

Statement delivered by Leonardo Trasande, MD, MPH, during the plenary session of the first Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee (INC) to develop an international legally binding instrument on plastic pollution, including in the marine environment.

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Punta del Este, Uruguay

Muchas gracias Señor Presidente por la oportunidad de dar esta intervención. Thank you Chair.

We appreciate the opportunity to give an intervention on measures to improve the effectiveness of implementation and enhance scientific and technical cooperation and coordination.

First, we reiterate that the plastics treaty is a global public health treaty. We observe with profound alarm statements suggesting the absence of health effects of chemicals in plastics, contradicting consensus statements by WHO and others. We remind delegates of the strong scientific consensus that chemicals in plastics cause noncommunicable diseases. The effects are concentrated in the most vulnerable, including children, pregnant women, and workers with unique exposures. Implementation efforts should expand on existing national and international efforts, including restrictions, that address the hazards of chemicals in plastic. For example, endocrine-disrupting chemicals (EDCs) used in plastic materials are treated with particular emphasis in EU laws and regulatory policies. We also highlight the ICCM4 resolution stating that continued actions on EDCs by all stakeholders are required to achieve the goals of SAICM.

We note that several delegates have raised the issue of regrettable substitutions. The instrument should therefore treat bisphenols, phthalates, and PFAS as classes of hazardous chemicals using existing scientific information. As a scientific and medical professional society we urge that scientists be engaged in all contact groups and treaty processes to provide and facilitate technical assistance on this issue.

We also emphasize that global obligations will be required to even begin to deal with plastic pollution and the associated negative consequences for human and environmental health. Plastic pollution is a transboundary issue and these pollutants continue to leach harmful EDCs throughout their lifecycle. We note that the European Food Safety Agency, based on peer-reviewed scientific evidence, has proposed to lower the tolerable daily intake of BPA by 100,000 fold, because these chemicals are hazardous at extremely low and environmentally-relevant levels and impact reproductive health, among other harms.

Finally, we would like to point out that, as a global community of scientists and medical professionals, we are here to support all of you, member states, so you can make informed



decisions on these important matters. The COVID-19 pandemic has reminded us of the crucial need to follow the science. We urge the INC to follow the human health and environmental science on chemicals used in plastic, and engage with scientists as with other international public health crises throughout this process.

Thank you