UK Intervention in sub-group 1.1 on 3a and 3b

Thank you Mr Co-facilitator. We welcome that you will feedback the concerns heard from the EU on the need to ensure proportionate time is allocated to this subgroup – and not just because we are enjoying working under you both as co-facilitators. This subgroup contains a lot of provisions.

Of the options listed, our preference is option 1, as it contains the concept of a criteria as set out in an annex and the requirement for Parties to take action on identified items. However, the UK co-sponsored by Thailand have proposed alternative draft text for this option. I will speak on this more in a moment but first I wanted to make comments on the streamlined text as per your instructions.

With regard to streamlining, in the first sentence of Option 1, we think that there is repetition of language around taking the “necessary measures”, “reduce”, and “not allow” that could be further streamlined.

We note that towards the end of paragraph 1 there is a part that states that “this provision does not limit Parties’ abilities to enact bans or implement additional criteria”. While the UK fully supports this concept, we believe it is not necessary to include in specific articles. If Members of the INC wish to make it clear that this instrument should not limit their ability to take more ambitious actions, this could be addressed through an overarching article such as Article 25 of the Agreement under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea on the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Marine Biological Diversity of Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction.

Finally, to provide a brief summary of the UK’s text proposal, we have proposed a two list approach:

- The first list for problematic and avoidable plastic products. The products on this list are to be subject to a global ban, though with exemptions for medical and military uses and acknowledging the exemptions available to a Party on request under Article 4.
- The second list is for problematic plastic products that are not globally avoidable. Parties are to reduce these products to the greatest possible extent and seek to improve their design to improve their ability to be recycled.

The draft proposal provides problematic criteria and avoidable criteria – based on the informal technical dialogues the United Kingdom co-led with Brazil that saw inputs from experts nominated by members of the INC from all UN regions. Whether a product is problematic and avoidable is defined against
criteria. For example, if a product meets at least one of the problematic criteria, it is problematic. I know in their in-session submission uploaded earlier this week, Kazakhstan asked to clarify the concept of “Problematic and avoidable plastic products and Cuba have also just now so stated there is a need to clarify the definitions. We hope that the definition we have proposed provides a starting point for a shared understanding.

Many members of this INC have called for criteria, both in this session and therefore we hope that in providing draft criteria, we have enabled discussions to be advanced.

The United Kingdom supports calls we have heard in this session for intersessional work on this issue.

We look forward to continuing constructive discussions on this provision.

Turning to provision 3b, the United Kingdom thinks Option 1 provides the best basis on which to start negotiations as it contains a broad range of views.

As a streamlining suggestion, the United Kingdom acknowledges the importance of understanding the risks associated with microplastics in OP1 Alt3 but suggest this could be covered in Part IV on monitoring and health under the work of subgroup 2.2.

Thank you.