



Women's Major Group

Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee to develop an international legally binding instrument on plastic pollution, including in the marine environment

**Plastic and Women
WMG Opening Statement
Punta del Este, Uruguay, Nov 28, 2022**

Thank you Mr President,
Excellencies, dear colleagues,

The Women's Major Group would like to thank the Government of Uruguay for hosting us. We hope to count with the leadership of the region to guarantee the participation of the stakeholders, protect human rights and include gender equality in the negotiations of the treaty, while recognizing the commitments acquired in the Escazú Agreement.

We are exposed to both plastics and the toxics within, in our homes and in the workplace. To begin with, each month we are exposed to an endless number of toxic chemicals in everyday hygiene products that come as additives to the components of plastics, whose health-related impacts remain invisible or unknown to us.

Exposure to hazardous chemicals in industrial processes and consumer products has serious consequences for our health, studies have found harmful microplastics and chemicals in the placenta and blood, and on the other hand, we understand that they can be the cause of various types of cancer, spontaneous abortions and other devastating conditions including loss of life. We know that the production of plastics is increasing, so are the diagnoses of debilitating or chronic diseases among women.

To protect ourselves as women and to protect all people from such exposure, transparency and access to that information about chemicals in plastic materials and products throughout their entire life cycle is essential.

We cannot recycle ourselves out of the problem. The scale of plastic production we are already facing is staggering, with plastic production projected to double or even triple in the coming decades. We are already drowning in plastics and suffering the damage of this pollution. Let's start with producing less and removing toxic substances from plastics.



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We want an ambitious treaty with specific obligations, and we are eager to contribute. We are the most impacted on the ground and the most vulnerable, as women, we have to be at the negotiating tables. We do not want this process to become an Expo where polluters come and present their false solutions.

The plastic treaty must protect our rights as women and human rights, including the right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment.

The Plastics Treaty must hold commercial business and companies responsible for the damages caused and for fueling the plastics crisis. These companies had the information decades ago, and did nothing to solve the problem that they generated. This negotiation process, as well as its implementation, must be protected from the manipulation of these industries that benefit from little progress on environmental issues.

We must highlight that the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control is an inspiring model of this, where clear limits have been established and maintained to protect public health policies from commercial interests that go against the common good.

In this sense, we urge the States and the future Parties to this Agreement to avoid falling to the corporate lobbies of companies that choose profit over the environment or the common good and that are responsible for the planetary crisis that we face today.

It is time to step up and turn off the plastic tap.

Thank you very much!