

KINDLY CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

Draft statement for the opening of INC 1 – Punta del Este:

Excellencies, dear colleagues, ladies and gentlemen, all protocols observed,

Egypt aligns itself with the statement delivered by Ghana on behalf of the African Group.

I wish to begin by extending our sincere appreciation to the Government and the people of Uruguay for hosting this inaugural INC meeting and for the hospitality they have afforded us here in beautiful Punta del Este. May the stunning coastline a few minutes away from here serve as an inspiration to us all to make meaningful progress at this meeting.

I also wish to thank the secretariat for the very rich tapestry of documents they have prepared for us this session. They offer plenty of guidance, inspiration and food for thought and I have no doubt they will greatly assist us to hit the ground running during our negotiations and deliberations here in Uruguay, and also at subsequent sessions.

Before I broadly address a few of the main substantive issues before us at this session, being guided by the secretariat's scenario note, I wish to underline a number of key principles that should guide us during our work this week – and indeed throughout this INC process:

- 1- First and foremost, this process must exhibit the highest levels of transparency and inclusivity and be member states owned and driven.
- 2- Secondly, we must balance between ambition and pragmatism, to this end it is necessary to identify and prioritize low-hanging fruits and avoid overloading ourselves each session.
- 3- Thirdly, as far as the structure of this agreement is concerned: form should follow function.
- 4- Fourthly, a balanced and inclusive outcome should be our ultimate priority – ensuring that the voices of developing countries are heard, our efforts are in line with efforts to achieve sustainable development and eradicate poverty, and that the fundamental principles of CBDR and equity are upheld.
- 5- Fifth, the element of national ownership is of paramount importance. National efforts must be the basis of this new agreement and follow a bottom-up approach that is nationally determined. There is no one-size-fits-all approach.
- 6- Sixth, we must ensure that all voices are heard throughout this process to secure a just transition, bearing in mind the specificities of all countries and in particular the needs of informal sectors and SMEs in developing countries.
- 7- And finally, and perhaps most importantly, an ambitious global agreement must be underpinned by equally ambitious means of implementation in order for it to be implemented meaningfully.

I wish to further elaborate on this last point. Action and support are inextricably linked, and the provision of adequate, predictable and at-scale finance will be a critical enabler for the action we all aspire to. The quality of this finance provided from developed to developing countries – and supplemented by finance mobilized through all sources – is a key aspect of this. We need to ensure that it does not further contribute to the debt crisis of many of our developing countries.

This public finance certainly needs to be supplemented by mobilized private finance. In this regard, we must also ensure that there is adequate support from the private sector as well

as to the private sector in developing countries to implement what we agree upon and achieve a just transition.

A dedicated multilateral fund is an important step towards realizing this objective. We should learn from past experiences and success stories, including the establishment of a multilateral fund and its instrumental role in helping to phase out harmful ozone depleting substances.

Technology transfer on a concessional basis for all developing countries will also be a prerequisite for any concrete progress and provisions must be made to provide the necessary technological advancements needed to make the necessary transition, as well as of course the need for adequate capacity development – including institutional capacity – for developing countries.

In this vein, it is also vital for us to explore the option of launching a dedicated process to assess the needs of developing countries to phase out plastics in a matter which assesses the whole life cycle of plastics.

Excellencies,

As far as the overall structure for the instrument is concerned, it is imperative to draw on the 4th principle I outlined earlier. Form should follow the intended function of this agreement. With this in mind, the secretariat document on broad options for structure, rightly highlights that the step-by-step nature of the framework convention option may provide the international community with the ideal way forward by setting out the broad overarching and ambitious objectives already set out by the enabling UNEA resolution in the convention itself and give us the time and space required to adopt subsequent protocols which would serve the ultimate objectives of this convention at a later stage.

The ambitious timeframe of 2024 also lends itself better to the framework convention route because it would not require us to already have all the complexities and specificities of required control measures worked out, bearing in mind that plastic pollution is an immensely complex, multi-faceted and multi-sectoral challenge.

Excellencies, before I conclude,

I wish to note that stakeholder participation and action as well as cooperation and coordination will be a crucial piece of the puzzle. To this end, we must ensure that the best available science is at the forefront, guiding our efforts.

We look forward to working with all parties this week to secure a successful first session of the INC.

I thank you.