

**Draft African Group Statement for the Open-ended Working
Group Meeting
30/5/2022**

Chair, Madam Executive Director, Excellencies and colleagues, all protocols observed,

I wish to begin by extending, on behalf of the Group, my sincere thanks to the Government and people of Senegal for hosting us in the beautiful city of Dakar for this important meeting and to appreciate your kind and generous hospitality. It is a source of pride to us that African countries have so far been taking a leading role in this process - including Rwanda as the initial co-sponsor of the UNEA draft resolution, Ghana for being one of the co-facilitators for the negotiation of the resolution, and Senegal for hosting this inaugural meeting of the OEWG.

As we embark on the momentous task before us, we must also take a moment to recognize the achievements we have all made together at UNEA 5.2 and UNEP @ 50 commemoration, as we came together to agree on 14 equally important resolutions and a ministerial declaration under trying circumstances as the world still grappled with a pandemic and a plethora of global challenges. We clearly demonstrated that the Nairobi spirit is alive and well and that multilateralism and global solidarity and cooperation are the only way through which we can tackle the challenges that lie before us. This certainly included the ambitious enabling resolution to end plastic pollution and hence our presence here in Dakar to lay the groundwork for the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee.

Chair,

As we proceed, I wish to highlight a few key and cardinal priority areas of the African Group as we look forward to the INC process. The first being that any efforts to address the scourge of plastic pollution must be in accordance with the principles of equity and common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities, in light of national circumstances. We must also remain cognizant of the right of African countries to development and

recognize the gaps between developing and developed countries in terms of historical responsibility, scientific knowledge, capacity, technological advances, technical and financial support in the fight against Plastic pollution including in the marine environment.

We must also recognize the special needs and circumstances of Africa, and the need for new, additional and predictable finance, including technology transfer, development and deployment as well as capacity building to support developing countries, in particular for Africa for its implementation. We must always remain cognizant of the need for a just transition as we address this global challenge in a comprehensive manner across the three pillars of sustainable development - economic, social as well as environmental, whilst paying particular attention to the interests of Small and Medium Sized Enterprises in Africa.

Chair,

We also wish to point out that the process of nominating representatives to the INC Bureau should be given adequate time and Member States should not feel compelled to settle on the nominees at this time, whilst encouraging consultations to continue in this regard. The Group also wishes to request detailed information from the Secretariat regarding the parameters for offering to host a meeting of the INC and in particular regarding the cost implications for the host country.

Chair,

As to the more immediate matters at hand, I wish to point out that the initial impression of the Group as far as the number of sessions and proposed timetable of the INC is concerned is that the INC will require at least 5 meetings - as proposed under option 1 of the Secretariat document UNEP/PP/OEWG/1/3. Given the special circumstances for Africa, the Africa group requests the Secretariat to facilitate a Regional consultation in the lead up to the first INC meeting. This has been a standard practice in the work of past INCs, and the Group also strongly feels that a matter as complex and multi-faceted as plastic pollution will require thorough consideration and therefore more sessional time to fully flesh out and negotiate. In addition, we

must also carefully consider the need for subsidiary groups under the INC to fully consider issues of a particularly technical nature amongst experts whilst ensuring that the process throughout is manageable for smaller delegations and is not too cumbersome.

Chair,

Before I conclude, I wish to once again emphasize one of the priorities of the group in this process - which is the need for the future global agreement to be formulated by the INC to take a full life-cycle approach to plastic pollution and to be ambitious in its objectives while backed by equally ambitious means of implementation.

I thank you Chair.