



**ECOSOC
YOUTH FORUM**

YOUTH2030

Economic and Social Council Youth Forum

"COVID-19 recovery: Youth taking action for a sustainable future"

CONCEPT NOTE

THEMATIC SESSION ON "LIFE BELOW WATER AND YOUTH: CONNECTING GENERATIONS TO PROTECT OUR OCEAN – SDG 14"

19 April 2022, 1:30 PM – 3:00 PM

IDENTIFICATION	
SDG/theme or Region	SDG 14 - Life below water
Session co-lead UN	UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs/DSDG
Session co-lead Youth	Oceans Youth Constituency of the UN Major Group for Children and Youth (MGCY)
Session co-organizers	UNEP, UN Global Compact
BACKGROUND & KEY ISSUES	
<p>The Ocean covers 70 percent of the Earth's surface, is the planet's largest biosphere, and is home to up to 80 percent of all life in the world. It generates 50 percent of the oxygen we need, and as the largest carbon sink it absorbs 25 percent of all carbon dioxide emissions and captures 90 percent of the additional heat generated from those emissions. The Ocean nurtures vast biodiversity and produces food, jobs, mineral and energy resources needed for life on the planet to survive and thrive. At the same time, the Ocean is under unprecedented pressure as a result of human activities. Urgent action is</p>	

required to protect the health of the Ocean from threats posed by growing populations, increasing pollution, over-exploitation, climate change, food insecurity and diminishing biodiversity.

2022 is a critical year for the Ocean. Convened by the United Nations General Assembly and co-hosted by the Governments of Kenya and Portugal, the “United Nations Conference to Support the Implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14: Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development” will be held from 27 June to 1 July in Lisbon, Portugal, under the overarching theme: “Scaling up ocean action based on science and innovation for the implementation of Goal 14: stocktaking, partnerships and solutions”. SDG 14 will also be under in-depth review at the 2022 High Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) to be convened under the auspices of the ECOSOC from 5 to 15 July 2022. In addition, several other key UN intergovernmental processes unfolding this year will have a direct impact on the Ocean and its well-being, including the resumed session of the fifth UN Environment Assembly that took place from 28 February to 2 March that decided to forge a legally binding agreement; the Special Session of the UN Environment Assembly UNEP@50 held from 3 to 4 March where the commitment to environment cooperation was affirmed; the Stockholm+50 international meeting to be held from 2 to 3 June; the COP27 of UNFCCC from 7 to 18 November, and part 2 of the COP15 of the Convention on Biodiversity planned to take place in the third quarter this year.

Given the critical role that young people have in the conservation and sustainable use of oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development, this session will provide a unique platform for youth to showcase ideas, recommendations, innovations, youth-led solutions and actions, to “Save our ocean, Protect our future”. It will also contribute to raising awareness among youth of the 2022 United Nations Ocean Conference in late June and the review of SDG 14 at the 2022 High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF), the implementation of the Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development, as well as other related processes.

SESSION OBJECTIVES

- To raise awareness amongst youth in taking action in support of SDG 14 and seek to highlight how youth can inform and/or participate in key UN intergovernmental processes in this regard, including the upcoming 2022 UN Ocean Conference.
- To mobilize youth action to strengthen environmental multilateralism, science, and policy, while fostering partnerships with key stakeholders to conserve oceans, seas, and restore marine ecosystems.
- To share best practices and solutions for the successful implementation of SDG14, inspiring action to tackle the environmental crisis of climate, pollution, and nature that affects oceans, seas, and marine resources.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

- A summary of discussion including key messages and recommendations will be prepared by the co-leads.
- Key takeaways from the ECOSOC Youth Forum will inform the 2022 UN Ocean Conference and the 2022 HLPF and be widely disseminated through relevant youth networks.

APPROACH USED TO GENERATE CONCRETE CONTRIBUTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Padlet will be used to engage participants to share their ocean action commitments in their own language during the event. The padlet will also be an opportunity to highlight the official registration for voluntary commitments in the lead up to the Ocean Conference and identify proven and scalable solutions to encourage registration.

OVERALL STRUCTURE AND FLOW

1:30 - 1:38 pm **Welcome/Opening Remarks** (DESA, MGCY as co-leads)

1:38 - 1:40 pm **Video** (UN Ocean Conference featuring the SEO)

1:40 - 2:20 pm **Moderated interactive dialogue**

Moderator:

- Ashlan Cousteau, Journalist, Explorer, Ocean Advocate

Panellists:

- Brandon Levy, Chief Programme Officer, Sustainable Ocean Alliance
- Gator Halpern, Co-Founder and President, Coral Vita
- Pamela Tapia, Marine biologist at Kalanbio, Member of Mexico Delegation to CBD
- Lfteris Arapakis, Co-Founder, Enaleia
- Stephanie Schandorf, Associate Director, Gulf of Guinea Maritime Institute

2:20 - 2:30 pm **Message from Specials Guests (Co-facilitators for the intergovernmental consultation on the political declaration for the 2022 UN Ocean Conference)**

- H.E. Keisha A. McGuire, Permanent Representative of Grenada to the UN
- H.E. Amb. Martin Bille Hermann, Permanent Representative of Denmark to the UN

2:30 - 2:55 pm **Moderated interactive dialogue** continues with Q&A

2:55 - 3:00 pm **Closing remarks** (UNGC, UNEP as organizing partners)

SESSION DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- How are young people mobilizing to support SDG 14 implementation, especially considering the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic? Any high-impact youth-led initiatives to highlight?
- What would be good strategies and policy recommendations to effectively engage youth in ocean action?
- What are the key enabling conditions to allow youth to be active change makers in this field?
- How can we mobilize Ocean Action Commitments from youth organizations and networks in the lead up to the UN Ocean Conference?

NAMES OF SESSION SPEAKERS AND MODERATOR(S)

Special guests:

- Amb. Keisha A. McGuire, Permanent Representative of Grenada to the UN
- Amb. Martin Bille Hermann, Permanent Representative of Denmark to the UN

Moderator:

- Ashlan Cousteau, Journalist, Explorer, Ocean Advocate

Panellists:

- Brandon Levy, Chief Programme Officer, Sustainable Ocean Alliance
- Gator Halpern, Founder of Coral Vita
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- Pamela Tapia Diaz, Marine Biologist at KALANBIO, Member of Mexican Delegation to CBD
- Stephanie Schandorf, Associate Director, Gulf of Guinea Maritime Institute

OVERVIEW OF PREPARATORY EVENT/CONSULTATION

Instead of a dedicated prep event/consultation, this session will build on the outcome from the [global online consultation](#), which was set up by the UN Secretariat to seek inputs from all stakeholders, including the Children and Youth groups, on the following topics: SDGs under review during the 2022 HLPF (SDGs 4, 5, 14, 15 & 17), under the overarching theme “Building back better from the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) while advancing the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”.

The global online consultation was open from 17 February-22 March 2022, and the following questions were included for SDG 14:

- What has changed since the last time this Goal was reviewed at the HLPF? Any deviations in progress from what was expected (including due to COVID-19)?

- What are the main obstacles to the implementation of this Goal, including interlinkages with other Goals, and connections to related processes?
- What are new/promising opening and opportunities to implement this Goal, including interlinkages with other Goals and connections to related processes?

In addition to the questions above, all stakeholders were also invited to share example of any innovative policy, programme, project or partnership related to SDG 14 which could be scaled up and support accelerated implementation. Inputs from the Children and Youth group through the global online consultation were reviewed and considered in the preparation of this thematic session.

SUGGESTED READING

[Summary Report of the Global Online Stakeholder Consultation - inputs to concept papers of interactive dialogues of the 2022 UN Ocean Conference](#)

Taking into account the evolving landscape and new challenges brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic, stakeholders have been invited to contribute inputs to update the concept papers of the eight interactive dialogues of the Conference, with latest COVID-related data and analysis in the status and trends, challenges and opportunities, possible areas for new partnerships as well as recommendations on advancing implementation of SDG14. Stakeholders have been invited to provide inputs on each of the 8 themes of the interactive dialogues. We invite you to view the key messages and takeaways from the consultation in the report that is available here. In addition, all submitted responses and more information on the global consultation can be found here.

ADDITIONAL DETAILS

More information on the 2022 UN Ocean Conference can be found on:
<https://www.un.org/en/conferences/ocean2022>