

STATEMENT FOR FIRST INFORMAL WEBINAR WITH OBSERVERS

18th November 2024 (11:00 - 12:30 Nairobi Time)

Your Excellency,

I am Madhuvanathi from India and I speak on behalf of the youth constituency to represent the needs and rights of youth across the world in our collective efforts to end plastic pollution. It is imperative to remind ourselves that we are dealing with not just an environmental issue but a geopolitical and socio economic crisis which will sustain and inflate our dependence on fossil fuels, thereby accelerating climate change and its debilitating impacts.

We sincerely appreciate the Chair's efforts in bridging diverse views and advancing the discussions ahead of INC5. The structure of the non-papers offer a valuable starting point for our work in Busan. However, we believe that the content requires further fortification. In this regard, we advocate for the employment of binding language, explicit inclusion of chemicals in polymers, specific references to extended producer responsibility, and robust integration of environmental and social justice principles throughout the text. Furthermore, as the process has been perceived as lacking inclusivity, we strongly recommend that the Treaty formally acknowledges the distinct voices of rights holders and stakeholders who are disproportionately affected by plastic pollution.

As youth, we urge that the negotiations move beyond framing the plastics crisis merely as a waste management or a littering issue. By placing excessive reliance solely on downstream measures, we are continuing to treat only the symptoms and not the root cause of the disease. We beseech the negotiators to pursue a paradigm shift that prioritises human rights and calls for upstream measures, including reducing plastic production, eliminating toxicity, and designing for durability, reuse, and repair. We are hopeful that you will lead the final round of negotiations ambitiously, to deliver a treaty that reflects a comprehensive, systems-wide approach which addresses the entire lifecycle of plastics.

This treaty is a critical opportunity in the history of humankind to reframe the flawed narrative of 'profits v. planet and the people' which considers the environmental and social costs of doing business as mere externalities. We must understand that without a healthy planet, societies cannot thrive, and without a thriving society, there is no

economic prosperity! Therefore, we urge the negotiators to understand that INC-5 is a now or never opportunity and your decisions in Busan will make or break our future.

Finally, I would like to use this opportunity to invite you all to the Youth & Stakeholder Assembly happening on the 24th of November in Busan which aims to amplify the demands and expectations of youth and stakeholders alike. We request you to register in advance and we look forward to seeing you all there.

Thank you very much for your time and we look forward to your Excellency's resolute leadership in INC 5 to protect and preserve the planet for the current and future generations.