

## Oceans and Seas

Mr. Co-Chair,

Please allow me to recall that the world's oceans, seas and coastal areas are a vital component of our global life support system. The oceans produce 70% of our oxygen, absorb and re-distribute heat around the world, and dominate the world's weather systems. We eat their bounty, trade across their surface, and mine their floors for energy and minerals.

Unsustainable practices, inequitable management systems, and management and monitoring constraints threaten ocean health and critically limit social and economic prosperity for many coastal and island nations. Inadequate spatial planning will lead to increased conflict over space and resources. Climate change impacts add further pressure to the cumulative impacts on oceans. Critical action is needed to ensure our oceans are healthy and well managed, including in the context of climate change.

I would like to put on record that we – Poland and Romania - are among those of the view that oceans and seas should represent a stand-alone goal. Nevertheless, we are open to also discussing ways and means for addressing ocean-related issues in a cross-cutting manner under different SDGs. Only so we can achieve the implementation of the MDG7, the translation into practice of the several ocean-related goals provided for in the Rio+20 outcome document. We strongly believe that the most important dimension of a goal on oceans and seas is to reduce / eliminate pollution of the seas and oceans and to protect marine ecosystems and biodiversity, by returning to the quality of the marine environment, existing in the year 1950.

To this aim, we consider that the following targets need to be integrated in the following framework:

- Rebuilding and restoring the marine ecosystems, including marine biodiversity and fish stocks, at healthy and resilient levels;
- Reducing pollution from land-based sources and ships (including oil platforms and exploitation of mineral resources);
- Protecting and restoring the coastal and marine areas critical to food security and livelihoods through effectively and equitably managed systems of marine protected areas (MPAs);
- Sustainable fisheries which integrate the regenerative capacity of stocks, the endangered species enhanced protection and the reduction of risks of bycatch of certain species (dolphins);

- Managing and controlling all types of maritime uses and assessing, understanding and mitigating all types of marine environmental impacts(including the effects of climate change and other types of land-based pollution).

Mr. Co-Chair,

I will now turn to the issue of **forests and biodiversity**:

Forest are vital to achieving sustainable development. As noted by the Rio+20 report, the wide range of forest products and services provide solutions for addressing many development challenges including: **poverty eradication**, environmental sustainability, food security, agriculture, energy, clean water, watershed protection, biodiversity conservation, combating desertification, mitigation and adaptation to climate.

The need for sustaining the multiple roles and functions of forests, and for enhancing their protection, sustainable management and conservation has been already recognized in different internationally agreed goals and processes. Apart from Millennium Development Goal 7 (ensuring environmental sustainability) and Non-Legally Binding Instrument On Forests, we need to add the Aichi-targets developed within the Convention on Biological Diversity, as well as the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. During the last UNFCCC Conference in Warsaw (COP19) Parties agreed a set of decisions on ways to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from deforestation and the degradation of forests (so-called REDD+ initiative backed by pledges of 280 million dollars).

Forests are vital for advancing **green economies** and green industries, which in turn can promote sustainable forest management. The green economy concept as agreed during Rio+20 Conference is considered a major tool for achieving sustainable development and eradicating poverty.

Mr. Co-Chair,

At this stage in the process our approach would be **to acknowledge an intense and mutually supportive relation between forests and SDGs** and to examine thoroughly all benefits and possible targets for having forests either spread over several goals or being included under a cross-cutting goal e.g. related to natural resources that allows to encompass other issues such as land, energy, biodiversity, water and targets on poverty reduction and economic development of rural population, ecosystem resilience and restoration and sustainable agriculture.

Mr. Co-chair,

The role of the **biodiversity**, the variety of life on Earth, is critical. It contributes directly to human well-being in many ways, as it provides basis goods: food, fiber, fuel and medicines. It is important to ecosystem functions, water purification and supply, pollination, regulation of pests and diseases, soil fertility and genetic diversity. The benefits of biodiversity are important for all people and some benefits in particular for the poor people, vulnerable groups and indigenous people as they are directly dependent on ecosystems, not only as a source of food and nutrition or traditional plant – based medicines, but also as buffers against natural hazards, enhancing natural resilience and reducing disaster risks.

The SDGs framework will need to include concrete targets on the protection of ecosystems and endangered species to fulfill the provisions of the conventions on biodiversity, in particular the Convention on the Protection of Biodiversity and the Aichi targets. Specific targets could aim at reducing illegal wildlife trade, which is one of the biggest pressures on natural ecosystems.

On a practical note, addressing biodiversity in the catalogue of SDGs could be done in various ways:

- Within an overarching goal on poverty eradication,
- Within goals related to food security and nutrition, water, clean energy or access to medicines,
- Within goals related to protection of ecosystems, including land, forests and oceans,
- Within goals related to less tangible aspects as utilization and conservation of biodiversity, safeguarding ecosystems to achieve sustainable development (education, equality, gender equity, governance, participation and human rights).

Thank you very much.