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**Opening statement of Public Services International, member of the Workers and Trade Unions Major Group at the Fourth Session of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee on Plastic Pollution (INC-4)**  
(23 April 2024, Ottawa, Canada)

3 minutes

Thank you Mr Chair,  
Excellencies, distinguished Delegates, UNEP Secretariat,

Public Services International (PSI) is the Global Union Federation representing over 30 million public service workers in 154 countries. Our members work in all public services, including national and local utilities, waste collection, management and disposal; water and sanitation; health and care; public emergency services and firefighters; as well as regulatory inspectors and scientists in public environmental and health agencies. We are members of the Trade Union and Workers UN Major Group. Our statement adds to the one made by the ITUC, which we fully endorse.

We have reviewed the Zero Draft and have concerns about a key missing piece. For this treaty to be effective. and reach its mandate to end global plastic pollution the world needs **waste management systems that protect human health and the environment from plastic pollution and which operated on an approach driven by public good.**

This requires public investment in waste management infrastructures and in water and sanitation facilities, so that tap water is safe to drink and we do not need plastic bottles to carry it. Effective waste management services can only work if there is proper investment in social infrastructure and the workforce that will operate those systems. This workforce needs and have proper staffing levels, decent working conditions with full human and labour rights including access to occupational health and safety (OSH), social protection, training, and personal protective equipment, and a living wage. Industrial policies are necessary to turn the curse of plastic pollution into an opportunity that ensures progressive formalisation of informal waste workers and pushes towards a just transition.

**Furthermore, as constituents of the global labour movement, we request the setup of Intersessional Expert Groups on Just Transition, waste management systems, financing, and stakeholder engagement.** [The scenario note for INC-4 at point F](#) mentions that the Chair is open to having intersessional work be carried out between INC-4 and INC-5. The Intersessional expert group on Just Transition and waste management requires the main involvement of the International Labour Organisation, and workers' representation: we are available to provide our expertise to the negotiators on these key topics.

Jointly with the Global Labour movement, we are submitting detailed comments and language recommendations for use by negotiators, and we invite you to review them. We remain available to provide further input all along the INC-4 process.

Thank you for your attention.

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