Thank you, Mr Chair; my delegation aligns with the statements delivered by Samoa on behalf of AOSIS and Costa Rica on behalf of GRULAC.

The plastic footprint has increased since the early 1950s due to its durability, lightness, and low production cost. This growth in the use of plastics has caused catastrophic problems in our marine ecosystems and human and environmental health due to the resulting plastic pollution.

To deal with this crisis, all governments and stakeholders must take accountability and responsibility regarding the judicious use of plastics in all sectors and throughout the life cycle of plastic products.

**To limit the negative impacts of plastics, we must look at several key categories:**

- Promoting solutions for a circular economy in preference to the traditional linear “take-make-dispose” economy. Our aim should be to reduce the consumption of finite resources and to maximize the lifespan of products.
- Waste management is a major challenge for small islands like Antigua and Barbuda. It is important since it mitigates public health risks, contributes to sustained economic activity, and enhances public welfare. Waste management, however, is one of the least recognized and invested sectors worldwide.
- The Government of Antigua and Barbuda is committed to the institution of legislation and new technologies for waste management, prioritizing plastic products most likely to become pollution.
- Solid waste recovery is essential, including the categorization of non-hazardous waste that can be separated and upcycled and hence separated before disposal at the landfills. These raw materials can then be incorporated into the production process, thus closing the circular economy cycle.
Mr. Chair,

Empirical evidence has shown that recycling supports the reduction of plastic waste at landfills, decreased pollution, conservation of energy and raw materials, and creation of jobs. Implementing mandatory recycling at the national level would benefit any country’s environmental, economic, and social factors. However, we know that we cannot recycle our way out of the plastic pollution crisis.

Therefore, Antigua and Barbuda further supports these approaches, actions, and measures across the lifecycle of plastics:

1. Interventions intended to reduce the reliance on raw materials, including the extraction, refinement and use of fossil fuels for virgin plastic production.
2. The development of criteria and targets to support regulatory interventions targeting polymers and chemicals of concern.
3. The development of criteria and targets to support regulatory interventions targeting specific classifications of plastic products.
4. Actions, measures and approaches to boost reuse, repair, recycling, collection and disposal, including through EPR.
5. The development of mechanisms for the remediation of plastic pollution in the marine environment, including in areas beyond national jurisdiction. This must include international scale-up regulations that curtail the flow of plastic debris reaching our Caribbean Sea and wider Caribbean region to ensure that noncompliance and traceability mechanisms are implemented.
6. Public/private partnerships to further strengthen the implementation of the policy and legislative framework.

Finally, we must be prepared to collaborate for effective and robust provisions to ensure the participation of and implementation by developing countries and SIDS. In building the financial mechanism, we require new, additional, adequate and predictable means of implementation under the instrument, with specific support provisions for SIDS, including priority access.

We look forward to working with all delegations to advance our work to the point where you, Mr Chair, can prepare a draft text of the treaty for consideration at INC-3 based on our discussions here at INC-2.