



Charley Peebler, Co-Founder of NGO Heirs To Our Oceans

Dear Excellencies and Honorable Attendees,

My name is Charley Peebler. I am a co-founder of Heirs To Our Oceans, a youth-led organization. I am here representing the youth voices of Heirs To Our Oceans and Heirs To Our Oceans Palau.

I co-founded Heirs To Our Oceans when I was 12 years old, and I have been active in ocean conservation since. There have been many occasions where my voice was one of the few youth voices in many spaces such as this.

In my journey I have spent a lot of time with youth around the world. I've seen that most youth don't speaking about the science of human impacts on our oceans because they are unaware. They haven't had the opportunity to learn about how human activity impacts our oceans and waterways.

This is troubling.

My generation *must* be taught about the real-world ocean challenges we are facing and be given tools and time to develop solutions.

Heirs To Our Oceans requests that SDG 4 -- quality education -- be considered interconnected with SDG 14. We have lots of science. Quality *useful* education we need to save our oceans.

We request education is reformed to:

- include the science of human impacts on our oceans and waterways,
- develop empathetic leadership, problem solving and critical thinking skills,
- teach traditional ecological knowledge, and
- connect youth to their waters.

The power of real-world education should not be underestimated in navigating the ocean, water, and climate crises.

And neither should youth voices.

Heirs To Our Oceans is committed to *meaningfully* engaging youth in the Ocean Decade. We organized the United States Youth Advisory Council to the UN Ocean Decade in 2020. It is the first of its kind in the world.

We want youth advisory councils organized around the world! We have developed a toolkit to support formation of UN Ocean Decade Youth Advisory Councils. We will be speaking about the toolkit at The

Ocean Decade Forum, a side event outside the conference, on June 30th. Youth, starting at teen age, *must* be provided a *meaningful* seat at the table, as our ocean needs *true* intergenerational partnership.

We also respectfully request that the minimum age for attendance at the UN Oceans Conference be reconsidered to include 15 or 16-year old ocean advocates. Including teen youth in forums like this is crucial in raising the next generation of environmental leaders.

Thank you.