China’s text proposal in contact group 1 on Objective

China supports option 2. The objective of this instrument* is to protect human health and the environment from plastic pollution, including in the marine environment. 

Then we could accept to place sub option 4 thereafter, which says “through, inter alia, managing both the utilization of plastics and plastic waste, while contributing to the achievement of sustainable development”.

We are open if we have the elements of managing the utilization of plastics and plastic waste, but we do think it’s important to have sustainable development in the text.

The reason we support option 2 is that we believe the objective of a legally binding instrument should be general and flexible so that it won’t be out of date in a short term. We also would like to have the objective formulated from a positive perspective, which is to protect human health and the environment from plastic pollution. This formulation is similar to a number of Conventions, including Minamata Convention, Stockholm Convention and Rotterdam Convention.

Environment is one of the dimensions of sustainable development. Addressing plastic pollution will greatly contribute to the realization of SDGs and sustainable development. Therefore, China supports the inclusion of sustainable development in the objective.

As for sub option 3, we understand a target is helpful to accelerate the action. However, we believe that an objective is different from a target. A time bound target will limit the length of validity of a convention. There is a practical question on whether the instrument will still be valid after 2040 if such a time bound target is added into the objective? What’s more, we seldom see any time bound target in the objective of a Convention. Therefore, China is not in favor of sub option 3 which sets a time bound target.