

## CONCEPT NOTE

### Youth Talks – Blue Economy

#### QUESTIONS

- How can young people participate in co-creating international frameworks and guidelines to protect the blue environment?
- How can we increase investment in innovation, technologies and human capital in the ocean sectors?
- How do you think governments and businesses should drive marine conservation while supporting economic opportunities the oceans offer?
- How can we take better care of marine resources?
- How can young people participate in shaping their countries' national vision for a sustainable blue economy?
- What needs to be done to encourage young people to engage in entrepreneurship, innovation and climate action within the blue economy?

#### DESCRIPTION

Besides being a source of natural beauty, our oceans sustain the livelihoods and wellbeing of more than 3 billion people and serve as a crucial asset in mitigating raising effects of climate change. 80% of global trade is carried by sea and more than 350 million jobs are linked to fisheries, with ocean ecosystems also contributing significantly to activities such as carbon sequestration, coastal protection and waste disposal.

The emerging blue economy seeks to drive economic growth and social inclusion while at the same time preserving marine and coastal areas from exploitation and environmental degradation. At its heart, it encompasses traditional sea-related industries of tourism, fisheries and maritime transport, including emerging economic activities such as renewable energies, aquaculture, deep-sea mining and marine biotechnology. As much as they're vital for life on earth, oceans are not a limitless store of resources. Increased human activity is leaving a big impact on the environment, and oceans that are not healthy cannot support economic growth.

Small island developing states (SIDS) are already experiencing a loss of marine resources due to rising sea levels and increased frequency of extreme weather patterns. Healthy oceans are critical especially for coastal communities which rely on maritime resources for food production and economic prosperity.

We need to rethink the way we interact with the sea to harness its potential while maintaining a healthy ecosystem. Sustainable tourism, regulated fisheries and aquaculture projects can create valuable economic opportunities for local communities and young people, and inspire them to pursue careers in the blue sector. Realizing the full potential of the blue economy will require including youth, indigenous people and other marginalized groups in coastal decision making, and support their skills development through trainings and mentorships to create suitable employment opportunities for the present and future generations. In this topic, we will delve deep into the blue territory as we explore the need for growing youth engagement in reshaping the ocean economy to achieve prosperity for all.

*Youth Talks is a project that is part of the preparations for the UNCTAD15 Youth Forum. Its outcomes will be fed into a report addressed to UNCTAD member States and contain the views of the youth. It will run until 3 October 2021. Participation guidelines to the Youth Talks online discussion platform and the subscription link are available on the Youth Talks webpage.*