

Opening Statement by the Republic of Korea, on 30 May 2022 for the Ad hoc open-ended working group to prepare for the work of the intergovernmental negotiating committee to develop an international legally binding instrument on plastic pollution, including in the marine environment.

Thank you, Mr. Chair,

Let me begin by congratulating you on your election as the Chair. My sincere congratulations also go to the members of the Bureau. My delegation is confident that your leadership will guide us to a successful preparation for the INC. We also would like to thank the government of Senegal for their hospitality to host this meeting and to the UNEP secretariat for their excellent preparation of this meeting.

The Republic of Korea would like to commend the adoption of the UNEA resolution 5/14, which was a historic accomplishment that we have made all together. The work of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee to develop an international legally binding instrument on plastic pollution, including in the marine environment, will be a significant move forward to a cleaner and sustainable world.

The Republic of Korea has been an active advocate of green growth, sustainable production and consumption, and a circular economy. Rapid economic development that we have achieved laid bare the importance of protecting the environment, including from plastic pollution. We need innovative approach, good technology and international cooperation to end plastic pollution. Korea has been a strong supporter of a full lifecycle approach on plastics including micro-plastics, to effectively address plastic pollution; that is, from the extraction of raw materials, product design, manufacturing, to distribution, use, waste management, re-use and recycling. We will remain consistent on this, throughout the negotiations.

We look forward to a successful conclusion of an international legally binding instrument by the INC. We also believe that the outcome and process should be transparent and inclusive, by leaving no one behind.

The role of this open-ended working group is crucial, in this regard. We thank the Secretariat for their useful suggestions. We prefer to have five negotiating sessions, so that we can have more time for negotiations among Member States. We can take advantage of holding INC meetings to promote awareness and attract attention of the international community on plastic pollution, so we wish to have at least one INC session in every six months. The Republic of Korea is willing to contribute to this process in every manner, including by hosting one INC session in Korea either in 2023 or in 2024, when we are elected as a member of the INC bureau. We support holding a forum open to all stakeholders one day in advance of the first meeting of the INC, as suggested by the Secretariat.

Mr. Chair,

In conclusion, my delegation would like to express our confidence in your leadership to steward this group and look forward to productive and fruitful discussions. You can rest assured of my delegation's full support throughout the session. I thank you. /END/