The distinguished Chair of the INC
The Executive Director of UNEP
The Honourable Minister of Environment & Climate Change for Canada
The Executive Secretary of the INC Secretariat

Excellencies Ladies and Gentlemen,

Allow me at the outset to relay my sincere gratitude to the Government and the people of Canada for being such gracious host of this pivotal session of the INC. The cordial welcome and friendly nature of the Canadian people has gone a long way in warming the hearts of my esteemed delegation.

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen, the human family has bestowed upon us a tremendous obligation of agreeing upon how we, the human family, shall put an end to plastic pollution. It is now time to walk the talk and ensure that we make great strides over the coming 7 days to build upon the areas of agreement and quickly resolve any areas that may be sticking points.

Excellencies ladies & gentlemen, Kenya aligns with the statement made on behalf of the African Group and acknowledges that the nature of plastic pollution is one whose effects transcend borders and thus a transboundary approach on how to manage plastic pollution should be accepted by all. Further, my delegation notes that the upcoming instrument should be legally binding to ensure that we all have common and standardized approaches to ensure timely and effective measures are implemented and that shall put us on course to manage plastic pollution by 2040 through an entire life cycle approach.

My delegation takes note of the need to agree on the compounding issues of problematic plastic polymers and chemicals of concern and proposes that we establish the mode of progress of identifying a criteria for addressing this challenge especially moving into the intersessional period. Secondly, the issue of transparency and traceability should be agreed upon to ensure that all actors are following the agreed upon rules and obligations of the treaty in question. The design for
circularity is also very critical and for this, we propose that the treaty replicates the very successful Kenyan practice of “the one society approach” that shall also include the industry as well as private sector to ensure that plastic pollution is addressed by all stakeholders and actors in the plastics value chain through out the entire life cycle of plastics.

Distinguished ladies and gentlemen

the Means of implementation of this treaty should also be as pragmatic and effective as possible to ensure easier compliance for the most rapid and effective results; as such the aspects of Financing should entail a Dedicated Multilateral Fund that shall inculcate innovative aspects to tap finance from a broad range of sources while operationalizing the Polluter Pays principle. The Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) scheme operationalized under this instrument should have global attributes that places responsibilities on producers, exporters and importers across international supply chains with options for regional operationalization through global partnerships. Secondly the framework for the transfer of technology and capacity building should be clearly articulate how the Member states deficient or lacking in technologies for waste management are supported to attain the collective lofty goal of avoiding unintended leakages into the environment, both terrestrial and marine through the waste hierarchy. This should also clearly address the ways of handling legacy plastics that already exist in our respective jurisdictions.

Excellencies

It is prudent to note that the implementation of this treaty shall not be done in a vacuum and that the proposed shift from a linear to a circular plastics life cycle shall have far reaching disruptive consequences in the socio-economic aspects. As such, my delegation reiterates the need for the negotiating committee to uphold the already highlighted just transition for the most vulnerable members in our societies including workers and especially waste pickers which should be operationalized throughout the text of the treaty including through Capacity building, monitoring and evaluation through National Action Plans (NAPs).

In conclusion your excellency, Kenya highly appreciates and reiterates the African Ministerial position to host the Secretariat of the instrument within the UNEP headquarters, this is rationalized by the fact that the instrument addresses Plastic Pollution in the Environment which is a cross cutting responsibility that has implications on biodiversity, the atmosphere through toxic gases through burning, micro-nanoplastics pollution, terrestrial and marine ecosystems and proven implications on human and animal health. In this regard, the integral function of synergy creation and complementarity with other Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs) would be best performed from the seat of the UNEP Headquarters. Secondly, in fulfilment of the Rio declaration paragraph 88 that called upon the Member States to support the strengthening of the UNEP headquarters by centralizing its functions, locating the Instrument’s headquarters in the UNEP Headquarters would be another great opportunity to fulfil this pragmatic obligation. I
implore all Member states to consider supporting this call to host the secretariat within the UNEP headquarters during the appropriate time in the treaty instrument progress.

I wish you all fruitful deliberations.

I yield the floor Mr. Chair.

23rd April 2024