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Sustainable Development Goal 14 and Youth Participation

“How inappropriate to call this planet Earth

When it is quite clearly Ocean”

Arthur C. Clarke

I am writing this essay at the 8th of June, World Oceans Day, and I decided to start this paper with the quote above as it vividly shows how much humanity is mistaken when it underestimates the role of the oceans and seas in our life. The reason why the UN pays such close attention to marine life is clear – not only three billion of people depend on food that the oceans provide them but literally everyone indirectly depends on them, as many mineral resources (more than 30% of oil and gas in the world) are extracted in seas and the majority of goods worldwide is shipped by sea. 13 of 20 most populous cities are located on the seaside and more than 40% of the world population lives in countries with coastlines. These numbers are impressive, aren't they?

Both Russia and the Republic of Korea have access to the seas and oceans which means that implementation of SDG Goal 14 is vitally important for both countries. Why? The main factor is that the countries' economic development has a strong connection with seas. Russia develops projects of gas and oil extraction in marine zones in the Northern part of the country, meanwhile the Caspian and the Black seas in South are one of the key destinations for domestic tourism. Considering political situation, the Republic of Korea can use only air and sea transport to trade with foreign countries, thus, its economy is highly dependent on shipping. The problem is that modern society seems to be blinded by economic benefits which the ocean can give and exploits it without giving a second thought to environmental consequences. The oceans are polluted with garbage and chemicals, which threatens biodiversity, for example, 20 % of the world coral reefs are already destroyed and there is little chance for recovery. Moreover, there is a constant risk

of oil pollution – remember the notorious case of BP oil disaster in Gulf of Mexico in 2010. That is why that is crucial to raise awareness among the young people that preservation of the oceans and seas is necessary for our future life.

Of course, there are already some organizations that fight for protection of the oceans with the headquarters situated mostly in the USA and Europe but how many people now about them? We already have all tools in our hands to help marine life – institutions, programmes, organizations, but we do not know how to use them. That is why it is so important to distribute information about the oceans' problem and the ways we can solve it among youngsters; moreover, we can double our efforts, if governments and businesses join us as well. And I believe that X Russia-Korea Youth Dialogue will become a great contribution in our common mission.