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GAIA and BFFP Members in Africa Calls for African Leaders to Negotiate on a Strong Global Plastics Treaty Ahead of the Second Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee (INC2).

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The global plastics treaty presents Africa with a historic opportunity to address the unique challenges the continent faces from the adverse impacts of the full lifecycle of plastics. At its first session, the intergovernmental negotiating committee (INC1), requested the secretariat to prepare, for consideration by the committee at its second session, a document with potential options for elements towards an international legally binding instrument, based on the submissions of member states, to which **14 African countries submitted individual inputs in addition to the African Group submission on what will form the foundational objectives; core obligations, control measures and implementing elements for the global plastics treaty.**

Of note, was the African Group's clear demonstration for high ambition to **end plastic pollution** through **reducing overall plastic production and use.** The strong position of the African Group in addressing plastic pollution from a life cycle approach that prioritizes upstream measures is critical in maintaining Africa's sovereignty especially since the continent continues to shoulder the burden of toxic and non-recyclable plastic waste exports in the form of waste colonialism. This is a position that all African states should adopt as a mandatory approach in the plastics treaty.

Five countries dominate oil production in Africa, a list that could be extended in light of new oil and gas exploration projects. Many of these countries subsequently dominate plastic consumption, imports and petrochemicals and have a history of **privileging profits to the detriment of populations.** The landmark opportunity to curb the global plastic pollution crisis is therefore at risk of being undermined by the disproportionate power and influence the plastics industry has, relative to the fundamental human rights of vulnerable frontline communities and informal workers.

Submissions to the INC2 from such countries have shown low ambition and are lobbyists for false solutions and greenwashing such as waste incineration, chemical recycling, plastics to fuel or plastic-to-chemical processes, pyrolysis and gasification which has the potential to create severe health implications for workers, communities and the environment by generating significant amounts of greenhouse gasses, toxic air pollutants, highly toxic ash, and other potentially hazardous residues.

Moreover, **Africa has been leading the way in the fight against single-use plastic**, with 34 African countries passing laws banning plastic items and should therefore, avoid the vested, private economic interests of petro-chemical companies and states being placed before those of the people, planet and human health. As stated by the U.N. Special Rapporteur, it is therefore vital that the treaty adopts **“A human rights-based approach to global plastics management, focusing on human rights principles as well as mechanisms for accountability and access to remedy.”**

The plastic pollution crisis has deepened existing injustices caused by colonialism, slavery, racism and capitalism that exceeds our planetary boundaries, and disproportionately harms low income communities and in particular black, brown and indigenous communities.

It deprives waste pickers of their right to earn a safe and fair livelihood. **Submissions to the INC2 from some African countries failed to acknowledge the pivotal role of waste pickers.** It has become evident that waste pickers are the backbone of the waste collection and sorting systems and as such, **waste pickers deserve particular emphasis in a new plastics treaty**, to ensure their meaningful inclusion in treaty provisions and implementation, and realize their full potential as engineers of the global materials economy, placing them at the vanguard of collection, sorting, reuse, repair, composting and recycling systems.

We, as the members of GAIA and BFFP in the African region, representing CSOs from Tanzania, Kenya, Ghana, Nigeria, South Africa, The Gambia, Mauritius, Tunisia, Uganda, Cameroon, Egypt, Ethiopia, and the DR Congo call on the INC Focal Points of all African Member States to:

- **Strongly align with the ambitious positions of the African Group** on reducing the trade, production and use of plastics, limiting the presence of toxic chemicals in plastics, prohibiting dangerous practices such as open burning, incineration, firing in coal-fired power plants and other waste-to-energy processes, co-processing in cement kilns, and chemical recycling, to protect human health and the environment.
- **Uphold the UN human right resolution** to a safe, clean and healthy environment that is toxic-free.
- **Guarantee the inclusion, integration, just transition and accessibility of waste pickers and frontline communities** into national waste management policies and the Global Plastics Treaty process.
- **Implement and strengthen existing legislation on single-use plastics and other problematic and unnecessary plastics** in African member states.
- **Recognise that waste management practices alone do not address the full lifecycle impacts of plastic**, and that recycling is most useful where it displaces virgin plastic production, rather than plastifying products that were formerly made from natural materials (e.g. in textiles).
- **Oppose false solutions** such as biodegradable and compostable plastics, and incineration and/or incineration of plastics in cement kilns).

- **Strengthen and scale up existing and new sustainable solutions** within the continent such as zero waste models and reuse systems.
- **Oppose financial mechanisms that perpetuate exponential plastic production and provide a license to pollute**, such as plastic credits, and that allow multinational firms to evade their legal, financial, and moral responsibility for the plastic crisis, while doing little or nothing to address the problem or to finance a just transition.
- **Establish criteria for effective, environmentally sound EPR schemes led by governments** and not by producers and polluters that are consistent with other MEAs and have clear upstream targets inclusive of stakeholders across reuse and recycling sectors.
- **Adopt scientifically sound and evidence based measures** throughout the Global Plastic Treaty process.
- **Foster support for the effective implementation of the treaty** through new, additional, predictable and adequate finance, technology transfer that is environmentally sound and not outdated or being phased out, and capacity building across all sectors of the plastics value chain.

We reaffirm that addressing plastics production reduction at source remains a fundamental part of the efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, build resilience and solutions to climate change while ensuring justice, and equity for all.