

Excellencies,

Friends,

[In relation to what has been stated about the situation in Gaza, I would like to refute any allegation that Israel is committing genocide in Gaza. Israel has the right to defend itself. While doing that, Israel has, of course, to adhere to the principles of international humanitarian law and must protect civilian lives.]

We are meeting at challenging times. Geopolitical tensions and mistrust are on the rise. Environmental and nature protection are facing severe backlashes. At the same time, people and planet are under unprecedented stress from climate change, ecosystem loss and pollution. According to this year's Global Risks Report presented in Davos, over a period of 10 years, 5 out of 10 major global risks are directly related to environmental degradation.

It is our task, at UNEA, to oppose this contradiction. It is our task and joint responsibility to uphold multilateralism in our search for common solutions. It is our task to tackle environmental problems to secure our future.

[Wofür setzt sich Deutschland besonders ein?]

We should prioritise solutions that have a systemic impact across different sectors, including nature-based solutions. To give you three examples:

First, the sustainable use of our water resources.

Water is the very foundation of life on earth. It is high time to make progress on the action agenda agreed at the UN Water Conference. Last year we adopted a National Water Strategy. Our goal is to restore a semi-natural water balance and make the water sector climate resilient.

Second, sustainable chemicals management.

Hazardous chemicals still threaten peoples' health and the environment. In Bonn, we adopted a new Global Framework on Chemicals. It is now very important that UNEP continues and increases its efforts and that it can strive to identify further resources. Germany has contributed 20 million euros to the new GFC Fund. I call on other countries and companies to follow our example.

Third, our fight against plastic pollution.

Plastic not only threatens wildlife and the environment: According to recent studies, microplastic in human bodies causes serious health risks. Let us join forces and finalise a binding and ambitious Plastics Treaty covering the full life-cycle by the end of this year.

[Abschluss]

UNEA is *the* platform for developing common solutions to our planet's greatest crises. Let's work together for the future of people and planet. Let us send a loud and clear message to the UN Summit of the Future in September and beyond.

Thank you.