

**Under Secretary-General Grete Faremo, UNOPS  
UN Ocean Conference  
Plenary  
Friday, 9 June 2017**

Thank you President.

As you said, my name is Grete Faremo and I am the executive director of the UN Office for Project Services – UNOPS. And for those you who do not know us so well, UNOPS is the operational arm of the UN System. We implement projects at the request of other entities of the UN, for governments, donors as well as program countries, organizations, institutions and the private sector.

This week, we have taken careful note of the needs and aspiration which have been expressed in the statements and communications of Member States and other partners. And we conclude that we are a part of the solution.

A partner survey we conducted recently showed that our services are required across all the sustainable development goals, also - indeed - goal 14.

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At this conference we have been particularly focusing on the goal dealing with marine pollution.

We all knew already that 80 percent of marine pollution originates on land.

It is on land that UNOPS has built water treatment facilities, or sewage systems. And it suffices to say this once – every new onshore infrastructure installation is probably more environmentally benign than old ones!

Problems addressed here this week can be resolved by implementing the right projects. Let me mention a couple of examples we already have acted on.

The first from Sri Lanka where we implemented a project on behalf of the European Union's Environmental Remediation Programme to improve solid-waste management, urban surface water drainage and environmental restoration.

Through the construction of seven landfills, five recycling centers, five compost facilities and one waste transfer station, UNOPS worked with local authorities towards a more sustainable solution for solid-waste management.

With support from the EU, measures were also taken to ensure the long-term financial viability of the project, including the introduction of a user fee for waste collection and the establishment of marketing channels to sell compost produced from collected waste.

Another example: In Nicaragua, UNOPS worked with 260 schools within five communities with funding from the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation.



With the goal of bringing awareness to younger generations about water and environmental stability, our project managers and local community members came up with the idea of “El Circo del agua - the Water Circus”.

Through play and education, issues related to water were brought to a younger audience.

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We focus the impact of our work.

Amongst the strongest measures of our impact, are the jobs we create.

Over the course of 2016, UNOPS-supported projects created more than 3 million days of paid work for local people.

This is up from 2.2 million days reported the year before.

We give greater importance to how to quantify the knowledge we provide through our expertise.

In 2016 we provided over 50,000 days of technical assistance to our partners, up from 44,000 in 2015.

We procured more than 900 million dollars' worth of goods and services last year.

More than \$400 million dollars of the 900, came from local suppliers – those based in the same country as the need.

This directly supports your local economies.

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The work ahead of us is hard and we will need more awareness to succeed. We can all do something.

One particular take-away this week has been that we all can stop our use of plastic straws. Americans alone throw away 500 million plastic straws every day many of which will end up in the belly of a whale.

And companies can begin committing to reducing plastics and forging new partnerships that work to ensure the sustainable development of life below the sea.

We need campaigns. We need policies. We need investments on-shore to help protect the oceans.

UNOPS is ready to partner in initiatives that help us restore the vast oceans and life on earth.