Opening statement of the Scientists’ Coalition for an Effective Plastics Treaty

at the Fourth Session of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee to develop an international legally binding instrument on plastic pollution, including in the marine environment (INC4) Ottawa, Canada 23 – 29 April 2024

Thank you for the floor Chair, distinguished delegates. Since this is the first time the Scientists’ Coalition has taken the floor at INC-4, we wish to congratulate Your Excellency on your new appointment.

The Scientists’ Coalition are now over 350 independent plastic pollution scientists from over 60 countries. There are 60 of us here at INC-4 ready to provide trusted scientific evidence to member states and stakeholders. We are all voluntary and have been supporting evidence based decision-making around our full-time jobs in our academic and research institutes since INC-1.

We urge member states to support the mandate to initiate the following crucial intersessional work before INC-5:

- Ambitious global and national plastics production reduction targets acknowledging that 1-3% per year will not be enough to end plastic pollution because plastics are persistent and cumulative.
- Essentiality, hazard-based safety, sustainability, and transparency assessment criteria for plastic chemicals, polymers, products, technologies, and systems and services across the full lifecycle of plastics.
- The establishment of a science policy interface as a subsidiary body of the future instrument grounded in robust conflict of interest and representational policies.

The work of our scientists does not finish at INC-5. We stand ready to support intersessional work and the implementation of the future instrument.

The expertise of our multidisciplinary academic scientists combined with the expertise of the original scientists including Indigenous Peoples with many generations of knowledge and skills, communities on the front lines and fence lines of plastics pollution including waste pickers, citizen scientists and others will collectively provide the effective and comprehensive responses needed to address the socioecological and economic complexities of the global plastics crisis.