Statement by the African Group during the First Inter-Governmental Negotiating Committee (INC-1) to be held in Punta Del Este, Uruguay from 28th November to 2nd December 2022.

Thank you Chair:

I am extremely honored to deliver this statement on behalf of the African Group on the momentous occasion of the first meeting of the Inter-Governmental Negotiating Committee established pursuant to UNEA Resolution 5/14 – “End Plastic Pollution: Towards an International Legally Binding Instrument”.

On behalf of the Africa Group, I wish to thank to the Government and people of Uruguay for hosting the first meeting of the Inter-governmental Negotiation Committee, and for the wonderful hospitality that has been extended to us since we arrived in Uruguay. We also wish to thank the INC Secretariat for the support that they are providing for us.

Distinguished Delegates,

1. Africa is severely impacted by plastic pollution despite the fact that it is not a major producer of plastics at the global level. At the same time, the Africa Region recognizes that time is running out on us in our efforts to address the threats posed by the triple planetary crises of Climate Change, Biodiversity loss and pollution, and plastic pollution is contributing significantly to each of these crises.

2. The best available science is indisputable about the need for concrete, immediate and concerted global efforts to address the menace of plastic pollution. Therefore, we must commit ourselves to move forward expeditiously from this session on, and to create platforms for sharing good practices and successful experience in the fight against terrestrial and marine plastic pollution.

3. In this regard, the African Group emphasizes the need to undertake “horizon scanning” to address the Specific elements of the instrument in order to enhance our evidence-based treaty making process.

4. The African Group also calls for a fully inclusive process which facilitates the meaningful participation of all relevant stakeholders, including the private
sector and informal sector actors such as plastic waste pickers, to ensure a just transition.

**Distinguished Delegates,**

5. The African Group has consistently demonstrated its firm resolve to take action against plastic pollution as reflected in many decisions that African Governments have taken over the years at the regional level.

6. The African Group takes this opportunity to commit itself to participating in the development of an ambitious and effective instrument that has the dual objectives of ending plastic pollution in all environments, and creating a non-toxic circular economy for plastics. Without a doubt, these efforts will contribute towards the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

7. The Africa Group recognizes that this will require a collective global effort, and a holistic approach across the full life cycle of plastics that creates employment opportunities at each stage of the plastics value-chain.

8. The Africa Region stresses that this instrument must provide adequate means of implementation that will ensure that all Member States are able to meet their obligations under the instrument. This includes adequate and sustainable funding that is readily accessible, including the establishment of a dedicated multilateral fund, the provision of effective channels for the transfer and deployment of technology and scientific research, as well as the implementation of capacity building programs, all in line with the principle of Common but differentiated responsibilities and national capabilities.

9. Further, the instrument must provide international standards for product design that eliminates harmful chemicals in plastics production, while promoting the hierarchical principles of reusing, recycling, recovery and disposal.

**Mr. Chairman,**

10. The African Group would like to stress the importance of national and global reporting regimes that cover each stage of the life-cycle of plastics, and facilitates effective assessment of the implementation of the instrument.

11. Finally, the Africa Group wishes to remind us that while the world’s attention is focused on land and marine plastic pollution, open burning of plastic waste
severely compromises the environmental health of vulnerable communities. Therefore, the instrument must ensure the elimination of open burning of plastic waste, in order to provide a safe environment, especially for vulnerable communities, as well as legacy plastic pollution.

Thank you, your excellencies!