



2022 United Nations Ocean Conference Side Event

Our Ocean Future: Empowering the next generation of Ocean Leaders

Tuesday 28th June 2022, 08:00 – 10:00

#SeatheFuture restaurant at Oceanario Lisboa

Organized by: Bertarelli Foundation, Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of UNESCO, Zoological Society of London

Background on the event (one paragraph)

Marine scientists are at the heart of science innovation, translating scientific conclusions into management practises, and increasingly the move towards sustainable development. The technical capacity of ocean science remains unequally distributed among countries and regions, particularly in infrastructure, deep sea exploration and data management. While the number of scientific publications continues to increase, they are heavily skewed in origin and focus to the Global North. Networks of early career marine scientists are central to the innovation of transformative solutions. These networks can be further improved by encompassing diversity of disciplines, racial diversity, and gender. However, the contribution young marine scientists and conservationists can make is often overlooked and the level of support offered to them differs widely among countries. This event took the form of a conversation between three ocean leaders and three ocean youth from the Global South, with the goal of identifying clear actions to overcome barriers and accelerate opportunities for next generation ocean leaders.

Panellists

Ocean leaders: Professor Rashid Sumaila (University of British Columbia, Canada), Angelique Pouponneau (Alliance of Small Island States, UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development Advisory Board, Dr Asha de Vos, Oceanswell, Sri Lanka).

Ocean youth: Inès Boujmil (BlueMed Ambassador in Tunisia, Fisheries & Environmental Engineer at National Institute of Marine Sciences and Technologies), Camille Rivera (Oceanus Conservation, Philippines), (Sivajyodee Sannassy (Bangor University, UK), Lasuni Chaturima Gule Godage (Ocean University of Sri Lanka via video message).

Moderated by: Professor Heather Koldewey, Lead, Bertarelli Foundation's Marine Science Programme, Zoological Society of London, with an introduction by Dona Bertarelli, Bertarelli Foundation, and Alison Clausen, IOC UNESCO, with concluding comments from Dr Sylvia Earle, Mission Blue.

Key Issues discussed (5- 8 bullet points)

- Talent is equally distributed around the world, but opportunities are not.
- 70% of coastlines are in the developing world, but representation of these communities at the global decision-making level is negligible. To achieve a healthy ocean and a sustainable future, it makes sense to be inclusive and representative.
- There are many preconceived stereotypes for researchers and conservationists based on factors such as age, gender and ethnicity that need to change.
- Careers in marine science and conservation are enabled by good supervisors, mentors, and peers, as well as supportive families and friends. Coming from a developing nation/ SIDS, taking on an ocean leadership role takes additional drive, determination, hard work, a thick skin, and is often exhausting.
- Challenges for representation range from the bureaucratic, for example securing a visa, to the lack of funding that enable attendance at international meetings and events.

Key recommendations for action (5 - 6 bullet points)

- Youth should be the leading voices in decisions made today as it is their futures that are currently being harmed. Therefore they should have greater representation, recognition, and participation at major policy events. Early career ocean professionals should already be considered as leaders.
- The most effective solutions come from teams that are collaborative, interdisciplinary, intergenerational, inclusive, and diverse. Good examples exist that can be replicated.
- Funding is required to increase opportunities for students and early career professionals as well as training and mentorship in supporting skills, such as science to policy and science communication.
- The marine science system is focused on lead authors and principal investigators. It needs to move to a more inclusive system that provides more opportunities to elevate national and early career scientists, and recognise contributions that often go unrecognised, such as local assistants.
- Capacity building should not be seen as solely from the Global North to the Global South, but flowing in both directions.
- Clear actions and recommendations are outlined in a series of research papers in a [special issue](#) in Conservation Science and Practice on 'Globalising conservation by confronting parachute science'

Voluntary Commitments (one paragraph)

To explore further funding opportunities for early career marine scientists from the Global South, building on the current initiatives from the Bertarelli Foundation through their Indian Ocean Marine Science Programme, an endorsed Action of the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development.