



**Statement of Legambiente ONLUS to the Ocean conference  
to support the Implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14: Conserve and  
sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development  
5-9 June UNHQ, New York**

Our organization, Legambiente, is the largest environmental NGO in Italy, founded in 1980. The protection of the Mediterranean sea and marine pollution monitoring are milestones of the history of our Ngo.

From 1986, every summer, we have been promoting awareness campaigns on the protection of the sea and monitored land based pollution caused by untreated wastewater, marine and beach litter in all around Italian coastlines and seas by our boat, Goletta Verde, the Green Schooner, thanks to the hard work of our technicians and the volunteers of our local groups.

Our international campaign - Clean Up the Med - involves thousands of volunteers in Italy and several Mediterranean countries in cleaning-up and monitoring beach litter.

It's one of the most important example of citizen science and we are proud of our experience recognized at a international level.

This Conference is very important to promote a global and coordinated action to save the oceans and seas. In addition, we participated to the preparatory process of the conference, and we will continue to work on these issues with two voluntary commitments:

- the first one regards the plastic bags ban in Mediterranean area, promoted by Legambiente (<https://oceanconference.un.org/commitments/?id=15599>)
- the second one is about science and awareness for a Mediterranean connection against marine litter, promoted together with the University of Siena, in Tuscany, Italy (<https://oceanconference.un.org/commitments/?id=20169>)

We consider very important to include in the Call for action these four issues:

1. The strategic role of citizens science and NGO in monitoring, awareness and policy actions from local to international level, as our experience well demonstrates

2. It is crucial to adopt decisive policies involving all the Mediterranean countries with strong and concrete actions of the Governments, by taking the following actions:
  - a. The Mediterranean is a worldwide biodiversity hotspot. To preserve it, we propose a target of at least 10% of marine protected areas, based on the Italian model.
  - b. Land-based pollution, such as marine litter or untreated wastewater, in the Mediterranean sea, are huge problems. We need good policies to prevent the problem on circular economy, recycling or ban of the most pollutant items (such as single use not biodegradable products), efficient wastewater treatment.
3. Illegal activities such as illegal dumping of toxic waste, discharges or fishing are global treat for the marine environment and a growing problem to be tackled at international level. It's important to adopt worldwide legislation, such as the European directive, approved in 2008, to protect the environment through criminal law or the Italian law approved in 2015 to fight environmental crimes.
4. Finally, we want to remark a very important issue that we didn't find in the preparatory documents of the conference and in the Call for action proposal. To stop the climate change we must act immediately an exit strategy from fossil fuels. To reduce the risks of oil pollution it is very important to stop sea drilling and related exploration activities, and to applicate a very strong legislation and control on oil transportation all around the world. No more environmental disasters like Deepwater Horizon in Gulf of Mexico, Exxon Valdez in Alaska, Prestige in Spain, Haven in Italy, and so on. No more oil drilling and spills to save our oceans.

It is time to move from words to actions,

Stefano Ciafani, executive director of Legambiente

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