



Stakeholder presentation at the United Nations Ocean Pre-Conference 2/4/20

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The targets guiding the advancement of SDG14 — such as reduction of marine pollution and protection of marine and coastal ecosystems — are goals that are a part of the every day lives of youth of Heirs To Our Oceans.

A part of Heirs To Our Oceans mission is to educate youth in primary and secondary school about human impacts on their oceans and waterways and to support and encourage them in connecting with one another in purpose and in processing solutions.

Our number one greatest challenge worldwide as we try to supplement youth education is the education system itself. This we see anywhere youth of Heirs To Our Oceans are located including in this country, the US, and everywhere the US has exported it. Education systems around the world are failing our youth in not preparing them for the real world issues they are inheriting, and, more so, not making space for even independent study on ocean and water issues nor excusing them for civic and community engagement. Modern day education system has failed youth generation after generation. We see the ill effects as we look around today at the state of humanity and our natural environment including our oceans.

The long-term solution, the real target to achieve the advancement of SDG14, is *quality* education for all youth everywhere, where:

- \* critical thinking, problem solving, creative thinking and empathic leadership skills are encouraged and developed;
- \* ocean and water literacy is an essential component of their curriculum along with ecology and relational education and indigenous ways;
- \* they learn in their natural environment rather than being disconnected from;
- \* youth learn about human impact on their ocean and waterways and they are encouraged to process solutions including protecting, not exploiting, the ecosystems that protect them;
- \* youth learn that the ocean crisis is inextricably linked to the climate crisis; and
- \* civic engagement and community engagement are supported.

The worse offenders of the impacts on our oceans and waterways are corporations and their lobbyists who are making decisions based upon profit and ROI, and who are products of our modern day education system. Education reform as defined here will go to the heart of the problem, not just fix a symptom. As Ambassador Thomson wisely said, “humanity is knowingly destroying the very support systems that keep us alive.”

Resources have been put into science. As Canada’s Ambassador shared, “the science is clear.” We have the science needed to justify taking action — to justify a new course, a new

way, to preserve our Blue Planet. But unlike science, education has not been prioritized, and it is an action item.

We respectfully request the following action items:

- (1) Quality education, as defined above, is a prioritized target to achieve a healthy and safe one-water system for the next generation;
- (2) Education is added to the list of Communities of Ocean Action (COA); and
- (3) Youth are sufficiently engaged in a participatory and meaningful way at all the UN Ocean Conferences moving forward starting with June 2020.

If this is the “decade for action”, then the 12 year olds today will be 22 years old in 2030, and the time to act is now. The next generation is the next generation of decision makers. A generation that understands and appreciates biodiversity will protect biodiversity.

The youth of Heirs To Our Oceans asked that I thank the UN members for instituting a single-use plastic free UN Headquarters policy. It was Heirs To Our Oceans youth who started the #plasticfreeUN campaign at the UN Ocean Conferences in 2017, so they are thrilled to see the change.

They also asked that I thank you for the “Blue COP” recognizing the relationship between the health of our ocean, climate change, and the health of our whole planet.

Thank you for your time.