

Opening Statement by H.E. Yoon Suk Yeol

President of the Republic of Korea

At INC-5 Opening Plenary Session (Video)

Busan, November 25, 2024

Ambassador Vayas, Chair of the Committee, Ms. Andersen, Executive Director of UNEP, Distinguished delegates, Esteemed guests and stakeholders from home and abroad, Welcome to the 5th Session of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee to develop an international legally binding instrument on plastic pollution. I am particularly grateful to have your presence here in the global hub city of Busan. The excessive reliance of humanity on the convenience of plastics has resulted in an exponential increase in plastic waste. The waste accumulated in our oceans and rivers now jeopardizes the lives of future generations. In order to address this pressing issue, we agreed to create an international legally binding instrument on plastic pollution at the UN Environment Assembly two years ago. Over the past four sessions, we have worked together to draft an effective and implementable instrument that covers the full lifecycle of plastics. Global plastic pollution is a common challenge facing the humanity that calls for an immediate action. It is crucial that we muster all our political

will and reach an agreement at this final round of negotiations. As a Global Pivotal State, the Republic of Korea has been sparing no effort in responding proactively to plastic pollution and other environmental challenges. Korea adopted the Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) system as early as 20 years ago, which aims to reduce plastic waste while increasing recycling rates. Furthermore, Korea enforced the Act on Promotion of Transition to a Circular Economy and Society this year, strengthening the institutional basis for establishing a resource circulation system. The Republic of Korea is committed to sharing its policy experience in resource circulation with the international community and indeed expanding Green ODA, thereby playing a larger role in bridging the gap across the globe as a ‘green ladder.’

Ladies and Gentlemen, Today, the global community faces numerous complex crises. Reaching an agreement at this meeting will send a powerful message of hope and courage to the world that we can unite to overcome any challenge. I sincerely hope that over the coming week all member states will stand together in solidarity – with a sense of responsibility for future generations – to open a new historic chapter by finalizing a treaty on plastic pollution. Thank you.