



REPUBLIC OF POLAND

PERMANENT MISSION TO THE UNITED NATIONS

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**2022 United Nations Conference
to Support the Implementation of Sustainable
Development Goal 14: Conserve and sustainably use
the oceans, seas and marine resources
for sustainable development**

Plenary session

**Statement by H.E. Mr. Krzysztof Szczerski, Permanent Representative
of the Republic of Poland to the United Nations in New York**

Lisbon, 29 June 2022

Excellencies,

Distinguished Delegates,

I would like to thank the organizers of the conference, the governments of Portugal and Kenya, for bringing together the world leaders, scientists and researchers, as well as civil society and private sector representatives to discuss the state of the world's oceans and seas and to foster a global vision of a more sustainable management of maritime ecosystems.

We are all acutely aware of the deteriorating condition of the world's oceans and seas. They are severely affected by human activity, threatened by maritime pollution, the depletion of fisheries and the loss of coastal habitats.

The well-being of every society is inextricably linked with the maritime environment that serves as a source of food, resources, and energy. The stakes are high and this conference is our call to action for every nation to focus on solutions.

We need to jointly develop effective international tools that contribute to the sustainable use, management and conservation of aquatic and maritime resources, the growth of a sustainable blue economy and a healthy and clean maritime environment.

Excellencies,

Distinguished Delegates,

Poland works closely with regional and international partners in implementing our national maritime strategy. As a signatory to the Helsinki Convention, Poland contributes to regional solutions towards fighting maritime pollution and responding to climate change challenges in the Baltic Sea region. The European Union's Integrated Maritime Policy is a prime example of the inter-sectoral approach to oceans and seas that all EU Members have developed over the years.

We are convinced that such regional initiatives can serve as a building block of a global action plan for oceans and seas.

Poland also actively supports the work of the UN system, including the International Maritime Organization and the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission, in the efforts towards the full realisation of SDG 14.

I would like to underline three key areas that are particularly important to Poland in the discussion about the state of the world's oceans and seas:

- First, we welcome the fact that the conference focuses on science-policy interface and innovative solutions to the challenges related to maritime ecosystems. Poland contributes to the global maritime and oceanic sciences - Polish scientists and academic institutions undertake numerous research projects in that field. Let me recall in this respect the Baltic Sea Action Plan, developed by the Helsinki Commission as a strategic tool to restore good environmental condition of the Baltic Sea by 2030, which incorporates the latest scientific knowledge and innovative management approaches.

Nonetheless, we are convinced that more could be done at a global scale in terms of scientific collaboration and research on chemical munitions deposited on sea floors, such as wrecks, conventional weapons and chemical weapons. One of the priorities for the Polish government is the development of a methodology to remove military contaminants submerged after World War II in the Baltic Sea, while taking into account the specificity of this reservoir.

Our scientists systematized the existing knowledge on the inventory of hazardous materials deposited in the Polish maritime areas in the Baltic Sea and reviewed the existing regulations in that regard. The task right now is to coordinate the

cooperation towards monitoring and neutralization of threats posed by dumped hazardous materials.

- Secondly, in response to the challenges posed by climate change, the seas and oceans can play a significant part of the global energy transition. Regionally, in the context of the Russian aggression against Ukraine, Europe has radically limited its dependence on the Russian fossil fuels.

The Polish government has ambitious plans for the development of the Baltic Sea offshore wind energy which will not only help reduce emissions but also drive innovations in the renewable energy industry. Offshore wind is one of the cornerstones of the EU energy and climate targets. In the environmental aspects, offshore wind farms can create places free from sea transport and fishing, giving the possibility to shelter marine mammals and birds, and to rebuild the underwater reef ecosystem. Regional and international cooperation in this field will be conducive to the implementation of climate-neutrality objectives.

- My third point relates to the urgency to fight marine pollution. We are very pleased with the launch of the international negotiations on a legally binding global agreement to combat plastic pollution. The support of the global community for this agreement during the United Nations Environment Assembly in Nairobi this year, was remarkable. We believe the agreement should promote action at all levels - global, regional and national - as well as enable countries to adopt implementation policies according to their national circumstances. We hope that this new instrument will address all stages of the plastics lifecycle, from product design to waste management. Poland is committed to an ambitious action in that regard.

Lastly, in the context of the Russian aggression against Ukraine let us not forget about the Nord Stream 2 pipeline that on top of exporting Russian geopolitical influence to Europe, has caused environmental

damage to the Baltic Sea, disturbed its seabed and marine habitats. Stopping this project is morally, politically and environmentally correct in the current circumstances.

As a conclusion, let me reiterate Poland's commitment to working at the multilateral fora to find solutions to protect the maritime environment, restore its biological diversity and devise better ways to use the oceans and seas in a sustainable manner.

As part of the European Union, we support all commitments announced by the EU at the conference, which will be financed from the Horizon Europe Programme, the European Maritime Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund, InvestEU and other EU programmes.

The blue agenda is our common future. We must accelerate our joint action to preserve the oceans and seas – they are our common good that binds all regions of the world.