

U.S. national statement for INC-1 on plastic pollution

- **Thank you to the Government of Uruguay and UNEP for organizing this meeting.**
- **The world is drowning in plastic pollution. It is time for the world to promote more sustainable, and healthier, opportunities that will allow us to end plastic pollution by 2040.**
- **We look forward to continuing that collaborative spirit that led us to success in Nairobi as we work together at the INC to negotiate a new international, legally-binding instrument to end plastic pollution.**
- **We seek to work with all of you to develop an instrument on plastic pollution in order to protect human health and the environment. We are targeting plastic pollution and recognize plastic has many vital applications in our lives, such the PPE masks that protected us during the pandemic.**
- **The United States views such an agreement as part of our long-term ambition to *eliminate the release of plastic into the environment by 2040*. It's essential that we keep this "North Star" goal in view to help focus our actions.**

- To this end, we seek to develop an instrument that takes an *ambitious, innovative, and country-driven approach* to combating plastic pollution throughout its lifecycle.
- This instrument should require each Party to develop and regularly update a national action plan.
- Each Party's plan should set out nationally determined policies and measures for action throughout the lifecycle of plastic, in order to contribute to the objective of the agreement..
- With a country-driven approach, Parties will be able to strengthen their actions to build greater ambition and fostering innovation over time.
- Transparency and accountability matter. The agreement should provide for robust, transparent national reporting, that can inform how we measure our collective progress toward the agreement's objectives.
- For countries most in need, we recognize that it will be important to have sufficient support, including capacity building and technical and financial resources.

- We support initiating a **Multi-Stakeholder Action Agenda** under the agreement that regularly brings together a diverse set of stakeholders to complement actions by Parties, mobilize technical and financial resources, and contribute meaningfully to the agreement's objectives.
- Additionally, we should avoid one-size-fits-all measures that drive down our ambition. We believe that an approach that drives progress, encourages innovation, and increases flexibility will help us reach our ambitious goals.
- Lastly, the United States supports holding a longer **multistakeholder forum** with a high-level segment at INC-2. We want to hear from civil society and private sector leaders about the accomplishments and commitments to help us combat plastic pollution. We learned a lot from this multistakeholder forum and recognize that stakeholders input will be critical to the success of future forums and these negotiations.
- The U.S. delegation looks forward to working with all of you this week and throughout this process as we embark on an exciting and momentous journey to end the scourge of plastic pollution.

- **Thank you.**

United States

- The United States would like to work with together to develop an ambitious, innovative country-driven global agreement.
- We agree with points made by Peru that the objective should be simple, and we see much commonality with Norway, Switzerland, EU, Japan, AF Group and GRULAC, and Brazil, about the framing of the objective around protecting human health and the environment from plastic pollution.
- We believe this broad framing could enable action throughout the lifecycle of plastic through an ambitious, innovative, and country-driven global agreement and support greater understanding of the impacts of plastic pollution and how to help prevent them.
- We also want to identify an ambitious global goal or north star and believe this could be eliminating the release of plastic into the environment by 2040, this goal could drive our action in the near term, and complement our objective.
- We want to avoid duplication with other instruments as we heard China and Mexico express.
- We also agree with views expressed by Egypt, Argentina, Kenya on the need for a bottom-up approach. We see such an approach as countries work towards a high-level objective through national action plans, and think such plans should describe nationally-determined measures and policies to combat plastic pollution.
- We think such plans should updated periodically to increase their ambition.
- We agree with Rwanda on the need to strengthen our efforts over time under a common objective and believe the approach outlined by Egypt offers a good path forward.
- We also think it is important to keep the focus on plastic pollution not only in the marine environment, but also in terresital and freshwater ecosystems.
- We support developing an instrument that uses the same basic structure found in many MEAs the Secretariat highlights in document 1/4, and we are seeking a structure that will drive ambitious progress as soon as possible by the widest number of countries.
- We support the EU, Japan and others that have noted we must ensure that the from follows function for the structure of the instrument. We do not see the two models outlined by the Secretariat as mutually exclusive.

- We agree with AOSIS that document 1/5 offers a good path forward to work together.

U.S. on Mol

- Thank you Chair.
- Capacity building, technical assistance and technology transfer under mutually agreed terms are important contributions to the instrument's eventual effective implementation.
- A key element of this support will be the establishment of an effective financial mechanism that prioritizes funding activities that support the objective and obligations under the instrument.
- We think that all means of implementation should prioritize actions that result in transformational action in addressing plastic pollution
- And that financial resources should be strategically prioritized for and targeted toward countries with significant plastic pollution issues but limited capacity and resources to address them.
- The challenge of plastic pollution is fundamentally different from other environmental challenges we have tackled internationally, and correspondingly, we are interested in thinking creatively about financing for this agreement.
- This includes thinking about ways a financial mechanism can operate strategically and with comparative advantage in a financing landscape that already features significant finance streams, including from bilateral assistance, multilateral development bank investments and the private sector.
- The United States is open to different institutional models of an eventual financial mechanism, but recognizes it is premature at this stage to discuss any specific arrangements.
- However we can describe some of the key characteristic that the eventual mechanism's operating entity or operating entities should have.
- These include being capable of managing flows from both ODA and non-ODA sources
 - And being able to prioritize financial assistance for those countries that most need it, and for those activities most capable of achieving the instrument's objectives, while not penalizing countries for taking early action to address plastic pollution.
- It will be important to us that the instrument references the role that the private sector and subnational entities play in providing financial assistance.
- It will also be critical that the eventual financial mechanism plays a clear, additive and complementary role to that financial assistance.
- We support the reflection made by the EU that discussions of finance flows need to be inclusive of all available finance flows
- And the recognition from Japan that all parties to the instrument can contribute to towards the common objective of the agreement.
- We understand that for the financial mechanism, form will follow function.
- At this early stage of the INC process, it is important to listen carefully to the visions expressed by Member States of how to solve the plastic pollution problem.
- We can then turn to potential institutional arrangements for financing and other means of implementation later in the INC process. Thank you

- The United States believes it will be critical to include binding obligations related to transparency and accountability in our future instrument. Robust national reporting and an effectiveness evaluation of the aggregate actions taken under the instrument to achieve the objective must both be designed to provide a strong backbone for such transparency and accountability.
- A robust national reporting obligation will ensure that all Parties are individually contributing to the achievement of the objective, allow the Parties to assess the progress of the overall instrument in meeting the objective, and contribute to the eventual evaluation of the effectiveness of the instrument.
- The United States supports a reporting obligation that calls for the provision of relevant information from Parties on a regular basis. Reporting obligations should serve a clear purpose, be precise, respond to specific obligations of the instrument, be manageable and not overly burdensome, be transparent, occur on a regular basis, be based on reasonably available information, and avoid duplicative reporting with other MEAs.
- The reporting requirements of this future instrument should also be broadly applicable to ensure that sufficient data is available for Parties and stakeholders to allow the governing body of the instrument to evaluate and make future decisions for the instrument on the basis of our reporting. To help in this regard, where possible, a harmonized set of metrics could be developed to measure progress under the instrument.
- The reporting requirements should also be crafted to ensure that the contributions of all Parties can be accounted for in the success of the instrument. To that end, such requirements should also take into account that different Parties will have different metrics by which to measure its contributions.
- Turning to the EE, the United States seeks a science based, cost effective, global EE. We recognize that some indications of progress attributable to the instrument's implementation may take time to fully register measurable results. To that end, it will be important that any effectiveness evaluation be transparent and based on consistent, reliable data.
- With regards to any potential assessments of progress of implementation, we look forward to hearing other countries' views. For the United States, any additional processes beyond national reporting and the effectiveness evaluation would benefit from considering how such assessments might add value to our understanding as well as our achievement of the objectives of the instrument.

Delivered by Karissa Kovner, US Environmental Protection Agency

4(3)(d) Other aspects, including scientific and technical cooperation and coordination, research and awareness raising

[Overarching]

- Thank you, Mr. Chair.
- Over the course of this week, we've heard delegations mention many scientific and technical issues. These topics span a wide range such as product design, alternative materials, types of recycling, additives and toxicity, and impacts of plastic on human health and the environment.
- The United States believes it will be extremely important to consider the inclusion of provisions related to research, and scientific and technical cooperation and coordination, to answer questions and to find solutions to the challenges we face.

Research, and Scientific and technical cooperation and coordination,

- The United States recognizes that the instrument offers a unique opportunity to facilitate sharing of information and research results on the many aspects of plastic pollution to increase knowledge, to better address the issue, and to reduce its environmental and social impacts.
- Collaborating to advance scientific research, monitoring and assessment, and innovative technologies and design solutions will be essential to our success.
- Further, the new instrument should allow flexibility to incorporate or utilize new evidence and solutions as they become available.
- In our view the instrument could have a role in encouraging cooperation among Parties as well as with other international organizations, as appropriate, on scientific research and the exchange of scientific information.
- We also recognize the critical role of all actors in research and development for combatting plastic pollution – the private sector, the scientific community, other established international technical and scientific bodies, and many others.
- There is a lot to understand but collectively we can achieve more working together. [EU Importance of BAS and knowledge of Indigenous Peoples]

With respect to Awareness raising,

- Similar to Armenia, the United States also strongly supports provisions on awareness-raising, education, and information exchange to facilitate the reduction and elimination of plastic pollution.
- Provisions in these areas could focus on increasing public understanding to support efforts to improve circularity of plastics, reduce leakage into the

environment, minimize the use of problematic and unnecessary plastics, consider plastic alternatives, and enhance reuse and recycling of plastic products.

- Provisions could also increase awareness and encourage trainings with relevant intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations and vulnerable populations about the effects of plastics on the environment and potential effects on human health based on scientific information.

[Closing]

- Thank you.

- The instrument should have a robust mechanism to foster the exchange and sharing of research on the many aspects of the issue of plastic pollution to best understand the state of the science on the issue and to guide and inform national efforts to monitor and assess pollution in the environment, as well as to take effective action to address it.

US Intervention

Sequencing and Recommendations for further work

- The United States looks forward to working with countries and others to chart a path forward on how to organize our work during the INC. We need to move rapidly over the next two years.
- We support the calls to ensure we have sufficient participation at INC-2 and look forward to working with the Secretariat on this matter.
- We think it will be important to have clarity on the organization of our work and how we can organize discussions well ahead of INC-2, and we look forward to the Chair and Secretariat help us make an efficient use of our time as we move into the more detailed aspects of this negotiation at INC-2.
- We note one way for such clarity is a timely posting of an annotated agenda or scenario note, informed by consultations over the next few months as we reflect on INC-1.
- We welcome this helpful early exchange on the views of potential contact groups and work streams, but we are concerned about rushing to lock ourselves into a detailed organizational structure ahead of INC-2. We note that so far we hear very different views about these important matters.
- We agree with many other countries that our discussions at INC-2 should be based on the document on potential options for elements towards an international legally binding instrument, which will be informed by input from member states and others.
- We need to review such information contained in the potential elements document ahead of making a decision on the structure of our work, including the number and thematic content of contact groups at INC-2.
- We agree with Japan and [others] that it is premature to make a decision at this meeting and are concerned that in attempt to set these details too early, we could waste time at INC-2 working to change such a structure.
- We want to take an approach that strikes a balance between locking in the organization of future work early and building in flexibility to adapt the structure of our discussions based on the meeting documents submitted to INC-2 and discussions during INC-2.
- We would also like to raise the provisional agenda for INC-2. We are generally satisfied with the version posted on the meeting portal. However, we would like to see INC-2 provide an opportunity for high-level engagement among countries at this meeting.
- We must maintain the strong political leadership that is behind our work as we move forward into the negotiations.
- We believe that having a high-level segment could bring energy and momentum to making progress rapidly along with building the high-level relationships that we will need to finish text of the new instrument by 2024.
- Therefore, we propose including a high-level segment on the provisional agenda for INC-2 as we kick off the substance of our negotiations.
- With regards to the multi-stakeholder forum at INC-2, we encourage the Secretariat to learn from the organization of the preceding multi-stakeholder forums, and to continue to improve this model.
- We need to maintain a strong connection to the stakeholders that are impacted by plastic pollution and those stakeholders that will be needed to help solve this problem. For this reason, we would like such a high-level segment of the INC contiguous with a multi stakeholder forum.

- We think such a forum can include opportunities to showcase action from regions most impacted by plastic pollution, bring to light innovations in technology that can help us solve this problem, and finally give us insights on how we can work together.
- In line with views that we shared in the informal group, we also note our expectation that the Secretariat will make arrangements to allow for robust side events at INC-2, including potentially a pavilion.
- Governments will not be able to solve this problem alone, and we look forward to working with stakeholders to come up with the solutions we need.

US Intervention

Stakeholder Engagement

- Robust stakeholder essential, and we will all need to work together in to make rapid progress to end plastic pollution. We hear this same sentiment echoed by the distinguished delegates in the room.

Multistakeholder Engagement During the INC

- We appreciate the efforts of UNEP in organizing the multistakeholder forum ahead of INC-1, and thank all those who have come together from national governments, sub-national governments, indigenous communities, private sector, civil society, youth, academics, and others to have a meaningful exchange on aspects of ending plastic pollution and also how we can initiate a multi stakeholder action agenda.
- We agree with the EU that we should continue the forum and should use the opportunity of INC-2 to improve our approach.
- Our vision for a multistakeholder forum for INC-2 includes having both a working-level and a high-level segment.
- We would like the high-level segment to be contiguous with INC-2 to provide for stakeholder leaders to talk about their accomplishments, commitments and actions to combat plastic pollution.
- We also think such a high-level segment should provide an opportunity for exchange among stakeholder leaders and national government leaders on opportunities for collaboration in combatting plastic pollution.
- We think such a high-level segment can pull inspiration from the Our Ocean Conference.
- We have heard the call for virtual intercessional session with multi stakeholders and think this could offer an opportunity to for further exchange ahead of INC-2.
- We also think that a direct way to guide and focus stakeholder engagement during the intercessional session would be to receive stakeholder input on targeted questions and issues, and compile these ahead of INC-2.
- These questions could be developed to inform discussions associated with the draft options paperould be an excellent way to leverage the tremendous stakeholder energy and knowledge in a way that directly advances and informs the process.

- We add our voice for the calls for side events and potentially other activities that give stakeholders opportunities to showcase their actions and innovations, such as a pavilion at INC-2, to help us achieve our goals to end plastic pollution.

Multistakeholder Action Agenda

- The United States supports establishing an innovative multistakeholder action agenda that would complement the actions taken by parties in support of the objectives of the instrument.
- Such an action agenda should seek to promote ambitious actions to address plastic pollution and promote cooperation with a wide variety of stakeholders.
- We think the objectives of such an action agenda could include:
 - Promoting stakeholder leader engagement in the new instrument and ambitious actions by stakeholders to address plastic pollution
 - Mobilizing stakeholder financial and technical resources to contribute to achieving the objectives of the instrument.
 - Promoting cooperation across national, sub-nations, and local levels of governance.
 - Sharing knowledge and awareness raising
 - Building on existing stakeholder efforts
- To achieve such objectives, we think the action agenda could include:
 - Hold a high-level forum that serves as a platform for stakeholder leaders to make announcements about major accomplishments and commitments that help us end plastic pollution and complement the activities of the instrument.
 - Set up a Portal on Stakeholder Actions to publicize stakeholder contributions to achieving the objectives of the global instrument.
 - Sharing of Progress on Stake Actions including with the Governing body of the instrument.