



Dear Distinguished Chair, Heads of States, Ministers, Representatives, and Delegates,

Thank you very much to the Governments of Kenya and Portugal for co-hosting the Conference. My name is Jessica Li, a Representative from YOUNGO, the Children and Youth Constituency of UNFCCC. By focusing on a scientific and knowledge-based approach, along with Gokul Rajendran and YOUNGO, we present the following statement highlighting how the national and international levels of ocean climate actions can support each other to accomplish ocean goals.

National and international frameworks have to align with local implementation of ocean actions and initiatives, while considering communities' unique characteristics including operating cultures and economies. To mitigate and drastically reduce impacts of pollution, contamination, and waste in waters, effective agricultural and farming techniques have to incorporate mitigation strategies that prevent upstream and downstream industrial and production activities that emit toxic chemicals and create run-offs of toxins.

This requires multilateral cooperation between different economies, Nation-States, and communities with varying climates and challenges. Trade, humanitarian and financial assistance, sharing of information, expertise and knowledge, and robust reporting, along with technology transfer, can increase synergy of climate, environmental, and oceanic actions.

Sustainable farming techniques, like adopting nature-based solutions agriculture, zero-budget natural farming and organic farming, need to be promoted. In fact, many agriculturally based communities have utilized natural resources in farming. While ensuring accessibility and availability of the required materials, this not only increases affordability, it also increases farming capacity and improves soil and ecosystems health, even in water-stressed environments. This also enriches biodiversity that regenerates nutrients and farmlands, as well as to secure wetlands and forestlands for shelter, food, and living.

The ocean captures about 25% of the emitted carbon and 90% of the excess heat. Anthropogenic activities contribute much to ocean acidification, which decreases pH value, and ocean warming.¹ Ocean acidification challenges marine life because of its acidity and sensitivity, prevents shell-like species from developing healthy shell forms, disrupts feed chains, and forces certain species to relocate because of uninhabitable marine ecosystems. Some may become endangered as less habitable environments are suitable for their sustenance. Thus, ocean acidification prevents us from achieving the targets we have set under Goal 14 (life below water) of Agenda 2030.

¹ "Ocean Acidification." *IUCN*, 26 Apr. 2019, <https://www.iucn.org/resources/issues-briefs/ocean-acidification>.

Community response initiatives can help to preserve marine life forms and wildlife, for example blue whales, orcas, and salmon. Deforestation and forest degradation contribute to global emissions. Forests absorb about $\frac{1}{3}$ of the carbon dioxide emitted by burning fossil fuels.² As such, forest restoration needs to be supported at the national and international levels.

Waste management, especially on plastics and microplastics, is vital to securing healthy and viable oceans. The UN Environment Assembly monumentally outlined steps forward “through decisions to undertake negotiations on two critical processes: an internationally legal binding instrument by 2024 to end plastic pollution and an agreement to establish a science-policy panel on chemicals and waste and to prevent pollution.”³ Furthermore, the resolution calls for an agreement that “is expected to address the full lifecycle of plastics, including production, design, and disposal, as well as the design of reusable and recyclable products and materials.” The local clean-up events add to the call for waste management, especially when microplastics and plastics are amongst the most collected trash items. The example of local cooperation forms an alliance with national and international efforts.

The Conference concentrates on strengthening the SDGs especially on SDG 14. YOUNGO’s Ocean’s Voice WG Ocean Youth Statement specifically highlights the above topics, while continuously amplifying dialogues and actions towards enhancing wellbeing, conservation, and preservation.

Empowered with the motto of “One Planet, One Ocean, and One Voice,” we aim to:

- Raise awareness of the ocean’s problems;
- Participate in a stakeholder-driven, democratic, and multilateral form, following the UN Framework Principles on Human Rights and the Environment and the seven crucial Ocean Literacy Principles; and,
- Support and engage in initiatives for the recovery and conservation of our ocean

Public and private sectors need to invest in teaching, nurturing, and developing young generations on climate and environmental education, agrifood systems, and ocean conservation.

² “Forests and Climate Change.” *IUCN*, 17 Feb. 2021, <https://www.iucn.org/resources/issues-briefs/forests-and-climate-change#:~:text=Forests%20are%20also%20one%20of,absorbed%20by%20forests%20every%20year>.

³ Hub, IISD's SDG Knowledge. “UNEA Launches Negotiation of Plastic Pollution Treaty, Science Body on Chemicals: News: SDG Knowledge Hub: IISD.” SDG Knowledge Hub, <https://sdg.iisd.org/news/unea-launches-negotiation-of-plastic-pollution-treaty-science-body-on-chemicals/>



Thank you very much for your attention regarding the urgency for ocean actions and investments in research and development (R&D) to innovatively create a sustainable blue economy.