

Statement of the United States
regarding the
Ministerial Declaration of the 2019 United Nations Environment Assembly
“Innovative solutions for environmental challenges and sustainable
consumption and production”
As delivered on March 15, 2019, Nairobi

The United States expresses its sincere gratitude for the leadership and vision of President Kiisler and his team. Their tireless work over the last year and a half has made this entire proceeding a success. We are deeply grateful. Thank you.

The United States recognizes that marine plastic pollution is an important and growing issue, and that urgent action is needed to reduce the release of plastic into the environment.

We know that many member states are taking ambitious action to reduce plastic pollution, and that the private sector is working to provide innovative solutions at all parts of the lifecycle, to reduce the amount of plastic that reaches the environment.

We are pleased to see the problem of plastic pollution, particularly in the marine environment, being taken so seriously.

However, we do not believe in a prescriptive approach where we target a specific product type because it is the subject of regulation in some countries, and with no consideration in this body of the associated environmental consequences.

We support reducing the environmental impacts from the discharges of plastics, and we further note that the majority of marine plastic discharges come from only six countries in Asia where improved waste management could radically decrease these discharges.

We believe there are numerous ways to achieve our common goals. The language in question asks us to endorse the approach being taken in other countries, which is different than our own.

We therefore disassociate from the prescriptive language in the declaration, of reducing single-use plastic products, because that language fails to recognize the variety of ways to reduce these environmental impacts.

Similarly, we disassociate from the reference to ‘low carbon’ economies, because we believe the context needed to be broader, to cover all types of emissions.

We believe this is especially true for key air pollutants such as particulate matter, nitrogen oxides and sulfur oxides that pose serious health risks across the globe.

We fail to understand why it wasn’t acceptable to reference all types of emissions.

We value the active participation and effective engagement of all, including indigenous peoples, in achieving sustainable development.

We hope, going forward, member states will focus on our common goal of environmental protection, rather than prescribing the method with which we should meet those goals.

Thank you.