

## **INC-1 Closing Statement - Chair**

Excellencies, distinguished delegates, representatives of observer organisation our time in Punta del Este, Uruguay is coming to a close.

I wish to thank again the government of Uruguay for hosting this inaugural session of the INC as well as UNEP and the INC Secretariat for their tireless work leading up to and during this meeting.

This last two days have been very productive with over 2500 participants and representatives of 150 countries.

We have hosted a multi-stakeholder forum, regional consultations and substantive discussions of the key elements of the future plastics treaty. We have discussed different aspects of what we want the future instrument to be as well as the process to get there and the involvement of relevant stakeholders. It has been important to listen to stakeholders, get their inputs and we will continue to improve the stakeholder engagement process to achieve a truly inclusive and stakeholder informed process.

This meeting has been unique in several ways, not to list of which the large participation of small islands. As chair I look forward to encouraging broad and inclusive participation in this process to ensure that our negotiation remain transparent, inclusive, and informed by experts from all sectors including business, academia, NGO etc.

We knew that these negotiations will be complex at times technical and difficult to find common ground. However, at the beginning of this inaugural session, I urge us all to engage in dialogue with an open mind and a commitment to the environment and planetary health.

As the Secretary General of the United Nations António Guterres said today “Plastics are fossil fuels in another form and pose serious threat to human rights, the climate and biodiversity. As negotiations towards an agreement to #beat plastic pollution continue, I call on countries to look beyond waste and turn off the tap on plastics”.

I am pleased that we have been able to find areas of agreement and that we maintain a clear commitment to achieving an ambitious treaty to end plastic pollution, that as, Secretary General António Guterres urges addresses waste as well as the rest of the plastic life cycle.

UNEA resolution 5/14 entitled ending plastic pollution towards an internationally legally binding instrument which created a legal framework that has guided our efforts as participants in this first INC meeting mandated us to work towards an internationally legally binding instrument on plastic pollution including the marine environment that addresses the full life cycle of plastics.

I want to reiterate that this is not an easy task, but the right thing to do is hardly ever easy to implement. To accomplish our mandate, we must remain patient and committed to our goals and not lose sight of our overall objectives ending plastic pollution. It is important to take a step back and truly recognize the progress that has been accomplished as alluded to previously delegates discussed the objectives, scope, fundamental elements of the future treaty, binding and voluntary measures, scientific and technical cooperation, research, awareness raising and stakeholder engagement.

I want to thank each of you for your constructive engagement these days and I am confident that in our next INC meeting we will pick up where we left off and continue to make progress towards our great idea.

Once again, I reiterate our immense gratitude to Uruguay and since we are here in Uruguay a land from poets, I will conclude with a quote from the most famous Peruvian poet Cesar Vallejo

I will say it in Spanish....

“...hay, hermanos, muchísimo que hacer, y vaya, ¡qué poco hemos hecho!, ¡cuánto queda por hacer!”

“There is, brothers, so much to do. And, oh boy, how little we have done, and how much remains to be done.”

I look forward to our next meeting and wish each of you, happy and safe travels back home. We will see you in Paris. Thank you very much

I now declare closed the first session of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee to develop an international legally binding instrument on plastic pollution, including in the marine environment. The meeting is adjourned.