Dear Co-coordinators of the Scientists' Coalition for an Effective Plastics Treaty,

With appreciation for you letter dated 21 May 2024, we would like to acknowledge that the Scientists' Coalition participation, contributions, commitment and dedication has been instrumental in advancing the process of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee (INC) on plastic pollution.

Concerning your request for further clarification on the points raised in your letter, allow us to address them as follows:

- Firstly, we would like to highlight that the INC Secretariat is tasked to ensure the necessary support to the Committee and the implementation of its decisions, and the Secretariat cannot make decisions on Observer participation.
- Secondly, the mandates and decisions of the Committee direct the work of the Secretariat. A decision on the
 establishment of ad hoc intersessional open-ended expert groups was made by the Committee at its fourth
 session and provides instruction on participation modalities. The decision is available on the INC website in the
 annex of the concept note on page 5. The decision states that the expert group meetings "will be open to
 participation of all Members of the Committee".
- The decision also states that "The Committee further requested the Secretariat, in consultation with the Chair, to invite selected technical resource persons to help inform the work of the expert groups." As per the concept note, developed by the Secretariat under the guidance of the expert groups' Co-chairs and in consultation with the INC Chair, "the Secretariat, in consultation with the Chair, will invite up to 12 selected technical resource persons per expert group." As indicated in this concept note, the selection is "considering the range of Observers, including civil society" and the criteria includes a balance of expertise, experience, regional representation, gender balance, among others. It is important to stress that the selected individuals will be participating in their personal capacity as independent experts.
- As per the established practice to ensure transparency, the final lists of nominated experts by Members and selected technical resource persons will be made available on the INC website.
- Regarding the nominations of experts by Members of the Committee nominating for the ad-hoc intersessional
 expert groups, it is within the discretion of each Member to consult, select, or designate experts they consider
 most relevant for the work, including from a range of stakeholders, should they wish to do so.
- With respect to the conflict of interest in the context of the overall intergovernmental process, it is not within the remit or role of the Secretariat to decide on this matter. Any criteria or other parameters for an application of conflict of interest policies would need to be defined by the Committee.
- The meetings of the ad hoc intersessional expert groups are only of a technical and expert nature. These are
 not negotiating nor decision-making meetings and are not part of an INC session. The decision made by the
 Committee specifies that "the outcomes from the groups shall be without prejudice to the Parties' national
 positions and the outcome of negotiations conducted by the Committee."

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- Furthermore, given the ad-hoc expert nature of the meetings, both by electronic means and in-person, the draft rules of procedure of the INC being provisionally applied, guide the conduct of the meetings to support their orderly conduct, with less formal rigor and more flexibility in their application.
- The intersessional ad hoc expert group meetings are not sessions of the Committee, and no interpretation or webcast services are provided for such meetings.

The Secretariat remains available to answer any further questions. Please note, the Secretariat will make this letter available on the INC website.

We extend our gratitude for your support and as we continue working towards our shared objective of developing an international legally binding instrument to end plastic pollution, we look forward to the Coalition's constructive engagement in the INC process.

Yours sincerely,

Signed Signed

Amb. Luis Vayas Valdivieso Chair INC on Plastic Pollution Jyoti Mathur-Filipp Executive Secretary Secretariat for the INC on Plastic Pollution

Cc: Kate Lynch of Australia
Oliver Bouchi of Ghana
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