Canada’s national statement on the preparation of an international legally binding instrument on plastic pollution

Mr. Chair, Distinguished Delegates, Excellencies, Colleagues,

It is a pleasure to join you all here today – thank you to Ambassador Cuadra Velásquez and the INC Secretariat, as well as to the Government of France, for hosting INC-2 and their efforts in organizing what we expect to be a meaningful and constructive meeting over the coming days.

We have important work to do.

The world is facing a triple planetary crisis of climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution. These challenges are inextricably interlinked and mutually reinforcing. We have an obligation to respond to this crisis and to find inclusive, sustainable and effective solutions.

Plastic pollution is a transboundary issue – once it enters the environment, it can travel beyond national borders. As we consider various options for elements towards an instrument, we should keep in mind the nature and urgency of this crisis.

Canada believes that a new international legally binding instrument on plastic pollution should be ambitious, comprehensive, evidence-based, and address the causes and sources of plastic pollution. It should enable a system change and support concrete actions across the lifecycle of plastics. An effective instrument should also emphasize common legally binding provisions and control measures.

Canada also acknowledges that the means of implementation, including the mobilization of financial support from a wide variety
of sources, both public and private, will be an important part of the agreement.

Let me also emphasize that Canada is a proud member of the High Ambition Coalition, working with a group of over 50 like-minded countries committed to ending plastic pollution by 2040.

Because ambition is what the world needs now.

We would like to thank all member states and stakeholders for sharing their views through submissions to the INC earlier this year. We believe that the options paper provides a useful starting point for substantive discussions. Nevertheless, we all know that negotiating a new and complex agreement without a draft text is challenging.

This week at INC-2, Canada will work constructively with all members of the INC. We hope – and we will strive to ensure – that the Committee makes substantial progress on negotiations and agrees, by the end of the week, on a mandate for a zero-draft text of the instrument for consideration at INC-3.

The INC process should be ambitious, inclusive and transparent. This is why, during the G7 Ministerial meeting less than two months ago, Minister Guilbeault announced that Canada is contributing $4 million CAD to help ensure inclusive, equitable, and transparent INC negotiations.

As you know, Canada offered to host INC-4 in April or May 2024, so we hope that a positive decision on this item will be made this week. We are ready to invite you all to Canada and work together on the development of this important instrument.

Thank you.