



Thank you Mr Chair

I will start by thanking Mr Ricardo Serrão Santos for inviting us all to Cascais for this important ministerial meeting of the OSPAR Convention.

The meeting location here at the Palácio da Cidadela [Palace of Citadel] is just stunning and I must say that I am pleased that the meeting is held physically here in Portugal and not online.

I would also like to thank the chair of OSPAR Mr Richard Cronin and the OSPAR secretariat for all the work done leading up to this ministerial meeting and for guiding us through the day.

A day that I have been looking very much forward to.

I am proud to be here today participating in the fourth ministerial meeting in the OSPAR convention for the protection of the marine environment of the north east Atlantic – one of the leading organizations on collaboration around the protection of our ocean.

Right now, our Ocean is facing many challenges; Biodiversity loss, climate changes and pollution being three of the major ones.

And these are not easy challenges to tackle. However, we have no choice - we have to act!



Protecting the marine environment against these challenges is a key priority for The Kingdom of Denmark.

Halting the dramatic loss of biodiversity, and mitigating the increasing threats from climate change are the great challenges of our time.

Across the world, we are facing the threat of rising sea temperatures and increasing acidification of the ocean environment – off-setting the delicate balances of marine life that we for generations have thought to be everlasting.

Especially in the Arctic we are right now witnesses to the direct consequences of climate change and the harmful effects it has on the biodiversity and the environment in the area.

It is important that we through collaboration with the Arctic Council protect the Arctic Marine Environment.

In this regard, I would like to underline the important work ongoing in the Arctic Council - such as focus on invasive species, monitoring of biodiversity and the effects of climate change, OECM and marine litter. We support a close collaboration between OSPAR and the Arctic council.

The climate crisis and the biodiversity crisis are interlinked.

In order to create a more green and sustainable future it is, therefore, crucial that we look into nature-based solutions and



acknowledge that healthy and resilient oceans benefits more than the oceans themselves – also the large natural carbon storage capacity in healthy oceans is needed to combat climate changes.

Internationally, The Kingdom of Denmark seeks the conclusion of an ambitious legally binding instrument on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction.

We know that marine protected areas not only increases the adaptation and resilience of species and habitats in response to climate change.

Such protection also strengthens the livelihoods of coastal communities, through healthier fish stocks and a higher level of ecosystem tourism.

OSPAR plays a crucial role in the protection of the marine biodiversity and ecosystems by designating an effectively managed network of marine protected areas, by taking actions to reach and maintain healthy populations and habitats and by sharing our knowledge.

There are also ongoing efforts to protect the oceans under for example the Convention on Biological Diversity and the International Maritime Organizations.



We need to strengthen our collaboration and together initiate strong actions for the oceans, in order to protect and conserve them.

For The Kingdom of Denmark, it is important that the ocean, biodiversity and climate nexus is incorporated by all relevant international and regional organisations to achieve synergies between organisations.

Plastic pollution is another problem that continues to fill our oceans, and is visible everywhere in our environment.

It is a threat to our wildlife – to seabirds and sea turtles.

Combatting marine litter is a key priority for The Kingdom of Denmark, and we support the ambitious targets and objectives of the new OSPAR strategy to combat marine litter.

OSPAR is a pioneer in the area of marine litter and is an excellent example of how a regional cooperation can lead to ambitious policies, thus influencing both EU and global action.

Marine litter has a strong transboundary component. We especially experience this along our Danish west coast and on the beaches in the Skagerrak.



Nylon threads from the dolly ropes on beam trawls are everywhere – also in the stomachs of fish.

We must do better. And we need to move away from unsustainable fishing methods that pollute our oceans with marine litter.

Globally the problem of marine litter is unfortunately increasing and it is a key priority for my government, that we strengthen the global governance, so we can address this urgent challenge.

The Kingdom of Denmark therefore support and actively work for an international legally binding instrument to address the entire life-cycle of plastic and prevent plastic pollution. We are pleased to see that all the OSPAR contracting parties support this goal as well.

The upcoming COP15 of the Convention on Biological Diversity will be a landmark and will set the ambition and framework for the global effort to combat biodiversity loss towards 2030.

We need an ambitious and effective Global Biodiversity Framework and agreement for our planet, societies and future generations.

I hope – and I believe - that we can reach ambitious agreement here in OSPAR and globally at CBD COP15. Agreements that will underline the importance of the ocean, biodiversity and climate nexus.

I look forward to the discussions today.



Thank you.