

National Statement UN, 8 June 2017

President [der GV, Peter Thomson],

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Germany fully aligns itself with the statement made by the European Union on Tuesday. I would like to make some additional remarks.

Germany firmly stands by its commitment to the Paris Agreement and to the goals of the 2030 Agenda, which we adopted here almost two years ago.

This building stands for the world's aspiration for peace and equity like no other.

Peace and equity can only be achieved in this century by protecting the foundations of life of billions of people.

Germany will therefore do everything in its power to ensure that the international community maintains this momentum and does not turn back the clock on what we have achieved so far.

Water - in all its forms - is life. Our very existence depends on healthy oceans. We need them as a source of food for our growing global population.

We need them to ensure that prosperity and social equity in the countries of the South are improved. We need them for the fight against climate change and we want to protect the unique flora and fauna living in them.

I am therefore very grateful to you, President Thomson, and to Fiji and Sweden for initiating this summit. It is high time we talked about protecting our oceans within this framework and agreed on protective measures in line with sustainable development that will also help us achieve SDG14.

Germany stands by this goal. Together with old and new partners, we want to help protect coastal and marine areas, manage them sustainably, establish new protected areas and combat marine litter.

So far we have made eleven voluntary commitments, for example the International Climate Initiative for the protection and sustainable use of marine biodiversity and the Blue Action Fund for promoting protected areas and combatting marine litter. We will also contribute to the “Partnership for Regional Governance” to advance the implementation of SDG14.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would like to say at this point that Germany had hoped for a much more far-reaching Call for Action. Of course, it is clear that not all countries can work at the same speed. In some cases we will be able to take big steps, while we will have to be content with smaller achievements in others. But: We can no longer afford to merely be signing joint declarations of intent and making general statements - what we need are actions. If we are honest, we are still far from being a game-changing conference.

This Call for Action should therefore mark the beginning of a new era, in which we must continually raise our levels of ambition.

It is encouraging to see the importance which has been attached to regional marine governance during this conference. We believe that regional alliances and close cross-sector cooperation are crucial for implementation. This was also the clear message of the popular discussion event we held two days ago together with Sweden, UN Environment and a group of international Think Tanks.

I ask you, colleagues, ladies and gentlemen, today on World Oceans Day, to endorse the Call for Action.

However, we should also use this conference as an opportunity to pave the way towards a coherent follow-up and review process.

Let us use the power of cooperation for the good of billions of people worldwide and for those coming after us. Thank you.