

Excellencies,

Ladies and gentlemen,

We all agree that we cannot continue to treat our world's oceans the way we do now. Overfishing, acidification and pollution all exemplify why business as usual is no longer an option. The only way to ensure that the coming generations can still use and enjoy our oceans and their wealth of resources is by protecting them.

It is good that the oceans have become a top priority on the political agenda. We need to take advantage of this momentum.

We can only change course through joint action. The international community needs to take cross-border action - this means everyone living on this blue planet.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Germany is working hard at all levels to help preserve marine ecosystems.

We have committed to protecting and preserving the oceans and marine ecosystems in a number of different treaties and agreements and are very active at national and European level.

We need to prevent increasing pollution, in particular by reducing marine litter. This

is especially important to Germany.

However, these efforts can only succeed if we use a coordinated approach.

As part of the EU Marine Strategy Framework Directive, we have put together a comprehensive package of measures which we are now implementing at national level, for instance, through the work of the round table on marine litter - which for the last year has been convening in two different working groups. The working group meetings discuss land- and sea-based sources of marine litter and awareness raising with various stakeholders.

At regional level, Germany is deeply and actively committed to the Conventions on the Protection of the North-East Atlantic (OSPAR) and the Protection of the Baltic Sea (HELCOM). Germany was actively involved in drawing up action plans to combat marine litter in both marine regions (OSPAR 2014, HELCOM 2015) and will continue to be actively involved in their implementation over the coming years.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Two years ago, Germany made the conservation of the marine environment a priority during its G7 Presidency.

In June 2015 at the G7 summit at Schloss Elmau in Bavaria, the heads of state and government adopted the G7 Action Plan to Combat Marine Litter.

On this basis, Germany is continuing to focus on this topic as part of its G20 Presidency.

Three months ago in Hamburg, the G20 adopted an ambitious G20 Action Plan on Marine Litter. This plan addresses both land- and sea-based sources of marine litter and focusses on measures to promote waste prevention, functioning sustainable waste management (the 3 Rs: reduce, reuse, recycle) and resource efficiency.

The plan emphasises the responsibilities of producers and consumers in equal measure and promotes awareness raising and research.

We don't just look at marine ecosystems and their functions, we also look at the socio-economic aspects of appropriate waste management on land.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Combating marine litter prevents losses in the fishing and tourism sectors. It also creates new jobs.

We refute the inaccurate claim that environmental protection only creates

costs. This is not true, plastic waste is a valuable substance and after all, turning waste into value is our goal.

Recycling plastic waste generates profits.

It is important to note that, parallel to the adoption of the G20 action plan, we established a platform for implementation, the Global Network of the Committed. By establishing this network we have ensured that the implementation aspect is firmly integrated into the action plan. It was important for us to show that we will turn our words into actions. The network is currently in the preparatory phase.

Another fact I think it is important to mention - representatives from

governments, environmental associations, industry, civil society, international financial institutions and international organisations participated in both the G7 and G20 negotiation processes.

We took all stakeholders on these journeys with us and were therefore able to achieve a high level of support. Our philosophy was “ownership through participation”. One thing is clear: these action plans would not exist without the close cooperation from the stakeholders in both processes. For the next steps we are counting on continued constructive cooperation with partners from different countries and organisations.

To help implement development projects such as the G20 Action Plan on Marine Litter, Germany is investing 30 million euros this year under the Ten-point Plan of Action for Marine Conservation and Sustainable Fisheries.

Thank you for your attention.