

PLENARY STATEMENT - THE OCEAN CLEANUP

June 9, 2017; 3 minutes

Mr President, Excellencies, distinguished Delegates

Big problems require big solutions. Plastic pollution is a big problem.

Thanks to technology, in the past few decades we have made remarkable progress in many areas, including health, education and prosperity. Ironically, it is the side-effects of these advances that are now creating the largest challenges of our time, specifically when it comes to the environment. So why can't we use this power of technology to help solve these problems as well?

At The Ocean Cleanup, we develop advanced technologies to rid the world's oceans from plastic. We have invented a passive system that runs on the natural ocean currents. Instead of going after the plastic, we use the currents let the plastic come to us, using a fleet of floating barriers to concentrate the plastic. Oceanographic models show that we should be able to clean up 50% of the plastic in 5 years.

Over the past 2 years we have mapped the plastic pollution problem with 30 boats and an airplane, we've done scale model testing and tested a prototype at sea. Last month we announced that we're ready to deploy the first full scale system in the Pacific Ocean within 12 months. To make this happen, we raised over 31 million USD and we're already in production as we speak.

I came here to the UN today with two messages:

First of all: in the future, we believe it can be relatively easy to develop spin-offs of our technology to intercept plastics before it reaches the oceans, before it reaches your waters and before it reaches your beaches. We are ready to help you to rid the world's oceans of plastic, and if this of interest to you, please feel free to reach out to us.

And secondly, let's not forget technology is the most powerful tool we humans have. The fact that just one species can fill the oceans with plastic and can change the climate of an entire celestial body is a testament to this. Let's use the power of technology to make the oceans clean again!

Thank you.