

Remarks of the President of ECOSOC

World Environment Day

“Solutions to Plastic Pollution”

5 June 2023

Excellencies,  
Ladies and gentlemen,

It is a pleasure to join you in celebrating World Environment Day. I would like to thank the United Nations Environment Programme, as well as the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire and the Kingdom of the Netherlands making the marking of this day possible at the global level.

Our world is swamped by harmful plastic waste. Microplastics in the seas now outnumber the stars in our galaxy. Every year, an estimated 8 million metric tons of plastic waste enter our oceans. This is the equivalent to dumping one garbage truck of plastic into the water every minute.

The impact of microplastics on the environment and human health is alarming. Studies have shown that these particles can enter the food chain, exposing humans and animals to toxic chemicals that adversely affect our health.

Moreover, the indiscriminate disposal and improper management of plastic waste result in vast quantities of plastic ending up in our waterways, endangering terrestrial and marine life, disrupting delicate ecosystems, and harming communities that depend on fishing and tourism.

The international community has recognized the dire consequences of plastic pollution by collectively committing to forging an international legally binding agreement by 2024, to put an end to plastic pollution worldwide.

Ladies and gentlemen,

During the recent UN Conferences, including the Ocean Conference and Water Conference, many voluntary commitments were pledged with the shared goals of ending plastic pollution at local, regional and global levels, from both governments and other stakeholders.

These commitments demonstrate a strong recognition of the urgency of addressing this planetary crisis and signify a step in the right direction towards a sustainable future.

To tackle this challenge comprehensively, we need an all-hands-on-deck approach and must collaborate across sectors and nations, addressing the full cycle of plastics from production to consumption and disposal.

It is crucial to ensure that no country is left behind in the fight against plastic pollution. Financial support, capacity building and technological assistance should be provided to developing countries to facilitate their transition from unsustainable patterns of consumption and production, to circular economic models that promote reusability and reduce waste.

Beating plastic pollution is possible. I hope that we can all come together to transition to a lifecycle approach to ending plastic pollution.

Thank you.