



2022 United Nations Ocean Conference Side Event

“Scaling up Ocean Action with Empowerment of SIDS Youth, Awareness Raising and Citizenship Engagement”

Monday 27 June 2022, 10:00-11:15 AM, Side Event Room 1

Organized by: **Permanent Mission of Kiribati to the United Nations, The Government of the Republic of Palau, Peace Boat, Oceanic Global, One Ocean Hub, Ciencia Viva, Sustainable Ocean Alliance, Fabien Cousteau Ocean Learning Center, United by the Sea, Blue Planet Alliance**

Background on the event

The Republic of Kiribati has been a dedicated supporter over the years for youth engagement and action for the ocean and seeks together with partner organizations to highlight the theme of citizen engagement and empowerment of SIDS youth. At the 2017 UN Ocean Conference, Peace Boat launched the Ocean and Climate Youth Ambassador Programme for youth leaders from states on the front line of climate change and marine degradation. They have since regularly traveled onboard Peace Boat’s ship to engage in capacity building and awareness raising through public engagement, meeting with government and civil society representatives. The programme has been carried out through partnerships with national governments, academia and civil society organizations to promote the implementation of SDG14, in person annually prior to the pandemic, and since then online. Each time, participants with diverse backgrounds in science, public policy, the arts, grassroots and international activism shared their skills and experiences. They visited ports in Europe and concluded in New York with events at the United Nations Headquarters including during UN World Oceans Day. This side event explored the connection amongst partner organizations working towards education for the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development, as well as the importance of innovation for the ocean, and youth empowerment for the future generation of ocean leaders.

Key Issues discussed

- Leadership role of SIDS in ocean conservation including Kiribati’s Phoenix Islands Protected Area (PIPA), as an exemplary model of international cooperation, coordination, and collaboration in marine protection and conservation and the Republic of Palau’s hosting of the Our Ocean conference this year

- Opportunities for youth empowerment and capacity building especially SIDS youth including through Peace Boat's Ocean and Climate Youth Ambassador Programme, Blue Planet's Global Ambassador Program and the Our Ocean Youth Summit in Palau
- The importance of multi-stakeholder engagement including government sector, private sector, academia and civil society
- Using universal passions such as the arts to raise awareness on key ocean issues
- Ocean literacy including the role of Blue Schools and learning outside the classroom, examples from the experience of Ciência Viva and the participation in the European Ocean Literacy Coalition (EU4Ocean) and Proteus Group

Key recommendations for action

- To give more opportunities to young people from SIDS to attend international events, share knowledge and influence policy makers.
- To provide innovative platforms for capacity building, citizenship engagement and ocean literacy including EcoShip which will also serve as a transition model for the decarbonisation of the maritime sector.
- To involve more young scientists in international research projects and in policy making;
- To ensure multi-stakeholder engagement in awareness raising and public education programmes including private sector, government, academia and civil society
- To include ocean literacy in formal education while at the same time increase opportunities for learning outside the classroom.

Voluntary Commitments

Peace Boat's Ocean and Climate Youth Ambassador Programme is a voluntary commitment to SDG14. Since the voluntary commitment was submitted in 2017, the first programme was completed during that year and the results reported at the UN Climate Conference (COP23) in Bonn. Peace Boat commit to relaunching the Ocean and Climate Youth Ambassador Programme once voyages resume in 2023 and to continue to hold the programme for the foreseeable future engaging youth from SIDS and other communities on the front line of the ocean crisis. EcoShip, another voluntary commitment of Peace Boat, will be future platform for Peace Boat's citizen engagement in ocean awareness raising including the Ocean and Climate Youth Ambassador Programme. The Republic of Kiribati has submitted a number of voluntary commitments including Advancing Science and Partnership in the Phoenix Islands Protected Area and the shark sanctuary. The Republic of Palau's voluntary commitments include the Palau National Marine Sanctuary. Ciência Viva have made a voluntary commitment together with numerous partners "Ocean Literacy for all: a global strategy to raise awareness for the conservation, restoration, and sustainable use of our ocean".