Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates, Colleagues:

- Plastics play a crucial role in the agrifood sector, with an annual consumption of 12.5 million tonnes used in crop and livestock production, forestry, fisheries, and aquaculture.

- The use of plastic products can enhance crop yields and improve labor and production efficiency, but their usage comes with significant environmental, economic, and social costs, primarily stemming from ineffective management practices resulting in pollution.

- Solutions to plastics pollution in agrifood value chains need to be cross-sectoral, inclusive, based on principles of circularity and an integral part of the overall transformation of agrifood systems to be more efficient, inclusive, resilient, and sustainable.

- FAO is developing a Voluntary Code of Conduct on the sustainable use of plastics in agriculture, which will consider design, manufacturing, distribution, use, collection, recycling, and disposal of plastic products.

- Abandoned, lost or otherwise discarded fishing gear is responsible for about 10% of global marine litter, but is the most hazardous type of marine plastic litter originating from sea-based sources. FAO encourages Members to use established instruments
and initiatives focused on prevention and reduction. These instruments include the International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships and its Annex V, the London Convention/London Protocol, and the FAO Voluntary Guidelines on the Marking of Fishing Gear.

- Without prejudging negotiation outcomes, FAO considers that the specificity of the use of plastics in agrifood systems may require a sectoral approach.

- FAO suggests the incorporation of provisions aimed at prohibiting, gradually phasing out, or minimizing the production of plastic polymers and products that are problematic and avoidable. The specific criteria for identifying these need to be clearly defined.

- Some applications would require provisions on fostering design for circularity, including, for example, plastic mulch with minimum thickness and requirements for the recycled content.

- Provisions to enhance responsible waste management should encompass sector-specific extended producer responsibility schemes, designed for the collection, recycling, and disposal of plastic products utilized across all agricultural sectors. This becomes especially crucial as the open burning of plastic waste presents hazards to public and environment health.

- FAO is fully committed to assisting Members in ensuring that the new Instrument encompasses the sustainable management of plastics across all agricultural sectors with due consideration to nutrition, food safety, and food security and taking into account the role of smallholder farmers and fishers.

- Thank you!