Closing statement

I speak on behalf of Health and Environment Justice Support, Swedish Society for Nature Conservation and groundWork South Africa as well as 40 other groups and big networks who support our vision.

A lack of globally harmonized obligations to ensure the availability and accessibility of information about chemicals of concern, including polymers, in plastics throughout their life cycle results in persistent contamination of the value chains. This is why it is important that traceability for chemicals in individual products is reflected in the report from Contact Group 1, as was raised by a number of countries in their interventions. Clear reference to this is now missing in the report.

Transparency and traceability requirements for chemicals in plastics throughout the value chain should not be limited to national laws and regulations, rather must be legally binding and harmonized globally, because of the globalised nature of the economy, including trade. It will ensure informed decision-making and equity with respect to access to information in all jurisdictions, supporting all countries, especially those weak in resources, and level a playing field in trade.

On the other hand, making transparency requirements consistent with national laws and not harmonized globally will create parallel standards and complicate verification checks. It will put an additional burden on developing countries and countries in transition and those with insufficient legislation or poor enforcement.

Intersessional work should also include the discussion on how to develop a mandatory and globally harmonized transparency mechanism for chemicals and polymers for the plastic treaty and investigate options for linking it to traceability requirements for chemicals in individual products. Such an approach will help to highlight this crucial issue and opportunities to include it in core obligations and means of implementation of the treaty.