

Opening Statement from NORWAY

The Minister of Climate and Environment, Mr. Sveinung Rotevatn

(speaker no 53)

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I thank the Government of Japan for hosting the Congress. We welcome the gathering of policy-makers, practitioners, academia, intergovernmental organizations and civil society.

We comment the Japanese Permanent Mission in Vienna for tireless efforts leading negotiations on the political declaration.

In the Declaration, we have expressed our deep concern that crime is becoming increasingly transnational, organized and complex with increasing use of new technologies. We have also reiterated that States are responsible to protect and promote all human rights in our effort to prevent and combat crime.

Dear Colleagues,

As Minister of Climate and Environment, I would like to focus on environmental crime. It represents the third largest illegal economy globally.

Environmental crime has devastating effects on global biodiversity and climate, human health, peace and security. We must fight environmental crime to be able to reach the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

Environmental crime is linked with other kinds of crime – such as financial crimes, illicit trafficking in drugs and firearms, human trafficking and modern slavery. Environmental crime is used to finance terrorism and organised crime, such as the mafia. To be able to prevent and combat environmental crime, we need to address corruption and money laundering. In many countries, environmental crime results in massive loss of revenue from natural resources, taxes and customs. Such lost revenue is conducive towards poverty and inequality, and it undermines democratic institutions.

Illegal logging is the most profitable form of environmental crime. Norway has several partnerships with rainforest countries to reduce climate gas emissions from deforestation, which includes support to fight illegal deforestation. We also support the UNODC, INTERPOL and RHIPTO to work with national governments, a program that has demonstrated excellent results.

Dear Colleagues,

Those who uncover environmental crime, including indigenous peoples, activists and journalists, play a vital role in exposing all forms of organized crime. Countries must strengthen their commitment to protect them.

Let us all strive to fulfill the commitments in the declaration that will be the outcome from this meeting – an important road map for the coming years.

With this, I wish you a very successful meeting and I encourage us all to strengthen our efforts to end environmental crime, for a better future for all.