First session of the Inter-Governmental Negotiating Committee to develop an international legally binding instrument on plastic pollution (INC 1)

General Statement – Switzerland

Punta del Este (Uruguay) – 28th November 2022

Mr. Chair, Excellencies, dear colleagues,

Let me first join my voice to express our appreciation to Uruguay for hosting this important meeting.

This delegation would also like to congratulate you, Gustavo Mezcuadra, for your election as Chair of the INC process. We are very much looking forward working with you and you can count on our full support. Our thanks also go to the Executive Secretary, Ms Jyoti Mathur-Fillips and her dedicated staff.

Our mandate is clear – we need to elaborate an international treaty with international binding rules in a very ambitious time frame. Without a common international regulatory framework, we will not be able to address the global and increasing challenge of plastic pollution. This view is supported by a wide range of stakeholders, including the business coalition.

Voluntary and fragmented national or regional approaches have proven to be insufficient. To find the right approaches, we need to be open-minded and examine the whole range of possible international obligations across the full life cycle of plastics – from measures aiming at reducing the production
of virgin plastics, to banning the most problematic plastics and harmful substances as well as transparency requirements. Many Member States, from all regions, have already taken steps – we can learn from their experience and the challenges they face in order to devise measures at the international level.

We know as a fact that the world cannot deal with the amount of plastic we produce – there is no silver bullet. We will need a wide range of tools and cost-efficient measures to allow for the required system change. As more scientific findings and data will be available – we need a treaty structure that will allow gradual strengthening. As a member of the High Ambition Coalition (HAC), Switzerland is calling for a treaty that will protect the environment and human health from plastic pollution and puts us on track to end plastic pollution by 2040.

Switzerland is impressed by the level of commitment and engagement of so many stakeholders from MEAs, civil society, International Organizations, Scientists and the private sector. We need to mobilize and catalyse this expertise in support of the drafting of a meaningful and ambitious treaty. We don’t have the luxury to work in silos. Many UN organizations and MEA’s in different United Nations duty locations can support these efforts. A presence on site is required to connect and work with them, and to benefit from the opportunities. We are ready to do our part in Geneva and beyond.

We look forward to engaging with all Members States and stakeholders to have a structured discussion during this first INC.

I thank you for your attention.