APG Opening Plenary Statement
Punta del Este, Uruguay

Chair, Bureau Members, distinguished Co-Facilitators, Excellencies, colleagues,

I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the **Asia-Pacific Group**.

We recall our regional consultation held in **Hangzhou, China**, ahead of OEWG 3.1, where Asia-Pacific countries came together in a spirit of solidarity and forward-looking cooperation. Building on that foundation, we reaffirm our shared commitment to establishing a Science-Policy Panel that is effective, inclusive, and reflective of the diverse needs, realities, and priorities of all regions and development contexts.

We reaffirm our commitment to building upon the textual progress achieved at OEWG 3.1. The outcomes of Geneva provide a strong foundation, and we believe negotiations should proceed on that basis to ensure continuity and mutual trust.

The Asia-Pacific region is home to vast diversity—in geography, economy, and institutional capacity. For this reason, we call for a Panel that respects and upholds the sovereign equality of all member states, and that serves to inform, not prescribe, national policies. The Panel must be intergovernmental in nature, with decision-making rooted in consensus, particularly on all matters of substance, including deliverables and strategic direction.

We emphasize that voting should be reserved exclusively for procedural matters, such as the election of officers. This ensures that science-policy integrity is protected through inclusive and balanced deliberation.

On institutional design, the Bureau must play a facilitative and logistical role only, and must not exercise oversight or authority over the decisions of the Plenary. Its mandate should be to oversee the implementation of Plenary decisions, without the ability to reinterpret or modify them.

We further highlight the importance of preserving balanced representation between developed and developing countries, through regional group allocation. This principle must also apply to the composition of the scientific body of the Panel—whether referred to as an IEC or expert group—which should serve in an advisory capacity, without altering the mandates agreed by the Plenary.

On participation, we stress that Panel membership must be reserved for sovereign states. While observers, including regional organizations, are welcome, they must not have rights equivalent to those of member states—including but not limited to the right to nominate members of the IEC, introduce proposals, or stand for election to leadership positions.

We further affirm our strong support for the State of Palestine's full membership in the Panel, consistent with its long-standing participation in multilateral environmental agreements and its status as a member of multiple UN specialized agencies. Palestine is an integral part of the Asia-Pacific region, and its inclusion reflects our shared commitment to ensuring equitable participation for all states in this process.

Regarding financing, we reiterate our support for a model based on voluntary contributions, without being guided by the UN voluntary indicative scale of assessments, and we underscore that funding must not be earmarked for specific deliverables.. Instead, the workplan and resource allocation must be adopted collectively by the Plenary, to ensure fair representation of all regional priorities.

The Asia-Pacific Group recognizes the vital role of capacity-building in strengthening the science-policy interface. We re-affirm that Capacity-building to be integrated as a cross-cutting element throughout the Panel's functions and work, with particular attention to the needs and priorities of developing countries.

Finally, we affirm that the Panel's scope must remain aligned with its founding resolution—centered on the sound management of chemicals and waste and the prevention of pollution. It should not be framed as a health- or prevention-dominated instrument, but rather as a mechanism for evidence-based, programmatic, and risk-informed policy advice, taking into account diverse national contexts.

In addition, the Asia-Pacific region supports the secretariat hosted by UNEP.and further reiterates not to go beyond UNEA resolution 5/8.

Chair, Bureau members, distinguished colleagues,

The Asia-Pacific Group enters this session with unity of purpose and readiness to engage constructively. We look forward to working with all regions to establish a panel that is intergovernmental, equitable, and fit for purpose.

Thank you.