



#YOUTH2030

2022 ECOSOC Youth Forum

COVID-19 recovery: Youth taking action for a sustainable future

19 and 20 April 2022

Concept Note

Thematic Breakout Session: LIFE BELOW WATER AND YOUTH: CONNECTING GENERATIONS TO PROTECT OUR OCEAN – SDG 14

Virtual

1:30-3:00 p.m. (EST), 19 April 2022

IDENTIFICATION	
SDG/theme or Region	SDG 14-Life below water
Session title as per official EYF programme	LIFE BELOW WATER AND YOUTH: CONNECTING GENERATIONS TO PROTECT OUR OCEAN – SDG 14
Session co-leads	UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Oceans Youth Constituency of the Major Group of Children and Youth
Session co-organizers	UNEP, UN Global Compact
BACKGROUND & KEY ISSUES	
<p>The Ocean covers 70 percent of the Earth’s surface, is the planet’s largest biosphere, and is home to up to 80 percent of all life in the world. It generates 50 percent of the oxygen we need, and as the largest carbon sink it absorbs 25 percent of all carbon dioxide emissions and captures 90 percent of the additional heat generated from those emissions. The Ocean nurtures vast biodiversity and produces food, jobs, mineral and energy resources needed for life on the planet to survive and thrive. At the same time, the Ocean is under unprecedented pressure as a result of human activities. Urgent action is required to protect the health of the Ocean from threats posed by growing populations, increasing pollution, over-exploitation, climate change, food insecurity and diminishing biodiversity.</p>	

2022 is a critical year for the Ocean. Convened by the United Nations General Assembly and co-hosted by the Governments of Kenya and Portugal, the “United Nations Conference to Support the Implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14: Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development” will be held from 27 June to 1 July in Lisbon, Portugal, under the overarching theme: “Scaling up ocean action based on science and innovation for the implementation of Goal 14: stocktaking, partnerships and solutions”. SDG 14 will also be under in-depth review at the 2022 High Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) to be convened under the auspices of the ECOSOC from 5 to 15 July 2022. In addition, several other key UN intergovernmental processes unfolding this year will have a direct impact on the Ocean and its well-being, including the resumed session of the fifth UN Environment Assembly that took place from 28 February to 2 March that decided to forge a legally binding agreement; the Special Session of the UN Environment Assembly UNEP@50 held from 3 to 4 March where the commitment to environment cooperation was affirmed; the Stockholm+50 international meeting to be held from 2 to 3 June; the COP27 of UNFCCC from 7 to 18 November, and part 2 of the COP15 of the Convention on Biodiversity planned to take place in the third quarter this year.

Given the critical role that young people have in the conservation and sustainable use of oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development, this session will provide a unique platform for youth to showcase ideas, recommendations, innovations, youth-led solutions and actions, to “Save our ocean, Protect our future”. It will also contribute to raising awareness among youth of the 2022 United Nations Ocean Conference in late June and the review of SDG 14 at 2022 High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF), the implementation of the Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development, as well as other related processes.

SESSION OBJECTIVES

- To raise awareness amongst youth in taking action in support of SDG 14 and seek to highlight how youth can inform and/or participate in key UN intergovernmental processes in this regard, including the upcoming 2022 UN Ocean Conference;
- To mobilize youth action to strengthen environmental multilateralism, science, and policy, while fostering partnerships with key stakeholders to conserve oceans, seas, and restore marine ecosystems;
- To share best practices and solutions for the successful implementation of SDG14, inspiring action to tackle the environmental crisis of climate, pollution, and nature that affects oceans, seas, and marine resources.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

- A summary of discussion including key messages and recommendations will be prepared by the co-leads
- Key takeaways from the ECOSOC Youth Forum will inform the 2022 UN Ocean Conference and the 2022 HLPF and be widely disseminated through relevant youth networks

APPROACH USED TO GENERATE CONCRETE CONTRIBUTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Padlet will be used to engage participants to share their ocean action commitments in their own language during the event. The padlet will also be an opportunity to highlight the official registration for voluntary commitments in the lead up to the Ocean Conference and identify proven and scalable solutions to encourage registration.

OVERALL STRUCTURE AND FLOW

- 1:30 - 1:40 pm Welcome/Opening Remarks** (DESA, MGCY as co-leads) including UNOC video
 Ms. Lotta Tahtinen, Division for Sustainable Development Goals, UN DESA
 Ms. Palmira Cuellar-Ramirez, Oceans Constituency, Major Group of Children and Youth
- 1:40 – 2:20 pm Moderated interactive dialogue**
 Moderator: Ashlan Cousteau, Journalist, Explorer, Ocean Advocate
 Panelists:
 Brandon Levy, Chief Program Officer, Sustainable Ocean Alliance
 Gator Halpern, Co-Founder and President, Coral Vita
 Pamela Tapia, Marine biologist at Kalanbio, Member of Mexico Delegation to CBD
 Lefteris Arapakis, Co-Founder, Enaleia
 Stephanie Schandorf, Associate Director, Gulf of Guinea Maritime Institute
- 2:20 - 2:30 pm Message from Special Guests (Co-Facilitators for the intergovernmental consultation on the political declaration for the 2022 UN Ocean Conference)**
 H.E. Amb. Keisha A. McGuire, Permanent Representative of Grenada to the UN
 H.E. Amb. Martin Bille Hermann, Permanent Representative of Denmark to the UN
- 2:30 – 2: 55 pm Moderated interactive dialogue** continues with Q&A
 Lead discussant: Ms. Sarah Oey, Youth Delegate from The Netherlands
- 2:55 – 3:00 pm Closing Remarks** (UNGC, UNEP as organizing partners)
 Mr. Jamil Ahmad, Director of UNEP New York Office
 Mr. Erik Giersksky, Head, Ocean Stewardship Coalition, UN Global Compact

SESSION DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- How are young people mobilizing to support SDG 14 implementation, especially considering the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic? Any high-impact youth-led initiatives to highlight?
- What would be good strategies and policy recommendations to effectively engage youth in ocean action?
- What are the key enabling conditions to allow youth to be active change makers in this field?
- How can we mobilize Ocean Action Commitments from youth organizations and networks in the lead up to the UN Ocean Conference?