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NGO Major Group

Thank you Madame Co-Chair,

I represent the NGO GAIA, Global Alliance for Incinerator Alternatives, a network of more than 800 grassroots groups, NGOs and individuals who are working together to advance Zero Waste solutions. I am speaking on behalf of 6 Major Groups: Women, NGO, Children & Youth, Farmers, Indigenous Peoples, and Science & Technology major groups.

The impact of plastics extends far beyond marine litter impacts. In order to address the plastic pollution crisis in the most efficient way, we need to consider the whole life cycle of plastics, as acknowledged by many of our colleagues in this room since yesterday.

We believe we need to look at the impacts and costs of plastics from the wellhead to the ocean, and the health, biodiversity, climate, social and economic impacts of each of these stages. This includes looking at the impacts of extraction of primary fossil fuel feedstocks and additives to produce plastics, the manufacture, use and environmental release of the resulting plastic products, and their handling through various plastic waste management options.

The accounting of the impacts at every stage should also include the externalized costs that are being shouldered by communities, taxpayers and local governments: impacts on their health and well-being, on their environment, on their livelihoods, food sources, etc, as well as the economic costs local governments incur to handle plastic waste. There are also externalized costs related to the climate impacts—including climate impacts on ocean health—across all the stages of the plastics lifecycle: from its origin from fossil fuels, to its carbon emissions when incinerated.

The costs and benefits on the health of humans and wildlife and to climate, as well as social and economic impacts, including the externalized costs throughout the lifecycle of plastics under the three options presented, are not presently understood and therefore not included in these analyses; updates should be included in a timely manner as information becomes available, and should inform the discussions of this group.

In that respect, we believe the OEEG should give significant attention to examining the feasibility and effectiveness of a new legally binding global governance framework to manage the full lifecycle of plastics in order to prevent plastic pollution in the marine and other environments and to support the goals outlined in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

This framework should aim to address plastic production and consumption levels, drive national and regional action plans and programs toward a common objective, collaborating with existing multilateral agreements where appropriate, while otherwise filling the significant gaps in coverage that have been identified by UN Environment and others that have looked at this issue.

Thank you.