



Excellencies, Delegates, Esteemed Colleagues,

Ocean Conservancy's Global Ghost Gear Initiative (GGGI) would like to extend its gratitude and congratulations to the co-hosts, Portugal and Kenya, for convening the international ocean community five years after the first UN Ocean Conference took place in New York and for the inclusive approach with perspectives from different public and private sector actors, from youth and from indigenous communities.

All of us here today are concerned by the most pressing priorities and actions needed to protect the health of our ocean and aquatic environments, including from the most harmful form of marine plastic pollution, lost and abandoned fishing gear.

We were delighted to see the outcome of UNEA 5.2 regarding the action against plastics through an international legally binding instrument, also referred to as the "plastics treaty", and were pleased to welcome the start of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee. To encourage all stakeholders to maintain the same level of ambition, we must consider plastic from sea-based sources in this process.

We applaud the recent decision of the Marine Environmental Protection Committee (MEPC) of the International Maritime Organization (IMO) that would make marking fishing gear mandatory, a strategy recommended by GGGI's Best Practice Framework for the Management of Fishing Gear and the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization's Voluntary Guidelines for the Marking of Fishing Gear. Although voluntary guidelines are an important preliminary step, mandatory measures are required to address the problem of abandoned, lost, or otherwise discarded fishing gear over the long-term.

Action from all sectors and actors is important if we are to achieve the 2030 Agenda for a Sustainable Future across all SDGs. Therefore, GGGI is proud to announce today that Walmart is joining our existing 132 member organizations and 20 member governments.

GGGI works with partners globally to conduct projects on a range of solutions including: collecting data to help build a reporting baseline and progress on the SDGs, removing gear from the ocean, recycling end-of-life gear, testing innovative technologies to improve gear tracking and prevent future gear loss, and building local capacity to implement tailored best practices and solutions on the ground.

Humanity's well-being is intrinsically linked to the health and productivity of the ocean. If we look after the ocean, it will look after us with generosity.

Thank you for this opportunity today. The Global Ghost Gear Initiative looks forward to continuing to support the successful delivery of SDG 14 and the 2030 Agenda for a Sustainable Future.

Ingrid Giskes

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