

- Ladies and gentlemen, it's a pleasure to be here today.
- The European Union and its Member States welcome this UN Ocean Conference. And we thank the Governments of Portugal and Kenya for hosting it.
- We have eagerly waited for this event. It has been in the making for a long time.
- This week we're all here **to reaffirm our strong commitment to the implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14** - the one that specifically focuses on the conservation and sustainable use of our oceans, seas and their resources.
- Back in 2017, the first Ocean Conference was an alarm call, alerting the world to the problems our oceans face.
- This year we should focus on urgent **action**.
- Because, unfortunately, the reality is still quite alarming.
- Despite our previous commitments, the latest scientific reports show that the status of our oceans, climate and biodiversity **are as bleak as ever**. And there are negative or worsening trends.
- This situation is mostly the result of improperly managed activities and insufficient progress towards a clean, healthy, productive, and resilient ocean. This is our **collective failure and responsibility**.
- Our citizens, especially our youth, are asking us to do something about it. We cannot ignore this call. It's our duty to resolve this situation. We in the EU hope that this Conference will **trigger the**

**necessary transformation of attitudes and spur on the implementation of SDG14.**

- This is **urgent**. We are mid-way through the 2030 Agenda cycle and the state of the ocean is not improving.
- At the same time, we continue to put more pressure on the oceans. Countries around the world are developing their ocean-based economies, particularly now in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Therefore, here in Lisbon, we would like to see a general and unequivocal commitment by **ALL**. We call on both the States and the stakeholders **to accelerate their efforts** to implement SDG 14 targets.
- And we hope that the commitments made here **will not be forgotten** once we return home.
- We need to deliver bold, measurable, and impactful measures to sustainably manage marine resources and biodiversity, increase the ocean's resilience to climate change and safeguard its health for generations to come.
- We all know that the oceans are crucial to life on earth. And that the livelihoods of millions of people around the world depend on them. Let's make sure that **no one is left behind**.
- **Solutions do exist**. We know what they are. But they require major structural transformation and investment.

- And most of all, they require much determination and a change in attitude. We can only achieve this with a firm political commitment.
- **In the EU**, we are implementing policies to scale-up the implementation of SDG14.
- We are promoting the circular economy. We have limited the use of single-use plastics. And we have adopted stringent measures to protect biodiversity and to cut 55% of our emissions by 2030. .
- The principle of Maximum Sustainable Yield is enshrined in our common fisheries policy. As is our zero-tolerance policy towards illegal, unregulated and unreported fishing.
- We are also active in the negotiations on harmful subsidies and the conservation and protection of biodiversity in the High Seas.
- We have policies to protect the EU's marine and coastal waters and ensure better planning and use of maritime space.
- And as part of our Research and Innovation Policy, we adopted a Mission to "Restore our Ocean and Waters by 2030".
- The EU and its Member States do not intend to step back. Quite the contrary. This is why today we are tabling more than **50 voluntary commitments**, worth **around 7 billion euro**.
- These commitments reach far beyond the European continent, with concrete projects in developing countries and the EU's outermost regions.

- They demonstrate our commitment to supporting partner countries and regional organisations in reducing pressures on the ocean and protecting and sustainably using marine resources.
- In addition, we will invest up to 1 billion euro contributing to ocean and coastal biodiversity and climate, including the high seas.
- I would like to conclude by encouraging everyone - governments, civil society, academia, and the private sector to join forces.
- Let's step up and tackle these challenges - for the benefit of all humanity.
- Thank you for your attention.