

Joint Closing Statement for INC-1

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Delivered by:

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On behalf of: COARE, Center for International Environmental Law (CIEL), Action on Smoking and Health, Corporate Accountability International, and Break Free From Plastic.

I represent COARE – The Center for Oceanic Awareness, Research, and Education, and this afternoon, I have the privilege of also speaking on behalf of the Center for International Environmental Law, Action on Smoking and Health, Corporate Accountability International, and Break Free From Plastic.

While we have not made full progress through the agenda as quickly as we had hoped, this has nevertheless been a fruitful and useful meeting.

Among other things, we have heard first-hand from some of the people whose very lives are threatened and impacted by the lifecycle of plastics and the plastic industry. Some of these messages are difficult to hear. And they should be. They should give us pause. But they should also inspire us to act – and to act quickly.

One of the reasons it has taken us so long to make progress is that in addition to being flooded with plastic pollution, we are constantly being fed misinformation. As we heard in the NGO Major Group opening remarks, the interests of industries that profit from plastic production present potentially profound conflicts with global public interest in dramatically reducing plastic production. This demands vigilance to ensure against undue industry influence in these critical negotiations.

The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights – the leading UN entity on human rights – calls attention to the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights – and notes that there is a fundamental and irreconcilable conflict of interests between industry and those profiting from the production and proliferation of plastic and the health and human rights of those affected.

The UN Human Rights submission to this INC further notes that the lifecycle of plastics has become a global threat to ALL human rights, not just the right to a healthy environment, but also the rights to life, health, food, water and sanitation, equality and non-discrimination, and housing.

The UNEP report, [*Neglected: Environmental Justice Impacts of Marine Litter and Plastic Pollution*](#), published last year found that the life cycle of plastics can pose obstacles to the full and timely achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). In fact, the lifecycle of plastic impedes every single one of the 17 SDGs.

As echoed this morning by António Guterres, the UN Secretary General, Plastics are fossil fuels in a different form, and they pose a serious threat to human rights, climate, and biodiversity.

We cannot address plastic pollution without addressing plastic production. We must turn off the tap on plastic and cap the amount of plastics being produced.

The true cost of plastic production and use is foisted upon everyone. Everyone in this room, everyone we represent, and even – and especially – those without representation.

Let us move forward, and move forward swiftly.