

Ympäristö- ja ilmastoministeri Sari Multalan esittämä Suomen kansallinen puheenvuoro YK:n valtamerikokouksessa Nizzassa 10.6.2026

Excellencies, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen, dear friends of the ocean,

It is a great honor for me to speak on behalf of Finland at this event, where we come together with a shared purpose: to protect the ocean. The possibility to contribute to ocean protection is highly meaningful to me at a personal level, since I have sailed most of the world's seas as a part of the Finnish Olympic sailing team, and I have a very personal relationship with the ocean.

Ocean is facing destructive consequences of the triple planetary crises of climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution. We as humans have overexploited many of the natural resources of the ocean, and unfortunately, still continue to do so.

This leads me to believe that we need to be extremely cautious when exploring new possible means of exploitation. Here I'm thinking, in particular, of the minerals of the deep seabed. Finland continues to support a precautionary pause on deep seabed mining, and encourages others to do the same.

Finland has also strongly advocated for an ambitious treaty to protect the high seas of the world, the enormous ocean areas which have remained underregulated for far too long. We are proud to announce that Finland is among those countries who have already finalized their national ratification of the BBNJ Agreement.

At the same time, we must address one of the most visible and pervasive threats to our oceans: plastic pollution. Finland remains committed to the development of a legally binding global plastics treaty, which must be ambitious, inclusive, and cover the entire life cycle of plastics – from production and design to waste management and reuse.

In addition to our strong commitment towards multilateralism and global cooperation, we are a proud host to the Baltic Marine Environment Protection Commission HELCOM, and we wish to highlight the important work done at regional level. The Baltic Sea is among the most vulnerable and troubled sea areas in the world, but through science-based policymaking we have begun to

reverse some of the damage. Our experience has taught us that many solutions to achieve healthier seas are based on measures done on land.

To give some examples, in Finland we have a long tradition in advanced waste water system and we are making progress in helping the farmers in keeping the nutrients in the fields and enhancing the use of recycled fertilizers.

In order to take powerful action to increase the well-being of the seas, we need powerful science. Finland has long invested in ocean observation, data sharing and science-policy dialogue, to support evidence-based decisions. We welcome global efforts and initiatives in this regard.

I would like to end my statement by emphasizing that ocean issues are in fact planetary issues. They interlink with questions of peace and stability, which are now increasingly prominent topics also for us Arctic countries. Due to accelerating climate change, and due to the current geopolitical situation, Arctic issues are, in fact, global issues.

Let us act with this understanding in mind – with urgency, unity, and determination.

Thank you.