



CROATIA

Statement by

Ms. Maja Markovčić Kostelac
State Secretary at the Ministry of Sea, Transport and Infrastructure

at the

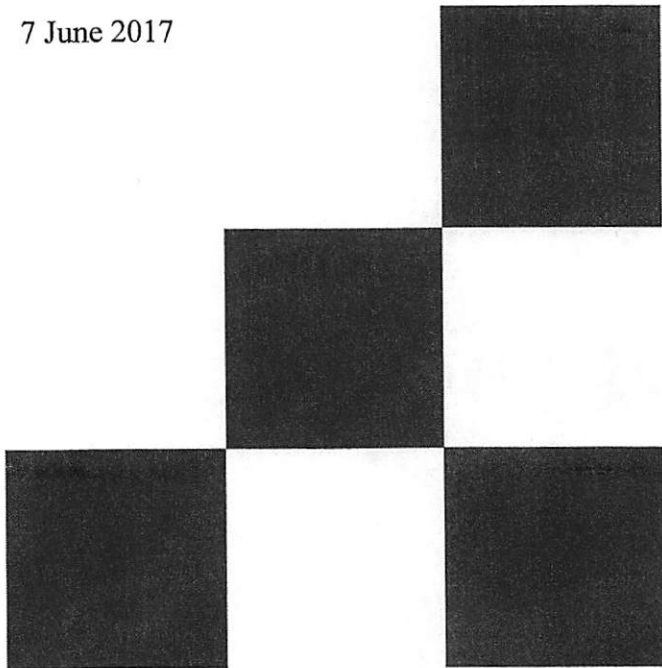
General Debate

on

UN Conference to Support the Implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14: Conserve and Sustainably Use the Oceans, Seas and marine Resources for Sustainable Development

7 June 2017

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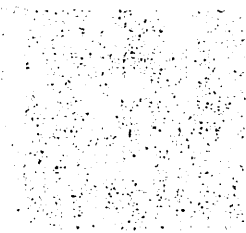
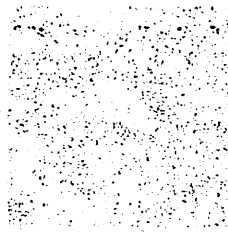
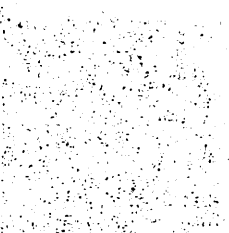
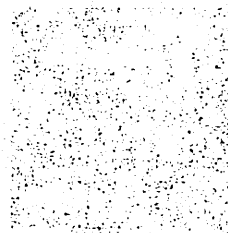
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Mr. President,
Your Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

There is a proverb saying: when you put the finger into the ocean, you are connected with the entire world. Indeed: seas and oceans are our common heritage and our common responsibility. Individually and collectively, we should all fulfill our mission. It is a common endeavor of various stakeholders such as public and private sectors, civil society, scientific and education institutions.

Therefore, allow me to express Croatia's strong support for this pivotal global conference, dedicated to the protection and sustainable use of the world's oceans and seas.

We are very pleased that the very first UN conference dedicated to the implementation of an individual Sustainable Development Goal, has been devoted to Goal 14 and the conservation and sustainable use of oceans, seas and marine resources.

Oceans and seas represent one of the world's greatest treasures and an indispensable source of food, income and well-being for millions of people all around the globe. Having in mind the fragility and vulnerability of this crucial resource, it is the high time to redouble our efforts towards activities for its preservation.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Croatia is a Mediterranean State, with a long coastline on the Adriatic Sea and 1244 islands, islets and reefs. Our long lasting maritime tradition, where for hundreds of years our people lived by the sea, with the sea and from the sea, obliges us to harmonize our efforts with the pulls of the sea.

The Adriatic Sea as the semi-enclosed sea is by its definition sensitive. Sensitive to all source of pressure from the shore and from marine related human activities. Urban development, tourism, fishery, exploitation of natural resources are recognized to be potential threat.

Economic growth, health and prosperity are legitimate goals of every human being and every nation. The growth however needs to be in line with what has been incorporate in the sintagma sustainable development. Development based on holistic and ecosystem approach insures that the growth does not turn into its contradiction.

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The first part of the report deals with the general situation in the country. It is a very interesting and detailed account of the political and economic conditions. The author has done a great deal of research and his work is well documented. The report is a valuable contribution to the study of the country's development.

The second part of the report deals with the specific aspects of the country's development. It is a very detailed and thorough account of the various sectors of the economy. The author has done a great deal of research and his work is well documented. The report is a valuable contribution to the study of the country's development.

The third part of the report deals with the social and cultural aspects of the country's development. It is a very detailed and thorough account of the various aspects of society. The author has done a great deal of research and his work is well documented. The report is a valuable contribution to the study of the country's development.

The fourth part of the report deals with the future prospects of the country. It is a very detailed and thorough account of the various aspects of the future. The author has done a great deal of research and his work is well documented. The report is a valuable contribution to the study of the country's development.

The fifth part of the report deals with the conclusion of the study. It is a very detailed and thorough account of the various aspects of the conclusion. The author has done a great deal of research and his work is well documented. The report is a valuable contribution to the study of the country's development.

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In this vein, we fully recognize the importance of sustainable development of islands and coastal regions and sustainable use of the seas and marine resources.

With tourism being vital for Croatian national economy, we recognize the ultimate need to ensure its sustainable character. Tourism based on the respect and understanding of traditional values, cultural heritage and preservation of natural environment has its economic justification and provides for long-lasting sustainable growth.

Nautical tourism as a fast growing branch of tourism and marine activity may have adverse impact on the marine environment if not regulated and exercised in line with the highest environmental and maritime safety standards. Therefore, Croatian government pays particular interest to ensure safe and environment friendly framework for the development of nautical tourism.

Although we are not the island state, our 49 low populated islands and high sensibility and dependence of island communities deserves particular attention. Connectivity is one of the pre-condition for the existence of island communities. Croatia plans to turn the entire system of island maritime connectivity to alternative fueling and thus contribute significantly to the reduction of emissions from marine transport.

Fishery is a very important economic activity in Croatia. As a traditionally maritime country, fishery is a part of our national identity and it constitutes a backbone of local coastal and island communities' development.

As a European Union member state, we are dedicated to implementation of the EU Common fisheries policy, which makes an excellent example of responsible management. On a global scale, we support the approach of expanding national jurisdictions beyond territorial waters and in such way increasing the area under the national management, monitoring and control in fisheries. Although aware that it means significant increase of costs, the long-term benefits are unmeasurable. As for the areas beyond the national jurisdiction, we all must put additional efforts into improving the work of Regional fisheries management organizations and develop initiatives to enhance the protection of biodiversity in such areas.

Most of the marine pollution, including litter, comes from land-based sources and this is where we must insist on making serious efforts. Smart urban development and green technology in general are tools, which provide us with the opportunity to ensure economic growth without jeopardizing the essence of our existence- our natural environment, our oceans and coasts. Here, in particular in semi-enclosed sea area, such as the Adriatic Sea is, the regional co-operation of coastal states is vital.

In that context, we would like to confirm our strong commitment to the integrated coastal zone management approach as one of the instruments applicable for the implementation of SDG14. Croatia is the proud host of PAP RAC, being a part of UNEP, established in 1977, with the main aim to provide healthier Mediterranean environment, resting on the principle of sustainable development. Regional instruments such as Barcelona Convention could provide valuable framework for institutional coordination of implementation of targets contained in SDG 14 and related action plans.

Shipping, although the most environmentally friendly mode of transport still has the adverse impact on the environment. Therefore, we should continue to work together in the framework of the international organizations, particularly the IMO, to reduce the emissions from shipping in line with the Paris Agreement.

In this regard, Croatia is actively contributing to the development and implementation of international standards for the protection of marine environment from ships sourced pollution. One of known and identified threats coming from maritime transport activities are invasive alien species, introduced through ships' ballast water. Since 2008, Croatia has proudly participated as a leading partner in the IMO-GEF-UNDP GloBallast Partnerships Program. Participation in the program enables us not just to build our own capacity for the implementation of international treaty addressing the ballast water management, but also provides us with the opportunity to share our knowledge and experience with other Adriatic states, the wider Mediterranean and on a global level. This was a truly positive example of co-operation in addressing and galvanizing global efforts to manage the ballast water issue.

Mr. President,

The implementation of widely adopted international instruments setting global standards is crucial for addressing global challenges facing oceans and seas. I would like to underline the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea and its Implementing agreements as key instruments establishing a comprehensive set of rules governing the oceans, human activities, protection of the marine

environment and management of marine natural resources. Efforts should be even more strengthened to ensure that all States become parties to the relevant instruments and to implement their obligations.

In addition, the international legal framework should be constantly improved and developed. Part of this process is the important development of an instrument on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction (BBNJ), which Croatia fully supports.

Dear Colleagues,

In conclusion, Croatia strongly believes that the only way we can preserve our oceans and seas, and at the same time use their full potential for growth and progress, is by ensuring genuine sustainable development and the preservation and sustainable use of marine resources. We have settled the goals, and now it is a time for action. We cannot afford ourselves to watch but not to see, to listen but not to hear. The oceans kept the genetic code of humankind. Therefore, we should be always reminded that we do not possess the oceans, we are here thanks to the oceans and this privilege has only been borrowed from generations to come.

It is the beginning of the journey when more than ever, shared responsibility and joint efforts are the key for the successful achievement of our common goals.

Croatia is all heartily ready to join this journey with our partners worldwide....

Thank you.