

Congratulatory Remarks by Vice Minister Kim Yangsoo of Oceans & Fisheries

Meeting of the Communities of Ocean Action

30 May 2019

Excellencies, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

It is indeed my great pleasure to meet you all at this event.

I am Vice Minister Kim Yangsoo of Oceans and Fisheries of the Republic of Korea.

I would like to begin by extending my heartfelt gratitude to the honorable guests who have come a long way out of their busy schedules.

Mr. 류젠민, UN Under Secretary General for Economic & Social Affairs;

Mr. Peter Thomson, UN Secretary General's Special Envoy for the Ocean;

Your Excellency Ambassadors and representatives from all corners of the globe;

Vice Mayor 허종식 of 인천 Metropolitan City; and other distinguished guests home and abroad,

I would like to deeply appreciate your presence and also warmly congratulate on hosting the Meeting of the Communities of Ocean Action or COAs on behalf of the government of the Republic of Korea.

Excellencies, members of the COAs and distinguished guests,

Much do we know that members from the 9 Communities have all been brought here to share best practices and explore inspirational ideas on UN Sustainable Development Goal 14 out of 17 SDGs, namely "Conserve & sustainably use the ocean, sea and marine resources" under the aptly chosen theme of "From Commitments to Action: Implementing SDG 14".

As the common heritage of mankind, the oceans are the one borrowed from our future generation, not the one we inherit from our ancestors.

Unfortunately, however, we are now facing with the oceans in distress. In light of the trans-boundary nature of this serious issue, no single country in the world can be immune; it requires the global collective action.

This is a defining challenge for our generation. But we must not give up or lose hope. In this vein, this meeting for discussions on healthier and cleaner oceans by all stake-

holders will be just one small step but one great leap for mankind. It is also timely and meaningful only with the fact that renowned experts come here together driven by the UN to tackle the challenge.

I would like to take this opportunity to make one request for this meeting as a person who cares deeply about the oceans.

The discussions today hopefully take us to more practical measures to be implemented easily.

As the saying goes “Easier said than done” or “Small things add up”, it is just a small step, not commitment itself, that puts us into action to move forward and reach the better place.

Looking forward to your in-depth and constructive discussions, let me introduce the policies of Ministry of Oceans & Fisheries of the Republic of Korea taking charge of the integrated administration over the oceans, sea and marine resources.

Subjects addressed by the 9 Communities generally correspond to the mandates of my ministry, namely implementation of international law; marine & coastal ecosystems management; marine pollution & ocean acidification prevention; and blue economy & sustainable fisheries.

First, my ministry is implementing plenty of effective projects for marine pollution prevention.

With well-planned management of land-borne pollution sources like wastewater discharged, we have taken some counter-measures by tightening control of emissions from vessels and ports.

The issue of marine debris, one of the globally intractable problems, will completely be addressed by the measures improving prevention and buy-back schemes targeting up to 30% reduction by 2022 and 50% by 2030.

Reframing the ecological value of the oceans is a timely remainder of their healthier conditions, leading my ministry to conservation-driven policy like expanding the Marine Protected Areas and getting mud-flats recovered. This policy will develop further in association with marine spatial planning & management scheme.

We have also redoubled our efforts to make fisheries more sustainable with a shift of the focus into resource management by mandatory implementing Total Allowable Catch scheme or TAC; industrial reform in fishing; and tightened regulations to fight against illegal fishing.

Capacity building of developing countries is another priority of my ministry. On 14 May, it is crystalized into signing the MOU on the pilot programme of the World Fisheries University that will be jointly implemented with the FAO. The programme focuses on sustainable fisheries and educational support for developing countries.

Honorable members of the COAs and distinguished guests,

Tomorrow, the last day of May, marks the 24th anniversary of the National Oceans Day of Korea, one of the greatest events for the oceans.

My government has annually commemorated the day since 1996 to raise the public awareness of the roles and value of the oceans.

This year's ceremony will be held in 울산, another marine city in southeastern region, with the slogan "Our Dream & Future – Come with the Sea". Also, a new national campaign named "Marine Plastic Zero" will be announced there.

It would be grateful if you pay your special attention to the all-out efforts of my ministry to prevent plastic debris from marine entry, which can become a serious threat to the ecosystem and human eventually.

Last but not least, I would like to have an unmissable comment on the news just yesterday I received. Let me congratulate USG 류젠민 on his appointment as Secretary General of the 2020 UN Ocean Conference, waiting for the world's eyes in Lisbon. I am convinced that his outstanding leadership will make the Conference successful.

I will bring my remarks to a close by expressing my sincere congratulations once again on the Meeting of the COAs and my dearest wish you every success & happiness in all of your future work.

Thank you.