

Your Excellencies,
Ladies and gentlemen,

It is with pleasure that I am attending today the UN Ocean Conference. As a representative of a landlocked country, I am fully aware of our shared responsibility for the state of our planet's environment. The oft-used phrase „pollution knows no boundaries“ applies literally in the case of water.

I therefore welcome UN Resolution 5/14, adopted at UNEA 5 in March, in which we agreed to establish an intergovernmental negotiating committee with a mandate to create an international legally binding agreement to end plastic pollution.

Slovakia is also adopting legislation and measures aimed at water protection **at national level**. The most important national activity is the adoption of the **Water Plan of Slovakia**, which is the main planning document in the field of river basin management. In order to **prevent diffuse water pollution from agricultural activities**, which is washed down rivers to the sea, we have adopted a **National Action Plan for Plant Protection Products with the aim of** reducing the consumption of certain pesticides and increasing the control of their use by 2030.

By amending the Waste Act, we have adopted a set of measures **to reduce the consumption of certain single-use plastic products**. At the same time, we have focused on **setting up a consistent separate collection of plastics and sufficient capacity to recycle them**. An important activity **this year is the introduction of a deposit system for single-use plastic and aluminium beverage packaging**, with the aim, in particular, of reducing the amount of plastic bottles discarded freely in the nature, cleaning up the countryside and watercourses, and thus preventing transboundary pollution.

We recognise the importance of creating product design and sustainable production that does not put a strain on the environment and therefore we are working with government, private and the third sector to reflect the **principles of the circular economy across different sectors** in Slovakia.

I would like to emphasise that Slovakia is seeking **innovative solutions** to contribute to the achievement of Goal 14 of the 2030 Agenda. One example is the **water treatment plant model called the Eighth Continent** by the successful Slovak architect Lenka Petráková, which you can currently view in the „Knowledge Pavilion“. This station collects plastic debris from the water surface and converts it into recyclable material.

Your Excellencies,

Ladies and gentlemen,

Let me conclude by asking the same question that the Envoy for the Oceans asked some time ago about our post-pandemic behavioural change. Will we try to eat, travel, produce and buy more **sustainably**? Has the pandemic taught us a lesson? I believe it has. And I would be very happy if other leaders of land-locked countries would share what measures they have taken to ensure the conservation and sustainable development of the oceans.

Thank you.