

# **Opening Statement by H.E. Cho Tae-yul**

**Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Korea**

*At INC-5 Opening Plenary Session (Video)*

Busan, November 25, 2024

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Ambassador Vayas, Chair of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee,

Madame Andersen, Executive Director of UNEP,

Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of the Government of the Republic of Korea, I warmly welcome you all to the 5<sup>th</sup> Session of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee here in the beautiful city of Busan.

It is both an honor and a privilege for the Republic of Korea to host the delegates and participants from all of the UN member states as well as stakeholders in Busan for the fifth and final session of the negotiations on the global plastics treaty.

Over the past two years, significant efforts have been made to establish a shared understanding of the measures needed to tackle plastic pollution. These measures range from phasing out problematic plastic products and enhancing product design for recyclability to establishing effective waste management systems.

While differences in perspectives remain, I firmly believe that they are challenges we can overcome. As a recent OECD report highlights, implementing robust policies across the plastics lifecycle can eliminate plastic leakage into the environment at a manageable economic cost.

What is needed is the political will to do what is both possible and necessary for the health and well-being of the generations to come.

For Korea's part, we stand firmly in support of a legally binding agreement addressing the full lifecycle of plastics, from production and consumption to waste management. We are fully prepared to work with all the delegates here toward a treaty that is actionable, grounded in scientific evidence, and adaptable to diverse national contexts.

Let us keep in mind the words of former UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon: “We are the last generation that can prevent irreparable damage to our planet.” Our negotiations are not solely about policies and treaties; they are about protecting our planet and preserving human health for our generations.

Thank you for your commitment and for being a part of this essential work. Let us make Busan a milestone in our journey to end plastic pollution. /END/