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Goal 14: Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources

What are the most urgent problems nowadays? According to the Copenhagen Consensus, they are the communicable diseases, lack of basic health services around the globe, malnutrition and the HIV/AIDS. Nevertheless, focusing on that problems, we may forget to make effort to conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and the marine resources. Some scholars, including the head of the Copenhagen Consensus Bjorn Lomborg, tried to priorities those global problems based on how effective our solutions might be. Bjorn Lomborg pointed out that the government firstly should deal with the problems of the communicable diseases because it will cost less. And he is right to some extent. However, who should focus on the challenges that may occur in the aftermath of the damage caused to the world's oceans? The answer is right here – the youth has to do it.

People cause a huge damage to the environment. For instance, not so many of us has ever thought that human noise threatens the Arctic Ocean, inhabited by whales and killer whales. In addition, as the Jeremy Jackson stated, the modern state of the ocean today may be described as overfished, overheated and polluted. And there are some indicators that things will get much worse. What is more, the carbon dioxide pumped into the atmosphere by people leads to drastic changes in the water's chemistry. Taking into the account what was mentioned earlier, does it mean that we turning the ocean into warm, noisy and uninhabited bodies of acid? Yes, that's true. However, there is still hope. And our young generation is the key factor in the process of dealing with those problems.

More and more students are becoming interested in volunteering. A huge number of students is involved in research activities. For example, National Research University Higher School of Economics organizes annually expeditions to different parts of the country. Within the framework of these expeditions different kinds of research are carried out. Nevertheless, there are very few similar projects related to the environment.

One of the solutions to this problem is the education. The more people know about the need to preserve water resources, the more people will become involved in volunteering. At the same time, it seems to me that it is necessary to abstract from often-used phrases and appeals. We have to *show* the modern youth what can happen to us if we do not save the world's ocean and do not care about other water resources. Many nonprofit analytical organizations, such as the Club of Rome, are engaged in global modeling. Perhaps a visual model of what can happen to us in the future, will motivate young people to volunteer actively.

The UN has put forward a number of goals to be achieved by states' government to maintain and preserve water resources. That is to say "to minimize the ocean acidification, including through enhanced scientific cooperation at all levels", "to increase scientific knowledge, to develop research capacity and transfer marine technology", "to enhance the conservation and sustainable use of oceans and their resources by implementing international law as reflected in UNCLOS" and so on¹. Unfortunately, personally we cannot influence the activities of the international community. Therefore, we should shift the responsibility for achieving these goals to our governments. But it does not mean that we should do nothing. We should act within the framework of local goals. "You must be the change you want to see in the world", - Mahatma Gandhi.

First of all, we should use fewer plastic products because they are the main polluters of the ocean. Secondly, do not flush any rubbish into the toilet. This rubbish most likely will end up in the oceans. Thirdly, refuse accessories and souvenirs made from parts of marine animals. In addition, while travelling, book eco-hotels and try to go to restaurants supporting local fishermen. Choosing a cruise, make sure that ship does not drop waste directly into the ocean. Treat responsibly any reservoir, do not dispose of garbage and do not pour waste into them.

It may seem that those actions cannot change the current situation. However, as Gandhi said: "Whatever you do will be insignificant, but it is very important that you do it".

¹UN Sustainable Development Goals. URL: <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/oceans/>