



SDG 14: Life Below Water
Tuesday 15 April, 4:30 - 6:00 PM

IDENTIFICATION	
Session/plenary title	Youth for Sustainable Oceans - Mobilization and Actions
Session/plenary focus	SDG 14: Life Below Water
Session/plenary UN co-lead UN 1	DESA/Division for Sustainable Development Goals
Session/plenary youth co-lead 1	Oceans Youth Constituency, MGCY
Session/plenary youth co-lead 2	Chemicals and Waste Youth Platform - MGCY
Session/plenary UN co-organizers	UNESCO
Session/plenary youth co-organizers	YOUNGO, Contact Point - Ocean Voice Working Group
BACKGROUND & KEY ISSUES	
<p>Today the Ocean, seas, and marine resources are in a state of emergency as increasing eutrophication, acidification, ocean warming, deoxygenation and plastic pollution worsen its health.¹ These challenges degrade habitats, endanger biodiversity, and affect the livelihood of coastal communities and marine ecosystems that support over three billion people. Young people are particularly impacted. In 2024, 75% of young people surveyed globally declared being very or extremely concerned by the effects of climate risks on their future.² While global efforts are underway, urgent acceleration is needed to meet the Sustainable Development Goal 14 (SDG 14) targets set by the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The Pact for the Future also promotes actions to improve the health, productivity, sustainable use and resilience of the ocean and their ecosystems. These efforts must be driven by young people at the forefront. The youth, comprising roughly 16% of the global population³, bring in fresh perspectives as well as bold actions and innovative solutions, making them essential drivers of transformative change for SDG</p>	

14. Empowering young people with ocean knowledge, new skills and innovation opportunities from an early age is key for youth to develop innovative solutions to address challenges like marine pollution, overfishing, and climate events. Investing in youth education and supporting their participation in ocean-related research and entrepreneurship, not only strengthens their creativity, technological skills, and fresh perspectives, but also ensures a future where marine ecosystems are protected, thriving, and resilient.

With just half a decade to meet the [30x30](#) target of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, 2025 is going to be a decisive year for ocean action to contribute to its achievement. The [2025 UN Ocean Conference](#), co-hosted by France and Costa Rica and which will be held in Nice, France, from June 9–13, 2025, will serve as a crucial platform to advance SDG 14. Additionally, SDG 14 will be under in-depth review at the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development ([HLPF](#)), under the auspices of the ECOSOC from 14 – 23 July at the UN Headquarters in New York, reinforcing the need for renewed commitments and accelerated implementation.

As a key milestone ahead of the 2025 UN Ocean Conference, the [ECOSOC Youth Forum 2025](#) will be a meaningful platform to garner attention for various issues in ocean governance, will mobilize youth voices, celebrate ocean movements and successes, and highlight youth-led innovations for ocean sustainability. It could also contribute to advance recommendations to address the impact of environmental challenges that constitute threats to the ability of young persons to enjoy their human rights and a clean, healthy and sustainable environment, as reflected in the Declaration on Future Generations.

This session “Youth for Sustainable Oceans - Mobilization and Actions” aims to provide a platform to amplify youth contributions, showcase innovative solutions, and foster intergenerational and cross-sector partnerships in preparation for the 2025 UN Ocean Conference and HLPF, ensuring empowerment and enhancement of youth participation in shaping the future of our ocean.

¹ United Nations, “*Preparatory Process of the 2025 United Nations Conference to Support the Implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14*”, Background Note, 2024.

² UNESCO Youth Climate Action Network, “Youth Challenges and Actions in the Climate Crisis” Global Survey, 2024

³ United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs. *World Youth Report: Youth Social Entrepreneurship and the 2030 Agenda*. United Nations, 2020.

OBJECTIVES OF SESSION/PLENARY

- **Raising awareness:** To equip youth with deeper understanding of the significance of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and SDG 14, as well as its interlinkages

with the other SDGs. This will include a discussion on the current state of the ocean, threats it faces and the implications of these threats on humans and to marine biodiversity. The event will also discuss the role played by youth in promoting ocean literacy and advocacy at the local, national, and international level. Furthermore, the session will emphasize youth's role in influencing and participating in key UN intergovernmental processes, including the 2025 UN Ocean Conference and the HLPF. The session will also highlight the role of youth in shaping and contributing to Voluntary Ocean Commitments.

- **Fostering partnerships and collaborations:** To strengthen partnerships between youth organizations, indigenous and local communities, governments and other stakeholders to promote collaborative action on ocean related issues to achieve SDG 14.
- **Mobilize youth action:** To provide youth with practical tools and strategies to enable them to actively and meaningfully engage in local and global initiatives related to ocean protection and to promote ocean innovation and solution-oriented actions.

OVERALL FORMAT/STRUCTURE

- Welcome/Opening Remarks by the moderator (**3 min**)
- Video demonstration of youth around the world working on ocean action (**4 min**)
- Introduction of Panel (**1 min** each)
- Moderated intergenerational dialogue about youth engagement and innovation towards SDG 14 (**2 min** each; 2 questions per speaker)
- Member State interventions (**2 min** each)
- Youth interventions/Floor speakers (**2 min** each)
- Takeaways from panelists (**1 min** each)
- Closing remarks (**2 min**)

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- What are high-impact youth-led commitments and initiatives related to SDG 14 to be highlighted? How can we better promote them?
- How are youth actively contributing to the development of an ocean-literate society and achieving SDG14?
- How can young people be best supported to implement impactful innovative projects to advance SDG 14?
- What type of new partnerships are needed to bridge the gap between youth action and policy makers to accelerate ocean action?
- How can youth from all over the world, especially in SIDS and LDCs, be better involved in global ocean policy making?

- How can young people be meaningfully engaged in the lead up to, and during the 2025 UN Ocean Conference and HLPF?

NAMES AND TITLES OF SESSION SPEAKERS AND MODERATOR(S)

Moderator:

- Ms. Maitreyi Koduganti - MGCY, Global Focal Point for the Water Youth Network

Panelists

- Mr. Olivier Richard, Head of Global Challenges Team, Permanent Mission of France
- Ms. Emilie McGlone - Executive Director, Peace Boat US
- Ms. Palmira Cuellar-Ramirez – Oceans Youth Constituency, MGCY

Youth respondents:

- Mr. Brandon Levy – Head of Global Engagement at Sustainable Ocean Alliance
- Ms. Arianna Beeray – Trinidad and Tobago Youth Advocacy Network
- Ms. Abigael Hartlieb – Girl Up
- Ms. Shannon Lisa - Chemicals and Waste Youth Platform - MGCY
- Ms. Ishwarya Kandasamy - YOUNGO, Ocean Voice Working Group
- Mr. Daniel Calarco - President of International Youth Watch

OVERVIEW OF PREPARATORY EVENT/CONSULTATION

The ECOSOC Youth Forum Session on SDG 14 aims to amplify youth voices and celebrate youth-led innovations in ocean sustainability. The session will showcase innovative solutions and foster intergenerational partnerships to advance SDG 14. Recognizing that many youth cannot travel to New York in person, the organizers have launched a video campaign to provide an inclusive, virtual platform for youth engagement. This initiative invites young leaders to share their efforts in ocean advocacy and innovation. Selected videos will be presented during the session, offering a powerful opportunity for youth worldwide to contribute their perspectives and collaborate as we approach the 2025 UN Ocean Conference and the HLPF in which SDG 14 will be reviewed.