure and undermine the health objectives of this treaty.

We have travelled from 35 countries to be part of these negotiations and we expect a cooperative spirit by all countries, a commitment to make real progress toward a treaty that will protect the health, environment and human rights of frontline workers, communities, Indigenous Peoples, women, and children globally. The plastic treaty must prevent harm at all stages of the toxic plastics cycle. Your decisions here will affect our future generations.

Thank you for your consideration and we look forward to working with you.