



The resumed session of the fifth meeting of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee to develop an international legally binding instrument on plastic pollution, including in the marine environment (INC-5.2)

Statement for Opening Plenary from No More Butts (Civil Society Organization)

5th August 2025

Dear Secretariat,

[No More Butts](#) extends our gratitude to the Government of Switzerland for hosting this event in Geneva, also to the INC Secretariat for their ongoing support and of course to the Chair for the preparation of the Chair's Text.

We welcome the opportunity to provide a written statement intervention. Due to time constraints, we are not requesting to take the floor for an intervention.

No More Butts is a subject matter expert on the environmental impacts of tobacco related waste, including cigarettes and vaping devices.

Cigarette filters are a **problematic** and **avoidable plastic of concern**.

Made from cellulose acetate, when littered, cigarette filters (commonly known as butts) are the single most littered form of plastic pollution by count. Estimates suggest that up to 4.5 trillion plastic cigarette butts are discarded into the environment every year, creating at least 300,000 tonnes of **plastic pollution** globally.

Cigarette butts are carried in stormwater runoff through drainage systems and eventually to local streams, rivers, and waterways, where not only do they pollute water, but they are also acutely toxic to marine life.

When released into nature, including **water** and **soil**, they persist for up to 15 years. As such, cigarette butts must be included in discussions when considering remedies and mechanisms for **addressing existing plastic pollution** as part of the Treaty.

Containing thousands of fibrous microplastic fibers each, we need to commit to **eliminating the release** of this **secondary form of microplastics**.

Known to contain 7,000 chemicals, including ones that are proven to cause cancer, used tobacco filters (cigarette butts) contain **contaminants** such as cadmium, arsenic and lead, as and PAHs and should also be considered in discussions around **chemicals of concern**.

We must ensure a dual focus of **human health** and environmental health. There is no evidence that tobacco filters provide benefit to human health and in fact, they are reported to have potential to cause harm to human health.

Tobacco disproportionately affects Indigenous Peoples and severely impact youth and women through the harm caused.

We'd like to call the attention of delegates to [Article 18](#) of the World Health Organization (WHO) Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC), which signatories adopted at COP10 in Panama. Amongst other objectives, this Article calls on signatories to implement strategies to minimize the impact of tobacco products on the environment. This specifically notes the Plastic Treaty process as a vehicle for member states to implement changes to meet their obligations, including considering comprehensive regulatory options regarding filters in cigarettes.

An alternative material replacing plastic would not provide any health benefits and would continue to be littered at the same rate. For these reason, we need to ensure that there are **no regrettable substitutes** proposed as part of the outcomes of the Plastics Treaty.

It is also important to note that due to the toxicity of cigarette butts, recycling at scale is not a feasible option to deal with this plastic pollution.

For these reasons, No More Butts calls on Member States to consider a **ban on all cigarette filters** as well as a **ban on single-use, disposable vapes**, as part of the future Treaty.

We are available to any member states and observers that wish to learn more about this issue. Further information on the environmental impacts of cigarette filters are available through

Yours faithfully,

Shannon Mead
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No More Butts Ltd

Read: [UNEP Perspectives Issue 45](#)