

Interactive Dialogue 7: Enhancing the conservation and sustainable use of oceans and their resources by implementing international law, as reflected in the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea

Intervention by Anna Clara Botto, Liaison Officer on Environmental Governance at Youth and Environment Europe at the United Nations Ocean Conference

On behalf of Youth and Environment Europe,

We'd like to draw attention to the fact that we, young people, are still not actively included in ocean governance, even though it affects all generations within Earth's web of life. The decisions that are being made on our behalf today directly impact our future, and therefore we deem it essential that we have a seat at the decision-making tables to speak for ourselves.

Article 140 of UNCLOS states that activities in the Area, meaning the seabed and ocean floor, shall be carried out for the benefit of mankind as a whole. I hope we all agree that young adults, teenagers and children are part of mankind. So how is our precious ocean being regulated without actively involving us, young people, into such governance processes?

The concept of common heritage of mankind loses its meaning when we consider harmful activities, such as deep sea mining, as providing benefits. How are they common if they only benefit the pockets of a few? From a shared economic benefits to a shared protection responsibilities approach, the International Seabed Authority must treat our seabed as a sacred space, not as a financial asset. That's why we stand for the DSM Moratorium and for the recognition of ecocide as an international crime, creating a legal force field to stop harmful activities from taking place.

We strive for ambitious, effective, inclusive, fair, future-proofed treaties that ensure strong protection of our ocean's biodiversity. We believe that only by collaborating across all generations we'll be able to achieve progress, and for that reason we'd like to see youth as a key stakeholder, and future generations and nature as rights-holders who cannot speak for themselves.

Our present, but most importantly, our future depends on the true protection of our ocean.

Thank you.