

A Concerted Effort to Beating Ocean Plastic Pollution

A Speech Delivered by Her Excellency, Betty Anyanwu-Akeredolu at the Lunch of the First Africa Mundus Maris Library at Staff Secondary School, FUTA on the 14th of June, 2018.

Protocols...

Ladies and gentlemen, from time immemorial humans have always sought innovative ways to solving some of the world's problem through astonishing inventions. In an attempt to have a container and packaging material that is easy to produce, versatile and water resistant, we introduced plastic to our world. This exciting invention called Plastic, which is most commonly derived from petrochemicals, transformed the packaging industry and immediately replaced more natural materials like wood, stone, metal and glass due to its durability, versatility and low cost of production. Now, durability; the very feature that makes plastic the wonder material we use for virtually everything is the same feature that makes it perhaps the most harmful trash, dumped by mariners and sea-goers in sea; threatening both human and marine life existence.

Every day, more and more plastic are accumulating in our oceans posing severe threat to marine life and, if care is not taken, may lead to man's extinction. Fishes, Seabirds, Sea turtles and marine mammals are terribly affected by plastic pollution; however, they do not bear the burden alone. Humans are also at great risk of digesting toxic chemicals while consuming fishes or other marine animals that have digested plastic debris. It is however sad to know that a high proportion of fishes in our markets have plastic in their guts, mostly in the form of plastic microfibers. This is indeed a danger sign to mankind.

To keep the marine life and ourselves alive, there is need to take resolute steps to address plastic pollution both on land and sea. The solution to plastic pollution lies in our packaging choice and preferred liquid container. It's about time we shifted our thoughts from plastic to

paper or fibre bags as the appropriate package material while making glass bottles and cans our preferred liquid container. We know! Taking plastic out of our planet completely might be a huge challenge, therefore, we should ensure to reduce plastic usage, reuse it, and support recycle. Hence, we must make concerted effort to create effective awareness on plastic reduction, reuse and recycle while promoting glass bottles, paper and healthy fibre bags in the place of plastic.

Ladies and gentlemen, I feel very excited to be a part of the lunch of Africa's first Mundus Maris Library here in staff secondary school FUTA. As some of you may know, I have a strong background in aquaculture and I always pride myself on my skills and passion for aquaculture. Let me state it here that "I am a proud practicing fish farmer". My love for marine life makes me share similar sentiment with Mundus Maris in promoting sea restoration, conservation and sustainable use. Indeed, Mundus Maris has distinguished herself to be an active voice in our world today; calling for the sustenance of marine life. It must become clear to everyone, male and female, young and old; that our existence hangs in the balance. Now is the time to join forces together and form an indomitable coalition, relentlessly advocating for ocean conservation that will ensure a suitable environment for marine life preservation. I am truly glad that Mundus Maris is taking the lead in this regard, but we must all support this cause to win the battle against ocean plastic pollution.

Thank you.