African Group Statement on Actions to be covered by the Instrument

Thank you Mr. Chair,

I have the honor to make this statement on behalf of the Africa Group. The Africa Group recognizes the need for unified action to address the problem of plastic pollution. Indeed, African states have taken a number of policy positions and issued calls for action on plastic pollution, including ministerial declarations and key policy messages at the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment, the Durban Declaration on Action for Environmental Sustainability and Prosperity in Africa, the Conference of Parties to the Bamako Convention on the Ban of the Import into Africa and the Control of Transboundary Movements and Management of Hazardous Waste. Some countries have also taken bold legislative steps to address plastic pollution at the national level.

However, the lack of a common approach and harmonized standards makes compliance and enforcement difficult. The lack of incentives to foster innovation, technology development, and plastics circularity, as well as the low competitiveness of recycled materials and products, remain a challenge for Africa.

Mr. Chair,

In order to ensure and facilitate unified actions to address the plastics pollution problem, the Africa Group believes that the instrument should incorporate obligations, controls and voluntary measures covering the following aspects:

(i) Eliminating or minimizing plastic materials, products and harmful chemicals in plastics that can be avoided and/or replaced with environmentally sound alternatives;

(ii) Where elimination is not possible, control the use of harmful chemicals or additives in the manufacture or production of the plastic raw materials and products, while ensuring transparency and sharing of information, including through prior informed consent procedures, where harmful chemicals may be used in plastics for essential purposes;

(iii) International reference standards should be defined, covering the entire life cycle of plastics, including product design, chemicals in plastics, among others, to foster elimination and/or minimization of harmful plastics, circularity and environmentally sound management of waste;

(iv) Global targets to meet the objectives of the treaty should be supported by action plans to define nationally determined measures to address the problem, and clear mechanisms for monitoring and evaluating progress in achieving the objectives of the treaty;

(v) The instrument should contain obligations relating to extended producer responsibility, particularly for plastics of concern, including establishment of necessary legal frameworks, infrastructure and capacity to implement EPR at both the international and national levels;
(vi) The instrument should strengthen synergies with existing international agreements such as the Stockholm Convention and the Basel Convention, among others, this should include measures to prevent the illegal trafficking and dumping of plastic waste in the guise of promoting circularity.

Finally, the African Group hopes that efforts in research, development and technology transfer will be ambitiously pursued, taking into account the socio-economic realities of each Member State.

The above-mentioned measures should be developed taking into consideration the precautionary, prevention, polluter pays and integration principles, among others.

I thank you Mr. Chair.