

**2025 United Nations Conference to Support the Implementation of
Sustainable Development Goal 14 (Ocean Conference) - GENERAL
DEBATE - Nice, France 9.-13.06.2025.**

Statement by Estonia

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Honourable Secretary General, Co-Presidents, Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am deeply honoured to address the third United Nations conference to promote ocean sustainability. Let me start by thanking Governments of France and Costa Rica for their efforts in organizing this vitally important event. I would also like to extend my deepest gratitude to Secretary-General of the Conference Mr. Li Junhua and the hardworking staff of the United Nations Secretariat. On behalf of the Republic of Estonia I hereby confirm our full support to the objectives of this conference.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Estonia is a small maritime nation in North-Eastern Europe, located on the shores of the Baltic Sea. Estonia's population is only 1,3 million, but our coastline stretches over 3000 km (5 times longer than the land border), and includes 1500 islands. The maritime environment directly impacts our economy and well-being. Rising sea levels and extreme weather events are not abstract concerns – they are immediate realities that demand urgent action. Like Small Island Developing States and Least Developed Countries, we understand the acute threats posed by climate change and the critical importance of protecting our environment.

The sea is a core part of our national identity, and we take strong responsibility for protecting the marine environment. About 30% of our coastal and marine areas are already under protection, and we're preparing to extend this to our exclusive economic zone. We also aim to strengthen marine protection further by identifying new conservation measures in cooperation with our regional seas' organisation HELCOM.

I encourage others to follow this path – designating protected areas is one of the most effective ways to safeguard marine species and habitats.

To ensure evidence-based policymaking, we invest in marine research and rely on science and digital tools. As a small but digitally advanced country, we proudly contribute to international research – especially in ocean observation, monitoring, and technology development. For example, in Estonia, innovations like autonomous vessels, remote sensing, and data analysis help us better understand and protect the sea, enabling smarter, data-driven decisions. Estonia stands ready to share our knowledge and expertise and collaborate on initiatives that enhance cyber resilience and support digitalisation.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The seas and the oceans are more than just a natural resource or a route for commerce; they are symbols of human existence. Jean Cocteau, the versatile soul who lived here in Nice, found endless inspiration in the sea - its depth, mystery and movement. In a similar way, Jaan Kross, the great figure of Estonian literature, used the sea and water as symbols of the currents of history and human destiny. In Kross's works, the sea is a unifying force across ages and generations, along whose shores people are born and on whose waves, they seek their path. Between Cocteau's sunlit Mediterranean and Kross's wind-swept northern shores, the sea emerges as a connecting power that transcends geographical and cultural boundaries and reminds us of our shared roots and common journeys.

When we act together, we must aim for ambitious goals – ones that bring not just environmental, but also social and economic benefits.

Marine pollution, addressed in Sustainable Development Goal 14, has become one of the most urgent threats to our future. We have exceeded safe limits for nitrogen entering the sea, we're battling growing plastic pollution, and we continue to find toxic substances in seabed sediments and water.

To tackle this, we must look beyond traditional sources of pollution. More attention must be given to industrial hazardous substances and pharmaceutical residues. And when it comes to marine litter, we need to go beyond prevention and actively remove existing debris. Since the world's oceans form one interconnected system, global cooperation is the only effective way forward.

Oceans are also critical for regulating the climate. Their health depends on how seriously we take climate mitigation. Our country remains fully committed to the Paris Agreement and to multilateral cooperation. We are aiming for climate neutrality by 2050, and by 2030 plan to cover our domestic electricity consumption with renewables. As part of this, we are creating the Marine Greentech and Retrofit HUB – focused on modernizing ships and green technologies. This includes investment in green port infrastructure and smart logistics, aiming to lead by example in sustainable maritime transport with smart ports and green corridors.

People often ask: what can a small country do? We can do a lot – even if we can't solve global problems alone. What we can do is show how to act quickly, effectively, and, when possible, digitally – so others can learn from us.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

To conclude: we all depend on the ocean – for food, for livelihoods, for wellbeing. But we must also meet its needs. Let's continue working together to ensure the sustainable use and protection of our marine environment – for future generations, for the health of our oceans, and for the future of our planet.

I thank you!