

**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.



INC Youth Focus Group Major Group for Children and Youth

Agenda Item 4.2, Scope, objective(s) and options for the structure of the instrument – 30 November 2022

Greetings distinguished member states, colleagues and INC secretariat. My name is Santhiya from India speaking on behalf of the Children and Youth Major Group.

First, On structure: Due to the urgent need to remedy these issues, we would like to see this formulated into a **specific instrument** where all of the agreed upon control measures are included. While the Framework model remains an option, frankly we do not have the time for additional negotiations, thus we believe a specific instrument model would be a better fit.

Two, On the scope: Without controlling the **production of virgin plastic polymers**, we are not Ending Plastic Pollution. We urge that the agreement contains a mechanism for controlling or restricting polymers through adjustments, meaning decisions without the need for additional amendment or ratification, similar to the approach taken in the Montreal Protocol and Stockholm Convention.

Thirdly, We call for a one-UN approach in the development of the treaty. Relevant UN bodies, conventions and secretariats should be invited and involved in the discussion, as siloed approaches will not help us achieve the transformation we are aiming for. The UN system has **stood by** while extractive industries and consumerism have become the yardstick for development. **But who will pay for the harm to human health and rights? The polluter or the most vulnerable? How will you incentivize funders to invest now or risk the future?** In the context of INC, we call upon UNEP to divest immediately from taking funding or close partnerships with polluting industries responsible for planetary destruction.

Fourth, Regarding the matter of stakeholder engagement, we would like to call for a model which has a transparent, democratic and rights-based manner of engaging stakeholders in the instrument. The 9 major groups and stakeholders model should be used as a baseline for any engagement and further expanded to be fit for purpose for the treaty.



In the same context, Mr. Chair and dear member states, we want to highlight a very important and pressing issue that emerged in this INC. We are concerned that the major groups signs including the sign of the Children and Youth could be removed from the INC. There is **nothing** within the Rules of Procedures of UNEA or the provisional rules of procedures of INC that prevents the signs of the major groups to be displayed alongside the signs of observers for all the stakeholders.

It will be a **regression** if the sign and voices of Children and Youth are being taken away at the INC-1. We would like to call upon the secretariat to maintain no regression for the representation of stakeholders and to give the children and youth constituency the visibility and space it deserves. We also remain available for a dialogue with the Executive Secretary on this matter. We further request that this issue be taken up in the contact group or discussions on stakeholder engagement before any constituency signs are removed from the INC.

We are calling upon member states and regional groups for support on this.

Thank you Chair for the floor.

Delivered by:

Santhiya Ananth

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INC Youth Focus Group Major Group for Children and Youth

Agenda Item 4.3.C, Support to monitoring and evaluation of progress in, and effectiveness of implementation and national reporting – 1 December 2022

Thank you, Chair. I am Abubakar Bamai speaking on behalf of the INC Youth Focus Group of the Major Group for Children and Youth.

Firstly, we are aware that to eradicate plastic pollution, the management of such waste takes paramount importance. However, we also strongly think that equal attention should be given to transitioning to alternative materials that are not harmful to the environment as a whole.

Firstly, we want to draw attention to a 2015 report from UNEP titled “Biodegradable Plastics and Marine Litter.” We are highlighting three points from the summary:

- One, that claims and counterclaims about the biodegradability of polymers in the environment appear to be influenced by commercial interests;
- Two, public perceptions about whether an item is biodegradable can influence littering behaviour; and
- Three, based on available evidence, biodegradable plastics will not play a significant role in reducing marine litter;

Therefore, we highly urge that scientific findings should guide this instrument’s creation and implementation and that we do not hurry into moving to alternatives that end up creating problems to solve later.

Secondly, on effectiveness of implementation:

- One, we are in solidarity with sentiments that the core of the instrument on reporting of implementation should be respectful of the principle of Common But Differentiated Responsibilities;
- Two, we support designing global mandatory measures to restrict virgin plastic polymer production;
- Three, while National Action Plans could be an option to be considered, we also want to highlight that over-reliance on this method would lead to inefficiency as we see happening in the context of National Determined Contributions & Paris Agreement. This is because the NDCs are not legally binding. Therefore, a mechanism for non-compliance should form part of this instrument such as in the Montreal Protocol.



Thank you, chair!

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Means of implementation, including capacity building, technical assistance and Finance

Thank you, chair. I am Abubakar Bamai speaking on behalf of the INC Youth Focus Group of the Major Group for Children and Youth.

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Third, On Finance

- We support the general sentiments on the provision for finance for developing countries and mobilizing finance across board
- We advocate that the immediate reduction of subsidies to fossil fuels, in order to push the phase out of plastic production, should be central part of this treaty.
- Finally, we encourage that the new financial mechanism must respect the rights of Indigenous Peoples, their land, and promote inclusion of all stakeholders.

Finally, In regards to capacity building, we insist on the urgency of environmental education and capacity building, therefore, we support the mandatory implementation of educational and capacity building programs, at all levels, in all school curricula, universities, businesses and other institutions. The legally binding instrument must require governments to make mandatory education on the topics of marine environment.

Thank you, chair!

Hello,

On observer no.14 in the table, the statement from Lim, Hooi Sean from the International Forestry Student's Association on **behalf of the Children & Youth Major Group**.

I am Abi speaking on behalf of the Children & Youth Major Group.

We are born in a world with a new ecosystem; Plastisphere. It is everywhere. Floats in our water to our blood, where will this stop?

Over the last week, several of us have participated here in-person and more online. The discussions here directly impact the future of billions of young people across the world. We are bringing you the #Power in Youth.

We recognize interventions from member states who advocated for children and youth participation. We urge them to maintain their position and call upon all member states to advocate for intergenerational equity.

First, we need to let scientific evidence guide the process of

alternatives to plastics and not be influenced by commercial

interests. Second, we need to respect child rights and stop their

exploitation as waste pickers.

Third, we need mandatory education and capacity building programs as part of ongoing UN efforts on environmental education.

Fourth, we want to recall the rights-based participation of major groups and stakeholders relevant to themes of INC. We insist for upcoming INCs to build upon the UNEA and ECOSOC stakeholder engagement models. No model is successful without youth. Engage young people in decision making and implementation. Let's be clear - you are not handing them a privilege but conceding to their right.

Fifth, children and youth in any decision-making process are vulnerable and most underrepresented. We ask for dedicated funding support from member states directly toward the Children and Youth Major Group for youth participation at the future INCs. Support the #PowerInYouth

Sixth, The Emissions Gap Report launched this year is clear. Only an urgent system-wide transformation can deliver the emission cuts needed by 2030. We call upon Member States to establish a Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty to immediately stop all further expansion of fossil fuel and plastics production.

Seventh, In the context of the INC, we call upon the UN system to divest immediately from taking funding and partnerships with fossil fuel and polluting industries responsible for planetary destruction. Stand with the #PowerInYouth.

Plastic pollution is grounded in waste colonialism. But with intergenerationally transmitted knowledge, there is hope for a decolonized future. Put People and Planet before Profits.

We cannot meet every 6 months to discuss what we refuse to change.

As Children and Youth, we stand prepared to engage with all member states and the secretariat on the road to INC-2. People Power. Power in Youth.

Thank you Chair.