

## **UN Ocean Conference – Plenary Debate – Friday, 9 June 2017**

### ***Global Ghost Gear Initiative (GGGI) Intervention, Ms. Ingrid Giskes, World Animal Protection:***

Dear Co-presidents, your excellency's, delegates, colleagues,

Each and every year we, collectively, abandon, loose or otherwise discard 6 to 8 hundred tonnes of fishing gear in our oceans. Once lost, this fishing gear becomes ghost fishing gear with devastating impacts on our marine environment, on our marine life and on the people that depend on our oceans for their livelihood

Ghost fishing gear makes up one tenth of all marine debris yet it is, by far, the deadliest form of marine debris. Ghost fishing gear is 4 times more likely to impact on marine life, through entanglement, than all other forms of marine debris combined.

Ghost fishing gear is directly responsible for an estimated 10 percent decline in fish stock levels globally. It is the second most dominant contributing cause of fish stock decline after overfishing, and directly impacting on global food security and the livelihoods of coastal communities.

Ghost fishing gear, if measured by weight, accounts for over half of all macro plastics in our oceans today and, unless action is taken, will eventually break down into micro-plastics and enter into the marine animal and, eventually, the human food chain.

However, if we can take action now, and we can be effective in reversing the ghost gear impacts if we act decisively and collectively.

The Global Ghost Gear Initiative is a multi-stakeholder public-private partnership that was launched in 2015, and works to take real action, both practically and through policy initiatives, to prevent and reduce ghost gear, and create pathways for end-of-life fishing gear to contribute to sustainable economically viable circular economy initiatives.

Our aim is that, by 2030, the total amount of gear lost or abandoned in our ocean is smaller than the total amount of ghost gear that is recovered, re-used or recycled on an annual basis so that over time we can substantially reduce and eventually eliminate this threat to our ocean and our future.

If we, together with you, succeed in this, we will directly and positively impact on 6 out of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals, at least 3 of the targets under goal 14 and contribute to 12 out of the 22 areas for action that are identified in the draft 'Call for Action'. The draft Call for Action also includes a specific reference to accelerate action on lost and abandoned fishing gear; and through the Global Ghost Gear Initiative we can do exactly that.

The UN Ocean Conference this week aims to instill a sense of momentum behind the implementation of SDG 14 and identify the partnerships that are necessary to achieve its targets. The draft 'Call for Action' calls on all stakeholders to take urgent action and strengthen effective and transparent multi-stakeholder partnerships. The Global Ghost Gear Initiative offers an opportunity to do just that and we hope that you'll join us, together with the 8 countries that signed on this week, so that together we can contribute to substantially reduce marine pollution, make fisheries sustainable again and secure clean and healthy oceans for our future.

Thank you.