

Youth Intervention at the Closing Plenary of INC-5

Thank you, Chair, for your unwavering efforts to help member states find common ground through successive iterations of the non-paper. However, we must express our gravest concern over the failure to fulfill our collective responsibility to deliver a treaty at INC-5. The repetitive cycles of debate seen in previous sessions—and now here—risk eroding global faith in environmental multilateralism.

Dear Member States,

At UNEA 5.2, you committed to crafting an instrument that addresses the full lifecycle of plastic—a landmark decision that must not be undermined. It is high time we stepped out of our comfort zones and confronted the root cause of this crisis: our addiction to plastics.

Intergenerational equity must guide our actions. The resources consumed for plastic production belong not only to us but also to future generations. We cannot exhaust these finite, non-renewable resources on short-term monetary gains and single-use, trivial products like cotton buds. Instead, member states must set global targets to reduce plastic production, with ambition raised periodically through treaty amendments.

The treaty must also explicitly address problematic products and chemicals of concern, which threaten our health and wellbeing. A comprehensive list must be established by the first COP and updated periodically. Without addressing hazardous plastics and toxic chemicals, what do we truly hope to achieve? Can we justify trading human health, especially the developmental health of our children, for short-term economic gains and reliance on false, greenwashed solutions?

Robust, inclusive financial mechanisms are critical. Developing countries, particularly SIDS and LDCs, disproportionately bear the burdens of plastic pollution. Hybrid financial arrangements are needed to meet diverse targets and address this multifaceted crisis—establishing a new standalone multilateral fund alongside a trust fund under GEF—will enhance the treaty's effectiveness.

Furthermore, we need a transnational, intergenerational, and intersectional approach that engages all stakeholders, including children and youth, women, Indigenous Peoples, and informal workers, in planning, execution, and monitoring processes. Member states must initiate discussions on a multistakeholder action agenda to recognize and integrate their voices.

Youth today are making a profound compromise, allowing outgoing generations to decide our fate. But we are not passive bystanders. This treaty is more than an agreement—it is an intergenerational pact between today's decision-makers, youth, and future custodians of this planet.

We urge you to act boldly, decisively, and ambitiously. Seize this opportunity to protect the planet, preserve our shared future, and create a lasting legacy.

The world is watching. History will remember. Do not falter.