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Statement to INC-4 Closing Plenary

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Distinguished Chair, Co-Facilitators, Members and Colleagues,

We would like to commend you for your efforts this week to advance the negotiations of an international legally binding instrument on plastic pollution, including in the marine environment.

My name is Andrés Naranjo, and I am representing the Friends World Committee for Consultation, or Quakers worldwide. Rooted in Quaker values of stewardship, peace, justice, sustainability, and community, we urge the development of an international legally binding instrument that confronts the root causes of plastic pollution. Central to this is reducing plastic production, beginning with the elimination of the subsidies that continue to fuel the production of primary plastic polymers and chemicals of concern. Subsidizing plastic production not only worsens the plastic pollution crisis but also diverts essential funds that could otherwise be allocated to remediation efforts and to support affected communities.

These types of issues are oftentimes better addressed in the more focused environment of intersessional work. Given the time allotted for the INC process, we still trust this committee to yield an ambitious intersessional work agenda for INC-5, and support the Chair's proposal for intersessional work, including the calls from many members of this committee to include observers in the open-ended working groups.

However, we note with concern, the missed opportunity of members to advance an intersessional work agenda that encompasses the full lifecycle of plastics, particularly in the production phase. We believe this would have been an essential step in the lead-up to an instrument that not only tackles plastic pollution but upholds the highest standards of environmental integrity, biodiversity, and human rights norms.

Distinguished colleagues, in our deliberations, let us prioritize those most adversely affected by our decisions — the indigenous and frontline communities, future generations, and global consumers unknowingly exposed to plastic-related risks and hazards. To this aim, it is fundamental for the international community to curtail unsustainable production and consumption patterns of plastic, and to protect our planet and societies from current and future harm by delivering a much-needed package of comprehensive and robust upstream measures through this instrument.

Let us embrace this opportunity with determination and compassion, striving for a treaty that reflects our shared aspirations for a sustainable, equitable, and thriving world. The decisions we make today will resonate through history.

Thank you for your dedication to this vital cause.

Sincerely,

Andrés Naranjo, Programme Associate
Sustainable and Just Economic Systems, QUNO