Thank you Mr. Chair,

South Africa extends its sincere appreciation to the government and people of France for graciously hosting this meeting. South Africa appreciates the leadership of the INC Chair and is grateful for the INC 2 meeting organization and preparation by the INC Secretariat.

South Africa aligns herself with the statement of the Africa Group as delivered by Ghana.

Plastic pollution threatens our ecosystems, endangers biodiversity, and undermines our joint efforts to protect human health and well-being. South Africa is committed to finding innovative, tangible, and effective solutions that can contribute to a sustainable future.

The international legally binding instrument is a critical step in ending plastic pollution. This instrument should incorporate a comprehensive life-cycle approach, encompassing changes in production, consumption, reuse, collection, and recycling of plastics. The instrument should emphasize the principle of polluter pays, while ensuring inclusivity of governments, waste pickers, industry, civil society, academia, and the public.

Mr. Chair, South Africa supports the Just Transition approach as we accelerate our efforts on ending plastic pollution. Livelihoods should be protected, and we affirm our commitment to protect the vulnerable groups, women, youth, and persons living with disabilities including informal waste pickers and Small, Micro, and Medium Enterprises. The options of substitution and alternatives signal a need for the INC to have sight of socio-economic assessment and implications thereof. South Africa urges the INC to ensure that the precautionary approach including scientific and credible
Governance mechanisms is part of the support to inform the evidence-based prioritization of problematic additives, polymers, and plastic products.

Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) is a key approach within the polluter pays approach that would benefit from a dedicated focus on this instrument to ensure common global standards in ending plastic pollution. South Africa recognizes that addressing plastics pollution requires a collective and cooperation effort, transcending national boundaries. We encourage the sharing of best practices, experiences, technologies, fostering partnerships, and promoting capacity-building. By working together, we can harness the collective wisdom and resources needed to tackle this challenge for us and for future generations.

The complimentary side-by-side negotiations on potential core obligations and related measures of implementation is appreciated. To achieve a global solution to plastic pollution, and to effectively implement a new instrument, means of implementation are critical for developing countries. These “means of implementation” are a necessary package deal, and its characteristics include new, dedicated and predictable finance mechanisms, technology transfer, technical assistance and capacity building with emphasis on alignment to the Rio Principles, in particular, the principle of Equity and Common but Differentiated Responsibilities (CBDR).

We are grateful for the prepared potential options paper that gives us good foundation for the deliberations during this session. The establishment of the two contact groups would give us an opportunity to identify areas that inform the zero draft of the instrument so that we are able to commence with the negotiations of the draft text in INC 3.

In conclusion, South Africa is looking forward to engaging in constructive dialogue, exploring innovative solutions, and shaping an international legally binding instrument that can effectively end plastic pollution. Let us seize this opportunity to make a lasting impact and create a healthier, cleaner, and more sustainable world for present and future generations.

Thank you Mr Chair