

Agenda Item 4

Ocean Conservancy

Thank you Chair,

Excellencies, delegates, esteemed colleagues.

Ocean Conservancy would like to thank Ambassador Meza-Cuadra from Peru, the Bureau, and the INC Secretariat for their leadership and work throughout this process. We would also like to thank the host country, and the French people for their hospitality in welcoming us here to discuss this important issue.

Excellencies,

Ocean Conservancy's priorities for this International Legally Binding Instrument reflect that of our organization, and of our International Coastal Cleanup partner organizations in more than 100 countries around the world, who have removed hundreds of millions of single-use items from their local beaches and waterways. They are tired, and so are we.

Ocean Conservancy hopes that this Instrument be designed to effectively carry out the needed system change to meet the urgency of this moment.

Numerous studies have modeled the interventions necessary to achieve a significant reduction in ocean plastic pollution and associated climate impacts, all reaching the same conclusion: We must start by making less plastics.

Ocean Conservancy encourages negotiators to pursue a single-use plastics source reduction target in line with a minimum goal of 50% reduction by 2050, in combination with other measures to address the full lifecycle of plastics. This reduction would eliminate over 2.6 billion metric tons of plastics, which will result in avoiding the equivalent greenhouse gas emissions as taking every car on earth off the road for 1.6 years.

Beyond single-use plastics, it is critical to address sea-based sources of plastic pollution, in particular abandoned, lost or otherwise discarded fishing gear, also known as ghost gear. Ghost gear is the deadliest form of ocean plastic pollution and has direct and crucial implications for global food security, biodiversity, coastal economies, and human health and livelihoods. Most fishing gear worldwide is made from plastic. To that end, we urge that the instrument address ghost gear as one of the core obligations.

While macroplastic debris such as fishing gear makes up the largest percentage of floating ocean plastics, by weight; by count, microplastics are the most abundant form of plastic pollution in our environment even pollute our own bodies. Therefore, we also support addressing microplastics as a priority during these negotiations.

Finally, we believe that chemical recycling, refuse-derived fuel (RDF), and related technologies are not viable solutions to plastic pollution and should not be considered recycling nor a step towards a more circular economy. These technologies emit more greenhouse gases than mechanical recycling, as well as countless toxic chemicals that harm surrounding communities and the environment.

Thank you, Chair.