

## **GENERAL STATEMENT OF THE AFRICA GROUP DURING AHEG 4**

**Chair, distinguished delegates,**

We wish to thank you, the Bureau members and the Secretariat for the exceptional organization of this virtual AHEG-4 meeting. The Africa group appreciates the ongoing support you, the Bureau and Secretariat have given us during the intersessional period since our last meeting in Bangkok, including with the organization of the regional consultation held in September this year.

As a region, on behalf of the African Group, I would like to raise the following points at this early stage:

1. We appreciate the opportunity being provided at this meeting to exchange views on response options, in particular an international response option, as well as on its elements and design. We believe such exchanges should build upon the rich discussions and detailed submissions that took place during the intersessional period. On this, Rwanda, on behalf of the African Group, submitted and presented our position on the topic during the intersessional period and we have reviewed with great interest the submissions and presentations of others. At this time, we would like to offer two observations:
  - **First**, at the 17<sup>th</sup> session of the African Ministerial Conference on Environment, which took place last year in Durban, South Africa, African ministers committed “to supporting global action to address plastic pollution, which will require further work in order to engage more effectively on global governance matters relating to plastic pollution, including reinforcing existing agreements and the option of a new global agreement on plastic pollution that takes a comprehensive approach to addressing the full life cycle of plastics....” Thus, for us, exchanges on global governance, in general, and the option of a new global agreement on plastic pollution, in particular, are of utmost interest and the time dedicated to it during this week is appreciated.
  - **Second**, we recognize the G7 Plastic Charter and G20 Osaka Blue Ocean Vision as important milestones in the ongoing struggle to address plastic pollution. We support them. But we believe that

voluntary measures alone are not proportionate to the scale and scope of the global plastic-pollution crisis. Accordingly, as we see it, in order to fulfill the visions contained in the G7 Plastics Charter and G20 Osaka Blue Ocean Vision, we must take additional steps to operationalize, institutionalize, strengthen and supplement those frameworks through the adoption of a new global legally binding agreement on plastic pollution, as stated in our submission.

2. For these reasons, at this early juncture, we believe a potential option that should be clearly presented for consideration at UNEA 5 is the convening of an intergovernmental negotiating committee to negotiate a new legally binding global agreement on plastic pollution. A majority of the countries in this process are calling for a global agreement and we expect that the main points of our submission will be reflected in the outcome document. As a final note, we are experiencing a rapid growth of this problem in our region since the beginning of the AHEG process. This is why we are here, and we want to start urgently negotiations of this agreement.

**I thank you!**