



UN Major Group for  
**Children and Youth**  
the space for children and youth in the United Nations

**United Nations Major Group for Children and Youth**  
**Plenary statement**  
**Ocean conference, 9 June 2017**

I am speaking on behalf of the UN Major Group for Children and Youth, the General Assembly mandated space for young people in UN processes, representing currently 6000 youth entities in over 170 countries and territories.

We welcome the Ocean conference, and thank Sweden and Fiji for their leadership.

It has been stated many times here that half of the oxygen we breathe comes from the ocean. But with every breath we take and every step we make, we are polluting and putting the ocean at risk. This must change.

Irrespective of the ambition here we are prepared to take action on conserving the ocean, seas and marine resources for the wellbeing of people and planet. All our lives and those of future generations depend on it.

### **Role of and Impact on Young People**

We welcome paragraph 9 of the call to action referencing youth engagement.

We call on you to recognize the impact on young people in all strategies relating to the ocean and climate change, and legislate our meaningful participation through mandated, self organised and well resourced spaces in further defining, contextualising and implementing the outcomes of the Ocean Conference.

Without this, paragraph 9 and the entire call to action will be undoubtedly impossible to live up to.

### **Ocean Pollution**

To succeed, we need to take action on marine litter and pollution.

We are happy to see the many initiatives and commitments regarding bans on plastic, and ocean clean-ups, though we are very disappointed that the call to action does ask for a global treaty or protocol on oceans and plastics.

This is critical for outlined commitments to not remain lip service.

## **Blue Economy**

A surging focus on 'blue economy' as a concept, should not render it just a buzzword, and not be a means to corporatised and privatise, our largest global common.

The ocean is a planetary boundary, a PUBLIC good, and an organism that lives, breathes and dies. It is not merely an object for our consumption.

The ocean is also not a 'spoils of war' for disputes on jurisdiction and the unchecked advance of public private partnerships that undermine people and planet.

All institutional arrangements, specially regulatory, need to clearly reflect this.

We strongly emphasise, for any partnership to be considered legitimate is must undergo community based ex ante and ex post ecological, social and economic impact assessments.

## **Knowledge and Science**

We do not need data and science for the sake of them. Instead they need to be context conscious and from diverse sources of knowledge to best inform policy design, implementation, follow-up, and review.

All intentions are not genuine, if we do not include traditional, non formal and indigenous knowledge. In addition, we need appropriate technology, coherence between related frameworks (SAMOA, DRR, Paris, Quito etc), and an effective science-policy interface to save our ocean.

## **Ocean Literacy,**

We welcome the inclusion of ocean literacy aimed at a culture of conversation in paragraph 13.e and seek your partnership in line with paragraph 9 for our indispensable role in it.

Education for sustainable development in general, and for ocean in particular, is crucial in order to leave no one behind.

To achieve this, we wish to highlight non-formal education and engagement as crucial to deep learning and impactful behavioural change, online and offline.

## **Food Sovereignty**

The Current referencing to food security in the outcome welcomed, but is gravely inadequate to what we really need. The approach needs to include food sovereignty, especially for countries in special situations.

## **Commitments**

Our dedication to address these challenges, is as great as the ocean itself. Hence, we have put forward a voluntary commitment to upscale our engagement through crowd-learning activities that will generate global learning and local action. We seek your support for what can become the first sustainable generation. Prepared and ready to take action on our part,

we demand the same commitment from all of you. As partners by your side and regulators across the aisle.

### **Conclusion**

Finally, we would like to stress the importance of immediate climate action - not *just* implementing the Paris Agreement - but raising the bar, taking real action to halt global warming, mitigate the ongoing climate crisis, and rein us to pre industrial temperatures.

Our blue world must at all costs be based on the collective principles of solidarity, justice, equity, inclusion, human rights and the integrity of the planet.

Because even though young people might only constitute 50 % of the population, we are 100% of the future. I thank you.