

**NATIONAL STATEMENT BY THE  
PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF GHANA,  
NANA ADDO DANKWA AKUFO-ADDO,  
AT THE UN OCEAN CONFERENCE (UNOC  
2022), ON MONDAY, 27<sup>TH</sup> JUNE 2022, IN  
LISBON, PORTUGAL.**

UN Secretary-General,

Excellencies,

Distinguished Guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen

I thank the United Nations Secretary-General, His Excellency Antonio Guterres, for the invitation to Ghana and her President to be part of this important Summit, which is being co-chaired by the President of the Republic of Portugal, His

Excellency Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa, and the President of the Republic of Kenya, His Excellency Uhuru Kenyatta. Ghana is a coastal nation on the Atlantic in West Africa, with extensive marine resources, which generate direct livelihoods for a fishing community of some two million (2 million) people in an overall population of thirty-one million (31 million) people.

Excellencies, the Ocean has, historically, been a dependable provider of resources for the world and its people. It is the source of food and nutrition for more than three billion (3 billion) of

the world's population, and it acts as the lungs of the planet, producing fifty percent (50%) of the world's oxygen, and absorbing some twenty-five percent (25%) of carbon dioxide emissions that result from human activity. In addition, the Ocean provides support for the world's economy to the tune of US\$2.5 trillion dollars, the equivalent of four percent (4%) of the world's total gross added value.

Today, this invaluable asset of nature is under serious threat from pollution, biodiversity loss,

overfishing and over-exploitation. Its very existence is at grave risk.

Coming on the heels of the One Ocean Summit, which took place in February, in Brest, France, this conference provides a unique opportunity for us to invoke the awareness that was created in France to help ease the pressures humans are exerting on the Ocean.

I want to use this occasion to re-affirm Ghana's strong commitment and support for all ongoing efforts to protect the Ocean, particularly the fight

against the menace of plastic pollution and marine litter.

Indeed, in September last year, Ghana was joined by Ecuador, Germany and Vietnam to convene the Ministerial Conference on Plastic Pollution and Marine Litter in Geneva, with the able support of the UN Environment Programme (UNEP). The draft resolution that emerged from the Conference, through the welcome leadership of Rwanda and Peru, was tabled at UNEA 5.2 in Nairobi, and eventually adopted as UNEA Resolution 5/14 "End Plastic Pollution: Towards

an international legally binding instrument". Through the Inter-governmental Negotiation Committee (INC) that has been established by Resolution 5/14, the world now has the opportunity to negotiate an international legally-binding instrument on plastic pollution, especially in the marine environment.

Ghana also shares wholly in the provision of the New Plastics Economy, which advocates the need for a full life-cycle approach in addressing marine litter and microplastics. We support the New Plastics Economy, and pledge to sign on to the initiative when it is ready.

Excellencies, in the governance of the Ocean, Ghana has adopted a Marine Fisheries Management Plan, whose principal objective is “to protect marine habitat and its biodiversity, and to mitigate impacts of climate variability and climate change”. Ghana is also implementing a National Plan of Action (NPOA) to fight Illegal, Unregulated, and Unreported (IUU) fishing.

In furtherance of this, Ghana supports the ratification of the Cape Town Agreement on the Safety of Fishing Vessels. We believe that, once ratified, the Cape Town Agreement would

guarantee fisherfolk the same level of protection as seafarers, more than a century after the adoption of the first convention protecting the lives of seafarers at sea in 1914. There is only one year left to ensure the success of this Agreement, and Ghana joins other member-states in calling on all nations to ratify the Cape Town Agreement.

Excellencies, let us all commit to a greater course of action to support the attainment of SDG 14, which demands that we conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development. Let us all put our hands



to the wheel, and take up the challenge for the sake of our common humanity.

I thank you very much for your attention.