



## **Official SOA UN Ocean Conference Written Statement**

Sustainable Ocean Alliance was founded with the vision and commitment to foster and scale up youth engagement and innovative solutions to solve the most pressing challenges facing our ocean, including climate change. Since 2014, we have built a global network of over 7,000 youth leaders and entrepreneurs from over 165 countries and we have supported 222 ocean solutions.

At the UN Ocean Conference in Lisbon, it became abundantly clear that the work of SOA is deeply rooted in and necessary to achieve not only the central conference theme to 'Scaleup Ocean Action Based on Science and Innovation for the Implementation of Goal 14,' but each of the Interactive Dialogue pillars. For that reason, SOA maintains a deep gratitude to the governments of Portugal and Kenya for co-hosting this year's UN Ocean Conference that brought together so many stakeholders after so much time apart, and to the UN General Compact for working closely with SOA to co-host the catalytic Youth and Innovation Forum. Through these efforts, SOA is proud to have supported our partners in bringing 130 youth delegates to Lisbon to engage not only in the Youth and Innovation Forum, but more importantly, the official UN Ocean Conference program - to experience and learn and to share insight with colleagues and partners as part of the official processes.

This year's UN Ocean Conference stood out not just in what was said in the Plenary Sessions and the Interactive Dialogues, but in what was said outside in the official and unofficial side events, the roundtables and working groups, and the stakeholder meetings. It demonstrated so clearly the power of dialogue, collaboration, and partnerships. The UN Secretary General, Honorable Antonio Guterres said this best at the Youth and Innovation Forum when he explained that he identified four phases of youth engagement, and that we only had made it thus far to phase three. With the fourth, and yet to be attained, phase being co-decision making between youth, the generation that stands to be affected the most greatly. To improve upon this, SOA calls for greater youth inclusion in the next UN Ocean Conference program, improving the access of youth to all components of the program, enabling a forum for their insights to be heard at the same decision-making table, and including more youth on their official national delegations.

In addition, SOA would like to call out two substantive campaigns that are integral to the work being done by the SOA Youth Policy Advisory Council - the campaign against deep-seabed mining and the campaign to call for and amplify the implementation of the youth-led framework for a Global Blue New Deal. In regard to the former, the global community of SOA youth are deeply concerned about the current race to mine the deep-seabed without the adequate scientific understanding of the deep-sea and the long-term ramifications of mining activities, without adequate inclusivity and transparency of all States (developed, developing, and Islands), civil society, and intergenerational, youth voices, and without a structure that accounts for fit-for-purpose processes and accountability. In light of this and the



repeated international commitment to the precautionary principle, SOA stands beside its many collaborators and partners to reiterate its call for a moratorium against deep-seabed mining for at least 10 years, in line with the UN Decade of Ocean Science.

Moreover, the SOA community calls attention to its youth-led, crowdsourced Global Blue New Deal that outlines a framework for States to advance local, national, and regional action in support of the ocean x climate intersection, taking into account and leading with key youth priorities. Youth from around the world have crowdsourced priorities, carefully drafted the framework, and now call on States to amplify this Global Blue New Deal through implementation.

In conclusion, SOA stands firmly committed to representing, supporting, and amplifying the inspiring, creative, bold, and undaunted youth leaders, innovators, and catalysts behind the groundbreaking solutions we need to solve our ocean's greatest challenges, including climate change. We again share our gratitude for the organizing governments of Portugal and Kenya, the hardworking teams behind the scenes, and the many bright and passionate partners and individuals that traveled far and wide to dedicate themselves to collaboration in furtherance of ocean action.