Joint Statement from Just Transition Coalition of Indigenous Peoples, waste pickers and other frontline communities
28 April 2024 - INC4

Distinguished Chair, Member States Delegates, Observers,

My name is Matt Peryman, from Aotearoa, the people of Ngati Awa

I am presenting this statement on behalf of the Just Transition Coalition of Indigenous Peoples, waste pickers and other frontline communities. I thank you for this opportunity. We acknowledge and appreciate the progress so far on the just transition section of the treaty.

Just Transition in the Plastics Treaty requires maximizing environmental, social and economic opportunities while minimizing and carefully managing any challenges through a mandate of effective social dialogue among all groups impacted by the plastics crisis. Therefore, it is important that the plastics treaty ensures the inclusion of Indigenous Peoples, waste pickers, and all communities and workers disproportionately impacted by this crisis in all states. Our voices and participation are essential to the process of shaping and implementing a just transition framework for the treaty.

Resolution 5/14 to end plastic pollution, adopted at UNEA 5.2 in March 2022, recognizes the significant contribution made by workers in informal and cooperative settings, notably waste pickers, in reducing plastic pollution globally. It also aims for this treaty to end plastic pollution by adopting a full life cycle approach, including the extraction of raw materials (for both fossil fuel and bio-based feedstocks), the manufacturing of precursors, polymers, resins, and products, as well as the transportation, consumption, disposal, and remediation of plastics and their associated chemicals in the environment. We, Indigenous Peoples, waste pickers and other disproportionately impacted communities, have historically suffered the negative impacts of plastic pollution, which has poisoned our bodies, lands, waters, air, territories and the marine environment. Just Transition must include reparations for the historic theft, displacement, and destruction of our lands, cultures, livelihoods, food systems, and subsistence lifestyles, which has left us living in sacrifice zones.

As Indigenous Peoples, waste pickers and other disproportionately impacted communities and workers, whose knowledge systems and lived experiences must lead all

solution-making processes, we demand that our voices, self-governance, and self-determination be centered in national coordinating bodies. Just Transition should never be led by industries driving this existential, planetary crisis.

Just transition provides opportunities to promote systemic change so that those who have been most affected by plastic pollution do not continue to face systemic harm. It also ensures that no harm is done to other communities or groups in the future. Therefore, the treaty must include legally-binding just transition provisions and financing mechanisms, with dedicated articles including but not restricted to, safeguards protecting human health and the environment, living income, strong occupational health and safety, social protections, and equitable economic opportunities. It is necessary that Just Transition be a binding global commitment by and for all states.

_____THANK YOU_____

Endorsed by
Indigenous Peoples Caucus
Society of Native Nations,
Asia Indigenous Peoples Pact,
International Alliance of Waste Pickers,
Global Alliance of Incinerator Alternatives,
Just Transition Alliance,
Aotearoa Plastic Pollution Alliance,
Tāngata Whenua Coalition for an Effective Plastics Treaty,
Valley Improvement Projects
Coordinadora de las Organizaciones Indígenas de la Cuenca Amazónica - COICA