Honorable Chair, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Sri Lanka sincerely appreciates the organizers efforts in convening the Intergovernmental Negotiation Committee on Plastic Pollution, including Marine Pollution, in Ottawa. This gathering signifies a critical step forward in addressing one of the most pressing environmental challenges of our time.

As an island nation, Sri Lanka is acutely aware of the devastating impact of plastic pollution on marine ecosystems, coastal communities, and the broader environment. Plastic pollution threatens marine biodiversity and jeopardizes human health, livelihoods, and economies, particularly in coastal regions.

Sri Lanka emphasizes the importance of developing a robust, legally binding instrument to address plastic pollution effectively. Such an instrument should encompass measures to reduce plastic production and consumption, promote sustainable alternatives, enhance waste management systems, and strengthen international cooperation and capacity building. This involves not only assisting developing countries in upgrading their recycling infrastructure to promote a circular economy in the industry. When promoting reuse and recycling to help mitigate plastic pollution, transparency and traceability of chemicals and additives will be vital.

Recently, Sri Lanka faced an unprecedented accidental release of plastic pellets from the Express Pearl vessel that sank off the country’s Western coast. Such events can occur anywhere in the world. We propose that a mechanism that can rapidly and effectively respond to such events with legal and technical assistance, is an urgent need that could be explored in this instrument.

In conclusion, Sri Lanka reaffirms its commitment to advancing the objectives of the Intergovernmental Negotiation Committee to rid the world of the menace of plastic pollution. Together, let us forge a path towards a cleaner, healthier, and more sustainable future.

Thank you.