Observer Statement, opening statements- Occidental Arts & Ecology Center,
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April 23, 2024

Honorable and esteemed chair Luis Vayas Valdivieso, delegates, and Secretariat,

Thank you for the opportunity to speak. Environmental Justice communities co-located with polluting plastic petrochemical plants have been supportive of the INC process and strive for participation, despite barriers of language, limited resources, and limited opportunities for intervention.

We support statements by PSIDS, SIDS, African States, GRULAC, and others who call for transparency and disclosure throughout the entire lifecycle of plastics, intergenerational equity, comprehensive control, prohibition of problematic chemicals of concern and avoidable plastics, and incorporation of measures that respect water security in already stressed areas. To achieve these goals, global harmonized standards will be essential. Given the thousands of unregulated chemicals in any given plastic product, we call for the global reduction of plastic production.

We support the development of a financial mechanism that is driven by public bodies that tax polluters, redirect subsidies and other mechanisms to ensure that profit-driven industries will contribute at levels commensurate with the amount of unevaluated damage that these have forced with impunity on countless communities, on biodiversity, on the environment, and on future generations. To this end, we emphasize and support calls to prioritize developing nations and SIDS.

We remind delegates that addressing the plastic pollution crisis must be accomplished without the promotion of greenwashing tactics, chemical recycling, carbon capture among others that further disproportionately harm our vulnerable communities, in specific, coastal areas of the Gulf of Mexico. High ambition goals must be achieved but not to the detriment of the most vulnerable. Our most vulnerable will suffer if final obligations further the expansion of chemical recycling, desalination technologies, and market-based approaches. We must never forget that profit-driven entities created this triple planetary crisis with their mechanisms and motives. Additionally, we support GRULAC in its call for a globally harmonized reporting framework with transparency, accountability, and consistent measurement and reporting requirements.

Our survival is dependent on a legally binding instrument that is protective of human health, biodiversity, and the environment for present and future generations.

We thank the overwhelming representation of delegates who seek to protect present and future generations from the ever-growing threat of plastic pollution throughout the entire lifecycle.

Yvette Arellano
Founder | Executive Director
Fenceline Watch an FSP of Occidental Arts & Ecology Center