

Thank you, Chair, for this opportunity. I speak for Action on Smoking and Health, Health Justice, African Tobacco Control Alliance, Corporate Accountability, Global Center for Good Governance in Tobacco Control, ACT Health Promotion, all members of the Stop Tobacco Pollution Alliance. Plastic pollution isn't just an environmental issue or a public health issue. It is surely those, but also a critical matter of basic human rights. Every government in this room has, in some way or another, bound itself to the human right to health. All human rights are important and germane to this treaty, but health is unique in that dead people cannot exercise their other rights.

People have a right to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health, and governments have a duty to enforce that right. It is what governments are for, and failure to enforce the right to health is an abrogation of a basic and fundamental duty.

Many aspects of the topic before us are complicated and difficult, but some are simple and eminently attainable, and therefore obligatory. Among these are cigarette filters, or butts, were recognized by the WHO FCTC – to which most governments here are Party - as unnecessary, avoidable and problematic. They do nothing to protect health, are toxic plastic dumped into the environment in the trillions each year, and are attached to the world's number one cause of preventable death. It is the lowest hanging fruit imaginable. We challenge this body to show its sincerity by adopting language to ban cigarette filters.

There is so much more beyond filters that must be done if we are to save this planet and future generations. But if this body cannot bring itself to ban cigarette filters, why are we here? If Parties can't respond to this obviously harmful plastic waste, the validity of this treaty process would be in question.