

Name: Baev Aleksey

University: Ural Federal University

Major: Oriental studies

UN SDG № 14 and youth involvement

For millions of years water was the source of life for all organisms on our planet and it was the place where life originated. Water occupies a huge part of the area of our planet, gives millions of tons of marine products every year, providing about 200 million jobs worldwide. Therefore, the conservation of marine ecosystems is extremely important. Industrialization, a sharp increase in population, the emergence of plastic packaging and utensils led to the fact that every year millions of tons of plastic fall into the waters of the oceans, which adversely affects marine ecosystems. If this trend continues, soon any seafood on our table will contain microparticles of plastic that will make food inedible.

Thinking about the pollution of the world's oceans, I recall a case that struck me for the rest of my life. In the fall of 2017 I happened to be in Hong Kong and a week before my arrival a typhoon struck the city and the islands located next to it. In addition to the city I wanted to visit several beaches that are located on the islands. Articles on the Internet were abundant in beautiful pictures and rave reviews from people who had once been there. However when I arrived at the beach, I saw heaps of plastic, which disfigured natural beauty. But the corpses of birds and fish lying on the shore struck me even more. I was horrified by what I saw and vowed to myself that from that moment I would be more responsible in using plastic and try to convince my relatives and friends to do the same.

In my opinion, young people should be actively involved in activities to combat water pollution. The generation of those who were born at the end of the 20th century is already faced with the dramatic consequences of human activity. This means young people should act immediately so that future generations can drink clean water and eat healthy seafood.

What could be done by young volunteers:

- 1. Informing the public.** Young volunteers can inform the population of their city / village about why it is so important to reduce the amount of plastic used and why it is necessary to prevent it from entering into the water. Often people do not even think that the plastic they use can get into rivers, seas or oceans, so informing can be an effective way to combat the problem of pollution.
- 2. Conduct various events / challenges.** For example, nowadays there is a popular challenge, which aims to clean the coastal areas. If you want to take part in it, you need to upload a photo of an area contaminated with plastic and other debris before and after cleaning. Thousands of people took part in this challenge all over the world, thanks to which it was possible to prevent a huge amount of plastic from entering the waters of the world's oceans. I believe that social networks are a very effective platform for volunteers, where they can encourage people to take part in such events and thus help in cleaning the seas and oceans.
- 3. Creation of cleaning mechanisms.** Many people have heard that in the Pacific, because of the peculiarities of underwater currents, an entire island of plastic, comparable in size to the whole state, was formed. This poses a huge threat to the Pacific ecosystem, so this plastic has to be removed from the water as quickly as possible. By today, many devices have been invented to collect plastic from the surface of the water. However, most of them are still ineffective, which requires the development of new models. It seems to me that it would be a good idea to hold competitions between young constructors to create new models of such devices.

To sum up, I believe that the sustainable development goal №14 set in 2015 will be achieved and humanity will be able to preserve aquatic ecosystems. Young volunteers around the world, realizing the importance of maintaining the cleanliness of the seas and oceans, should intensify their efforts to achieve this goal and inspire others to take measures to preserve the aquatic ecosystem.