

Second Session of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee on Plastic Pollution
29 May - 2 June 2023, Paris, France

AFRICA REGIONAL STATEMENT

Mr. President

Your Excellencies

Distinguished ladies and gentlemen,

1. It is a great honour for me to deliver this statement on behalf of the Group of African States.
2. I wish to thank the Government and people of France for hosting the Second meeting of the Inter-governmental Negotiation Committee, and for the wonderful hospitality that has been extended to us since we arrived in France. We also wish to thank the INC Secretariat for the support that they are providing to our delegations.
3. Africa is extremely challenged with plastic pollution. Our landfills, our soils, our water resources and the air we breath are being heavily polluted with plastics, and our beautiful coastal beaches have not been spared either. The global COVID-19 pandemic has further exposed our vulnerability and the risks associated with our continued dependence on plastics.
4. Mr. President, unfortunately, our determined efforts to address the plastic pollution challenge in order to safeguard the environment and the health of our ever-growing populations have not yielded the desired results. For example, recycling of plastic waste lags woefully behind the rate of final disposal due to lack of local capabilities, waste management infrastructure, appropriate technologies and adequate finance.
5. Therefore, Africa stands ready to partner the rest of the world to engage in negotiations towards an implementable international legally binding instrument to end plastic pollution in order to address the larger triple planetary crises of climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution.
6. Mr. President, Africa firmly believes that the objective of the instrument that is being negotiated should be to end plastic pollution, to protect human health, and the environment taking into account the ‘One Health Approach’, and the scope should cover the entire lifecycle, including legacy plastics, in an inclusive approach and based on the principles of the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, particularly the principle of equity and common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities, the polluter-pays-principle, precautionary approach and the principle of just transition.

7. Mr. President, on the governance structure, Africa proposes that the legally binding instrument being negotiated should include provisions to “promote sustainable production and consumption of plastics, including, among others, enhancing innovation for alternatives, improved product design, and environmentally sound waste management, all based on the principles and practices of circularity. The instrument must establish means for efficient implementation which includes financial mechanisms, capacity building, technology transfer and a robust monitoring and evaluation regime.
8. The governance structure of the future instrument must should promote the reduction in in the production and use of plastics and the efficient management of plastic waste to prevent pollution.
9. Mr. President, microplastics are equally released into the environment intentionally and unintentionally across the life cycle of plastics. Africa supports the introduction of globally determined design standards and improved mitigative activities in order to further reduce losses of secondary microplastics into the environment.
10. On means of implementation, Africa supports the urgent need to establish a dedicated plastics multi-lateral fund or funds, which takes into consideration special circumstances of developing countries and countries with economies in transition, and particularly small island developing states. There should be mechanisms to ensure transparency in accessing the fund(s) which should include grants and concessionary loans. Innovative approaches should be explored at all levels, including private sector participation in financing the implementation of the instrument.
11. On capacity building, Africa supports various options that provide programmes that are country-driven and promote the development, transfer and dissemination of environmentally sound technologies and best practices. There is the need to strengthen the technical, institutional and human resource capacity of all countries under the instrument.
12. Mr. President, in conclusion, Africa would like to reiterate her commitment and support for the UNEA Resolution 3/7 which calls for all countries to develop and implement action plans addressing marine litter, resource efficiency, among others

We will do our outmost best to ensure that a comprehensive and implementable legally binding instrument is negotiated to end plastic pollution for the protection of human health and the environment, and we call on all other partners to do the same.

Mr. President, excellencies, distinguished ladies and gentlemen, I thank you for the kind attention.