Mr. Chair,

Jamaica would like to express its appreciation to the government and people of the Republic of Kenya for hosting this important meeting. Additionally, we would like to thank the Chair and the Secretariat for organizing this meeting and for the production of the zero draft which we believe is a good basis to advance the Committee’s work. Jamaica supports the statements made by Uruguay on behalf of GRULAC and Samoa on behalf of AOSIS.

The instrument should be comprehensive in addressing the full life cycle of plastics, inclusive - leaving no one behind, and at the same time it should not be overly burdensome for Parties in its implementation, particularly for SIDS, and governance arrangements should not be overly complex.

Indeed, Jamaica would like to reiterate the special circumstances and inherent vulnerabilities of SIDS with respect to plastic pollution as well as the associated climate and environmental impacts. This should be reflected in the provisions of the instrument, including in the means of implementation – financial resources, capacity building, technical assistance, and technology transfer.

Jamaica is of the view that there are some key principles that must underpin the instrument including: just transition, extended producer responsibility, corporate social responsibility, common but differentiated responsibilities, the precautionary approach, the polluter pays principle, inter- and intragenerational equity, transparency and accountability, and the community right-to-know.

Additionally, key concepts such as sustainable consumption and production, circularity within economies, resource efficiency, science-based data and information and research and the elimination of hazardous chemicals associated with plastics and plastic products must be mainstreamed throughout the instrument.

Given the nature of the plastic pollution crisis, the instrument must encourage partnerships and proactive engagement of all stakeholders, including the private sector, as well as action at all levels and across all sectors, in support of the fulfillment of the objective of the instrument.

Cooperation and coordination with international chemicals-related conventions and frameworks as well as the multilateral environmental agreements which deal with climate change and biodiversity will be key. This is to ensure the success of the instrument as well as to avoid duplication and take on board best practices and lessons learnt. We also recognize the importance of ensuring the provisions of the instrument should not contradict, but be complementary to the relevant rules adopted by international multilateral organizations that deal with trade, public health and labour. This should include particular focus on workers in the plastics sector as well as waste pickers with a view to improving their working conditions and health giving due consideration to the epidemiological studies required.
Jamaica is in the process of developing its blue economy – shipping, fisheries and tourism, which already contributes 20% to the country’s GDP. Addressing plastic pollution in the marine environment is of paramount importance as we work to facilitate the further growth and development of the blue economy to provide greater economic opportunities as well as social inclusion to advance the country’s development while ensuring environmental sustainability.

There must be greater investments by governments and the private sector in providing easily accessible, affordable and environmentally friendly alternatives to plastics and plastic products. Additionally, scientific research and innovation will be required to support the development of these alternatives as well as the establishment of criteria for the identification of chemicals of concern used in the manufacture of plastics and plastic products. This will be particularly important for SIDS’ markets which are net consumers of plastics and plastic products.

We look forward to actively engaging in this week’s discussions on the matters that are being negotiated by the Committee as we strive toward fulfilling the mandate outlined in Resolution 5/14 which was adopted right here in Nairobi, Kenya over a year ago. The time is now, the place is here.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.