



# Youth Ocean Parliament Declaration

November 5-8, 2007

*Attard, Malta*

## **Introduction**

We the participants of the first international Youth Ocean Parliament, from all over the world, have come together to express our thoughts, concerns and recommendations on the state of the ocean.

These thoughts are summarized and embodied in this final declaration, which has an overarching focus on the use of education and the media in raising awareness on ocean sustainability. It moreover details our ideas on sustainable management of our ocean resources, the mitigation of climate change, ocean governance and the outlook for future generations.

We believe in the rights of the future generations, and that it is our intrinsic duty to protect and ensure these rights.

We gather at the Youth Ocean Parliament certain that, as young people, we have a valuable contribution to make to this debate, and pledging to take action upon this contribution.

However, we ask the international community to step up to the commitments it has taken, to take action and protect the ocean, its resources and environment, the life it affords us, as well as the right of the future generations to it.

## **Fostering Sustainable Use of Ocean Resources**

Alarmed by the current exploitation of the ocean and its seabed, as well as the invaluable resources it affords us, we have come together to state our commitment for sensible use of the environment and for development that 'meets the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs', we recommend:

1. The application of stricter measures to fisheries organizations.
2. The establishment of a heavily regulated seasonal fishing action plan to combat the issue of overfishing that is evident in many states.
3. A common international approach for the operation of such measures by governments worldwide, further enhanced by the flexibility of the system in different regions and states to meet the needs of the area of implementation.
4. An investigation into alternative forms of seafood production that are environment friendly, sustainable and economically viable.
5. The global banning of all harmful forms of fishing practice.
6. The creation of small-scale fisheries that supply their own areas and countries with seafood and a small export system in place to further enhance this, whilst eliminating the damage currently created by large-scale international trawlers.
7. The establishment of more varied use Marine Protected Areas.



8. The initiation of a global program that has the ability to change the mentality of the wider population, through the promotion of a personal approach to understanding society's effects on the world's ocean.

### **Climate Change**

Concerned by the effect of climate change on our environs, we ask the international community to live up to its commitments, specifically by:

1. Enforcing its decisions and holding itself accountable for them, otherwise strongly considering the imposition of sanctions or fines.
2. Increasing security for people living in the already affected areas, particularly in coastal areas, through dyke and channel building, so as to alleviate the rise in sea water level.
3. Delivering financial and technological support to countries and areas where the environment-related imminent needs of people are not met due to lack of financial resources, either of national governments or local communities.
4. Enhancing ties between developed and developing states so as to provide energy alternatives whereby the environment in developing states would not suffer the same consequences that industrialization has caused in developed nations.
5. Providing a strong educational tool through which prevention of further degradation of the environment may occur, in all parts of the world.

### **Ocean Governance**

Deeply troubled by the rapid and incessant degradation of the oceans and seas, and in support of the recognition of the ocean as a public good for all humanity, we ask for the establishment of a global ethics board, which we propose to name the United Oceans, that would be based on the preservation of the ocean environment, and that would, through the use of its legal framework, compel governments to comply to this preservation

The constitution of this board would comprise governments as well as civil society actors (specifically those involved in scientific, educational and social issues), and whereby its regional-based constituency would tackle region-specific problems, while also offering a forum for consultation with the public, for more stakeholders to voice their opinions and be heard. Moreover, the executive decisions taken, based on existing international networks for data collection, would lead to executive actions, taken as a joint commitment between all countries and representatives.

### **Education, Training and Communications toward the Sustainable Use of the Ocean**

Education is not merely a static and formal component in the lives of many, but should provide formation that leads to citizenship and awareness in younger generations. For this reason, we ask governments for:

1. Basic education programs about the oceans for all children and citizens, including natural disasters, human impact, ecosystems, oceanography, and global warming.
2. Direct contact with the ocean through swimming lessons for children, which combined with ocean education and emergency training, would form a holistic educational and awareness-raising approach to ocean heritage preservation.
3. Intensive emergency training programs, such as designating two days per year to reach out to schools and the community on disaster preparedness.



4. Use of the World Wide Web to promote communication between schools, specifically between those in coastal regions and those in inland regions, whereby children who may never have come in contact with the sea may experience it through the eyes of their peers.
5. Use of visual media in the creation of a form of distance education, awareness raising and the communication of ocean issues to children and communities away from the sea.

### **Commitment to the Future Generations**

We call on national regional and international organizations and the citizens of the world to guarantee and protect the environment in which the rights of future generations may be exercised.

We demand that all stakeholders come together in responsible steps toward fulfilling the promises made to the international community and the citizens of the world. For this reason we ask for:

1. Access to education and formative experiences in learning, targeted towards raising awareness on the global and local issues of sustainable development.
2. A true commitment by governments and education policymakers to develop and enhance programs for formal and informal citizenship education, with a special focus on the protection of the natural environment.
3. We recommend the nomination of youth focal point within the International Ocean Institute.

### **The Future of the Youth Ocean Parliament**

We appreciate the opportunity given to us as young people to come together and in one voice communicate our hopes and concerns.

Moreover, we recognize and look forward to a continuation of this debate through suitable and further extended channels.

We are ourselves committed to the creation of a World Youth Ocean Network, possibly as an extension or under the auspices of the World Ocean Organisation, which will take a lead role in the preparation of future Youth Ocean Parliaments and youth representation on environmental issues within other regional and global fora.

### **Conclusion**

As youth living on a planet of which almost 70% is covered in water, we have come together to appeal to all stakeholders to protect this large segment of our planet – protect the use of the life and resources it gives, to recognize its importance, and to enforce the decisions taken that will not only affect us, but that will have a longer term effect on the future generations.

This is our commitment – is it yours?