

Your Excellencies, Distinguished delegations, ladies and gentlemen.

The Ocean is a vital source of life for humanity.

The Ocean has offered us with food for survival; opened itself for trades across borders; and inspired us to stretch our imagination from which various arts are created.

This ever-giving Ocean, however, now seems to have reached a critical juncture where its sustainability is put to a serious question.

Sea level rises, unusually high sea temperatures, and ocean acidification are seen as a main cause of abnormal weather conditions across the globe.

An enormous amount of marine debris has formed a trash vortex which is even named as the Great Pacific Garbage Patch.

Fish stock declines and coastal erosion are threatening the lives of hundreds of millions of people who rely on the ocean for survival.

Distinguished delegations,

With all these threats growing bigger than ever, it is clear that we no longer can afford a slow progress in our efforts to achieve the SDGs.

The Republic of Korea has committed itself to these joint endeavors,

responding to the call of the era.

Let me share some cases in point.

First, Korea established the Carbon Neutrality Road Map for Oceans and Fisheries 2050 last year, announcing its goal of becoming carbon negative, pushing beyond carbon neutrality.

A step towards this direction is scaling up investments.

On top of the development of ocean-based renewable energy sources such as tides, waves and currents, Korea plans to produce green hydrogen.

While working on advancement of low-carbon technologies for ships, Korea will spare no funds for zero-carbon shipping fuelled by green energy sources such as hydrogen and ammonia.

Korea has been continuously searching for oceans-based solutions that involve Blue Carbon at the core, and has also been applying of technologies that are relevant to the 4th Industrial Revolution to smart fish farms; fish processing plants that run on IoT; and smart observation and monitoring for marine and coastal disasters.

Second, the government of Korea will strengthen its leadership in preventing marine pollution both home and abroad.

We laid out an ambitious target of zero marine plastic by 2050, which will be acted upon through monitoring and management throughout the full lifecycle of marine plastic wastes.

Korea was a co-sponsor of the historic UN Environment Assembly Resolution to end plastic pollution and forge an internationally binding agreement by 2024, and declared participation in the New Plastics Economy Global Commitment.

I believe that the 7th International Marine Debris Conference, which will take place in Korea from September 19 this year, will serve as a tailwind for the global efforts to eliminate marine debris.

Third, We will keep sharing our experiences and technologies with our partners to continue mutual growth. Korea has been providing technologies and tools for sustainable aquaculture to developing states that experience resource declines due to overfishing and environmental degradation.

More is to be done with small island countries in the Pacific area where acidification is becoming ever severe to build the relevant tracking capacity while providing oceans-science based data and analyses.

Distinguished guests,

Sustainable Ocean is certainly a tremendously tall order, but our commitment is stronger than ever to achieve it.

Solidarity and cooperation are the keys to this achievement.

Thank you.