



**UNITED NATIONS  
OFFICE OF LEGAL AFFAIRS**

**2018 United Nations World Oceans Day Celebration and Panel Discussion**

**Statement**

by

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and United Nations Legal Counsel

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Excellencies, Distinguished delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

In my capacity as Under-Secretary-General for Legal Affairs, United Nations Legal Counsel and UN-Oceans Focal Point, I am pleased to welcome you to this World Oceans Day celebration and panel discussion entitled, “Clean our Ocean: Youth and Innovation.”

In line with the theme of this year’s World Oceans Day, the panel today will focus on youth and innovation, which both play fundamental roles in cleaning our oceans and in ensuring their future sustainability and well-being.

Life on earth is centered around our oceans. From the very air we breathe to the food and systems that sustain life, our oceans are a resource that must be cared for by current and future generations.

Today, more than ever, young people are taking leadership roles in cleaning and protecting our planet’s most precious resource. Recognizing that the oceans’ future depends on them, the impressive and inspiring actions taken by youth to be highlighted today reflect the growing global understanding that their energy, creativity and enthusiasm is crucial to solving the problems that our oceans face today.

By bringing innovative ideas to the table, along with passion and encouragement to us all, the youth here today remind us that ocean stewardship and care is an inter-generational endeavour in which we are all stakeholders and to which all of us can contribute.



We also need cross-sectoral cooperation and partnerships at all levels that build on technologies that can provide innovative solutions uniquely designed to address challenges, such as pollution from plastics, eutrophication and the loss of biodiversity, some of which will be presented and discussed today. Science also plays a critical role in decision-making and management as also increasingly recognized for example in the context of multilateral processes taking place at the United Nations.

As climate, demographic, economic and environmental stressors on our oceans increase, these and other innovative responses will be needed to face those shifting challenges and their cumulative negative impacts on ocean health and sustainability.

I am proud and honored to mark this World Oceans Day by hearing about these solutions, in particular those from future ocean leaders and those who are working alongside them. The impacts of youth and innovation in achieving sustainable development in the oceans, in line with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, particularly Sustainable Development Goal 14 to Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development, are instrumental.

Let us celebrate the advancements that have been made in this direction as we learn from what will surely be a constructive and stimulating discussion, and let us keep focused on concrete solutions that will ensure a clean future for our ocean.