Australian Government written intervention – Agenda item 4

Australia thanks the Government of Kenya for hosting the third Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee meeting.

Australia remains firmly committed to negotiating an ambitious legally binding instrument by the end 2024 to end plastic pollution. We are at the mid-way point in our negotiations, and we are mindful of the need to make considerable progress this week if we are to complete our work by the end of 2024.

We strongly support focusing our efforts this week on substantive discussions to progress the development of the draft instrument. The Zero Draft represents a sound outline for us to commence our discussions on a legally binding instrument, building on our discussions in previous INCs. We thank the Chair and the Secretariat for their work and look forward to hearing and discussing views from Members on the text, including where it might benefit from amendment, additions and expansions.

This delegation remains committed to the mandate of UNEA resolution 5/14, that is, to develop an international legally binding instrument on plastic pollution, including in the marine environment, based on a comprehensive approach that addresses the full life cycle of plastic.

We are pleased to see that the Zero Draft includes global legally binding options to enable us to develop provisions across the full life cycle of plastics. We consider this necessary to facilitate our shift from the current linear plastic economy to a safe circular economy where plastic is considered a valued resource that continues to circulate safely through the economy. The Zero Draft also provides a good basis to develop:

1. A clear objective in line with the UNEA resolution, to end plastic pollution, to protect human health and the environment, based on a comprehensive approach that addresses the full life cycle of plastics.
2. Binding provisions to provide certainty and global harmonisation in our transition to a safe circular economy for plastics.
3. Robust implementation mechanisms, which will be essential to achieve the instruments’ objective, assess its effectiveness, and fund and build capacity.

Australia looks forward to further discussions to develop provisions in contact groups this week. We seek to:

- ensure actions are targeted on those products and activities that contribute the most to plastic pollution;
- bolster provisions relating to monitoring of plastic pollution, so the governing body can assess whether the objectives of the treaty are being achieved;
- ensure our actions are based on the best available science and take into account Indigenous Peoples’ knowledge, science and practices on the basis of prior informed consent; and
- ensure complementarity with other multilateral environmental agreements and avoid duplication.

We consider that intersessional work will be needed so we can arrive at INC-4 in Ottawa having made significant progress. Australia strongly advocates for INC-3 to deliver a clear and detailed mandate to commence intersessional work on priority areas prior to INC-4, which we look forward to discussing with colleagues this week.
We have come prepared to discuss these important issues, and to work towards preparation of a comprehensive and enhanced draft of the instrument in time for INC-4.

We look forward to working with all INC Members over the coming days towards our goal of developing an ambitious legally binding instrument to end plastic pollution.