

Respectful greetings Mr. President, Honorable delegates, distinguished stakeholders,

My name is Mary Jane Lamoste, a Young Ocean Leader from the Philippines, serving as Asia Regional Representative for Sustainable Ocean Alliance. I have been leading the campaign against deep-sea mining with civil society organizations across Asia, and I will also be one of the youth voices at the International Seabed Authority meetings in July.

First, we congratulate the 37 countries that courageously stand up for the rights of the deep sea and support a precautionary pause, moratorium, or ban on deep-sea mining. Your leadership gives us hope.

As youth, we stand in solidarity calling for a moratorium on deep-sea mining. Ocean health is already in crisis: we don't have time to add more extreme threats to an ocean we have already abused.

The deep-sea is the "common heritage of humankind." It belongs to our ancestors, and it belongs to future generations. We have a responsibility to steward this inheritance, not exploit it.

We must preserve our deep-sea to continue benefiting from how it supports climate regulation, fisheries, cultural heritage, and pharmaceutical innovation. By moving forward with deep-sea mining without clear science, we risk losing these benefits.

With attention on the climate-ocean-biodiversity nexus at this conference, deep-sea mining is a threat to all three. We also have a responsibility to align with international commitments like the BBNJ Treaty. Sixty countries already support protecting ocean biodiversity in international waters, but only 37 have called for a precautionary pause or moratorium on deep-sea mining. As a young woman from Asia, I highlight the fact that not one country from Asia has joined us in the call for a deep-sea mining moratorium.

I ask you: what legacy do you want to leave for us? Will you be remembered as the generation that protected our common heritage, or the one that allowed its destruction? Together, we have the opportunity to be guardians of our common heritage. Let us choose collaboration over exploitation, precaution over profit.

I'm attending the July International Seabed Authority Meetings, and I call on delegations to join me. I call on countries everywhere, especially those in Asia, to call for a moratorium on deep sea mining. Defend, do not deplete, the deep!

Thank you.