Observer: Alliance pour le Contrôle du Tabac en Afrique (ACTA)

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Agenda Item 4 of the Second Session of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee to develop an international legally binding instrument on plastic pollution, including in the marine environment (INC2)

Option 2 - Possible core obligation: banning, phasing out and/or reducing the use of problematic and avoidable plastic products

I am speaking on behalf of Action on Smoking and Health, the African Tobacco Control Alliance, Corporate Accountability and other members of the Stop Tobacco Pollution Alliance, a coalition of over 100 public health and environmental groups, who assert that cigarettes filters are a source of significant and hazardous plastic pollution.

Every year, 4.5 trillion cigarettes butts persist for 10 or more years. The source for at least 300,000 tones of microplastics and toxins. The so-called ‘filter’ serves only to encourage and facilitate smoking, which is responsible for eight million preventable deaths each year.

We urge Member States to align the future legally binding instrument on plastics with the public health objective of ending the tobacco epidemic, to which most have already committed via the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control.

We emphasize that for some hazardous and unnecessary single use plastic products, an immediate ban and appropriate trade measures should be indicated. The WHO and a growing number of public health agencies have called for a ban of cigarette filters.

We also call for intersessional work that is protected from the commercial and vested interests of the tobacco industry, in accordance with Article 5.3 of the WHO FCTC.

This will join environmental and public health science in the fight against tobacco-induced diseases as well as the growing problem of environmental plastic pollution.