

Ladies and gentlemen,

Today, I would like to draw your attention to a critical issue affecting our planet: ocean pollution. This complex problem involves several pollutants, with plastic waste being the most pervasive. Each year, an estimated 8 million metric tons of plastic enter our oceans, largely due to inadequate waste management practices.

One significant component of this issue is microplastics, which are tiny plastic fragments measuring less than 5 millimeters in diameter. These microplastics originate from larger plastic debris that breaks down over time and are widespread in marine environments. Research has indicated that these particles are ingested by marine life, leading to adverse health effects and bioaccumulation in the food chain, which can also impact human health.

Another major contributor to ocean pollution is chemical contaminants, including oil spills, industrial discharges, and agricultural runoff. For instance, oil spills coat marine organisms in a thick sludge, affecting their buoyancy, reproduction, and overall survival rates. Additionally, runoff containing pesticides and fertilizers leads to nutrient pollution, fostering harmful algal blooms that deplete oxygen levels and create dead zones.

To address these challenges, several strategies are being implemented. Waste reduction efforts, such as bans on single-use plastics, aim to minimize plastic pollution at its source. Furthermore, advancements in cleaning technologies, such as seabed vacuum systems and autonomous drones, are enhancing our ability to remove existing debris from the marine environment.

In conclusion, tackling ocean pollution requires a multi-faceted approach involving policy changes, technological innovations, and public awareness campaigns. By committing to these actions, we can protect marine ecosystems and ensure the long-term health of our oceans.

Thank you.