

Excellencies,

Assalam Alaikum

I am Zuhair Ahmed Kowshik from Bangladesh, and Today, I stand before you as a representative of the global youth, united in our resolve to combat one of the gravest challenges of our time: plastic pollution.

First of all, I want to begin my intervention with a piece of good news. Recently, we have co-convened the Global Youth Coalition on Plastic Pollution with several other youth constituencies from different categories of participation in the INC process and beyond. I am delighted to inform you that we will use this avenue to support and enable broader and more effective youth engagement in the INC process. Through this youth coalition, we have started facilitating collaboration and partnerships between youth-led organisations to develop collective positions and strategies for eliminating plastic pollution in the environment.

Plastic pollution threatens the delicate balance of ecosystems, endangers marine life, and compromises the health and well-being of our communities. It violates our right to live in a clean, healthy and sustainable environment. We must also recognise that plastic pollution is not just an environmental issue but a human rights issue. Therefore we demand the protection of environmental rights must be one of the core objectives of the international legally binding instrument.

As the youth of today, we are the ones who will inherit the consequences of plastic pollution, and therefore, we have an obligation to hold our leaders accountable to implement measures to address this challenge. The youth of today is demanding a set of global rules and targets to be incorporated into the treaty from our political leaders, and we believe only that can properly address the magnitude of the problem. We call on the governments to incorporate extended responsibilities of producers and importers in the instrument and hold businesses and corporations accountable for their waste production and management. Companies must move towards sustainable production and sound management and take responsibility for the impact of their products on our environment.

To find solutions to plastic pollution and its impacts, we need more investment in research and development. This requires both public and private sector investment to support innovation. We urge governments and organizations to also invest in educating communities on the importance of reducing plastic consumption and proper waste management practices. For example, we must train and educate communities, particularly youth, on waste segregation, recycling, and upcycling.

Let us not forget the immense power and potential of youth action. Young people have proven time and again that we are catalysts for change, driving transformative movements across the world. From the shores of remote islands to the bustling streets of urban centres, youth-led initiatives are emerging, raising awareness and taking concrete steps towards a plastic-free future. We have seen inspiring examples of youth-led campaigns, innovations, and sustainable alternatives that have made a tangible impact. From beach clean-ups to zero-waste communities, young people are showing us that change is possible. Our collective passion, creativity, and energy are forces to be reckoned with.

Therefore, I implore each and every delegate present here today to recognise and invest in the power of youth. Include us in decision-making processes, make us part of your delegation, value our voices, and respect our perspectives. Engage with us, mentor us, and provide us with the resources and platforms we need to make a difference. Together, we can drive innovative solutions, reshape policies, and create a lasting impact.

Let us make concrete commitments today. Let us mainstream plastic pollution on all our global and national agendas, setting ambitious and binding global targets for waste reduction, recycling, and the transition to sustainable alternatives. Let us champion human rights in future legally binding agreement, ensuring that no community is left behind.

Thank You.

