

Estonian Statement

2020 UN Conference to Support the Implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14:

Preparatory meeting, 04-05 February 2020

Elements for the Interactive Dialogues

Thank you, co-facilitators,

Estonia aligns itself with the statement made by the EU and its Member States.

We see many connections in the first and third dialogue as marine pollution and ocean acidification can have a common cause. We do agree that land-sea interaction has to be covered in depth in both of these dialogues. Today our biggest concerns are the increase in nutrient loads and the amounts of hazardous substances found in sea, leftovers from pharmaceuticals that continue to affect the life in sea and marine litter and debris found at the sea bottom, in water column and on our coasts. Regionally, for the Baltic Sea, **the main and most urgent problem is the eutrophication.**

Focusing only on environmental and climate policies is not sufficient to safeguard the sustainability of oceans. We need to take a broader, more systematic and integrated approach. It is important **to look at the bigger picture and the interplay between different policies**, eg. transport, energy, industry, agriculture – they all affect climate and thus also the marine environment. Sustainable consumption and economy, eco-efficient transport, promotion of renewable energy, and support for organic and small-scale agriculture – all these measures help to protect the oceans from the adverse consequences of climate change.

Adding to these, **forestry could be an essential economic driver** that also has a significant role to play in nutrient circulation or pollution generation. Forests with their flora hold a huge amount of nutrients and clearcutting forests releases these nutrients from the soil to ditches, rivers and eventually to the oceans. Sustainable management of our forests plays a significant role in protecting our oceans and therefore should be covered within these dialogues.

Managing, protecting, conserving and restoring marine ecosystems has a huge impact on the climate crisis we are facing and science has a vital role to play (also, the themes of dialogue five and six cover these issues). Oceans contain green energy sources that we have not yet learned to utilize to the best possible extent. Innovation towards energy from waves and new solutions for offshore wind parks that can be built in deep seas, where they do not harm marine environment, is needed.

As for the involvement of local communities and youth, we believe, that increasing public knowledge about the oceans, about how they affect us and how we benefit from them is the key to changing people`s behaviour. Changing people`s behaviour has the biggest impact in achieving the sustainable development goals.

We believe, that public knowledge and caring can be improved by involving citizen science and other hands-on actions to environmental programs globally. Raising awareness about the life below water is a challenge that needs to be addressed in the dialogues as well.

Thank you!