

## **Opening Statement - MGCY INC-1**

Dear Chair(s), Member States, Youth Delegates, and Stakeholders,  
I'm Felipe Gómez Gallo from Colombia, speaking on behalf of the Major Group for Children and Youth.

Given the unique and cross-cutting nature of the issue of plastics pollution, young people from different constituencies and movements have come together to form the INC Youth Focus Group - a universal structure under the Youth Constituency, bringing together youth organizations and advocates worldwide.

We have worked virtually in the last weeks to prepare our interventions and policy positions, and we would like to thank donor member states and institutions that have made possible the fully funded participation of 8 youth delegates to INC-1.

Through this intervention, we want to explain how this is an issue of intergenerational justice. One that deeply affects children and youth.

First, we want to encourage the INC to bring bold strategies in the implementation of the international legally binding instrument on plastic pollution, one that addresses and stimulates a cultural paradigm shift on Single-Use Plastics, a life-cycle approach to plastics, sanctions for the biggest polluters, and scientific research to find solutions for the current plastics crisis.

Secondly, Children and Youth around the world are pushed into waste picking, especially plastics. While multiple factors contribute to this, the main issue is the disregard for the rights of the child fueled by the non-implementation of laws relating to the protection of children. We urge this process to take note of this serious issue.

Third, plastic is not merely a waste management issue or a lack of it. It is about Health- The health of our planet, humans, animals, and plants - the health of our environment. To address this, we must ensure coordination with BRS conventions, similar to the joint liaison group between the Rio Conventions.

Fourth, we want to highlight the link between plastic manufacturing and the usage of fossil fuels. This directly leads to weakening our fight against climate change. We cannot afford this anymore and we see this instrument as strengthening our defense against climate change. And we call upon Member States to establish a Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty to immediately stop all further expansion of fossil fuel production.

Finally - dear member states, we also want to call your attention to the sign behind which I am speaking - the Children and Youth flag. We formally request that this sign stays on for this INC and future ones, as this sign recognizes and represents the voices of countless young people who are otherwise unheard. We further request that the informal and contact groups - once established - remain open to the participation of observers.

Thank you, Chair(s), for the floor.