Summary Report for the United Nations Environment Assembly

The United Nations Environment Assembly held its annual session to consider the following agenda items:

1. Protecting and Restoring Marine Habitats
2. Incorporating Nature-Based Solutions to Achieve the Sustainable Development Goals

The session was attended by representatives of 67 Member States and no Observers.

On Friday, the committee adopted the agenda of 1, 2 beginning discussion on the topic of “Protecting and Restoring Marine Habitats.” By Sunday, the Dais received a total of 9 proposals covering a wide range of sub-topics including educational initiatives, implementations, plastic and microplastic, funding, international organizations, supporting the elimination of fossil fuel. The atmosphere in the committee was one of collaboration, and by the end of the session on Saturday evening, multiple working papers merged along complementary and similar themes.

On Sunday, 7 draft resolutions had been approved by the Dais, none of which had amendments. The committee adopted all 7 resolutions following voting procedure, all of which were conducted by a substantive recorded vote. The resolutions represented a wide range of issues, including regulation through governments and relevant agencies in all Member States for plastic debris management, providing a new industrial output of biodegradable technologies, and reducing single-use plastics. The body advocated for transparency, effectiveness, and rationality in their approach to formulating resolutions. Their dedication to protect and restore marine habitats was demonstrated by their tireless efforts and eagerness for logical compromise.

Code: UNEA/1/1
Committee: United Nations Environment Assembly
Topic: Protecting and Restoring Marine Habitats

The United Nations Environment Assembly,

Recognizing the inherent success of the United Nations (UN) Human Rights Council (HRC) Advisory Committee that was created in accordance with HRC resolution 5/1 (2007),

Noting with approval the success of the non-profit “Ocean Cleanup”, who created a floating net barrier three meters deep that forms a large U-Shape slowly towed by two ships collecting plastics and waste,

Cognizant that the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) has reported that over 17 million metric tonnes of plastic entered the ocean in 2021, and is projected to double or triple by 2040,

Reflecting on the Education for sustainable development framework, as suggested by the United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO),

Expressing alarm that thousands of tonnes of oil are spilled from tankers and leaked from pipelines annually, which are having detrimental effects on the surrounding marine life, with the UN stating that subsea oil spills pose one of the most systemic threats to the world’s oceans,

Noting with deep concern that, according to the National Institute of Environmental Health Science, 80% of all marine pollution originates from land sources, of which is highly concentrated along the coastlines of low to middle income countries,

Acknowledging that the rise in acidity levels is reflective of the carbon dioxide emissions released in the atmosphere and that, according to the United States Environmental Protection Agency, ocean acidity has increased by 25% since before the Industrial Revolution, greater than any other time within the last two million years,

Alarmed by the endangerment of the world’s marine habitats, where 70% of the earth’s surface is covered and houses 80% of all life on earth,

Noting that oceanic habitats are on the point of being destroyed from microplastics, water pollution, and marine litter accumulated by human action,

Addressing the importance of recultivation of seagrass, shellfish, and reefs done by The Nature Conservancy, which creates significant economic opportunities for coastal communities around the world, expanding on the USD $264 billion in revenue, and employment opportunities for 20 million people that aquaculture is providing,

Encouraged by the further possible success of the United Nations Economic Group for Europe (UNECE) and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) for the sustainable forest management program, as per the U.S. Department of Agriculture,

Further recognizing Peru’s strong equipped marine inhabited systems has set a precedence through educational resources and has shed light on this issue for other struggling Member States to follow which have made known to the general public,

1. *Suggests* the creation and implementation of The Green Advisory Board, to assist Member States in passing international legislation regarding environmental issues, that consists of:

    a. A rotating board of 18 independent experts from varying professional backgrounds that are:

    b. Nominated by governments and elected by Member States;

    c. Representing the various global regions which would include:

        i. 5 representatives from African States;
        ii. 5 representatives from Asian States;
        iii. 2 representatives from Eastern European States;
        iv. 3 representatives from Latin American and Caribbean States;
        v. 3 representatives from Western European and other States;

    d. Limited to a chair position period of 3 years and available for re-election once;

    e. Reviewing international legislation to verify that it will not be detrimental to the environment and can benefit it when applicable;

    f. Funding from voluntary contributions from Member States;

    g. Various pillars of ideals including:

        i. Sustainable development of the environment;
        ii. Education;
        iii. Green legislation;

2. *Endorses* the solution of “Ocean Cleanup” with the implementation of BIG NET (Biodiversity Initiative for the Growth and Nourishment of Environmental Territories), expanding and closing the gaps of the nonprofit through:

    a. Utilizing cameras, trigger releases, and breathing ports in order to preserve marine life;

    b. Processing the plastics and sea debris material, in order to create a plethora of different products, in addition to creating jobs worldwide;

3. *Encourages* a Biodiversity Education Program (BEP) to educate Member States on the effects of pollution through:

    a. The private sector to:

        i. Establish training programs in sectors responsible for biodiversity conservation, such as commercial companies whose activities may threaten biodiversity;
        ii. Intensify environmental awareness programs addressed to the business sector by collaborating with commerce and industry chambers;

    b. The public sector to:

        i. Strengthen education programs in the form of curriculum, media campaigns, publications, and direct contact with locals in areas with high biodiversity;
        ii. Incorporate film from the collection of the BIG NET fishing net initiative;

4. *Invites* Member States to draft their own legislation regarding oil pollution to prevent and mitigate oil leaks and spills though:

    a. Aiming to prevent and eliminate spills or contamination of oil and oil products;

    b. Imploring all equipment used in the production and transportation of oil and oil products to meet the standards of The International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships (MARPOL) and be inspected at least every 5 years;

    c. Encouraging oil corporations to obtain insurance policies to ensure financial security in carrying out necessary cleanup and restoration efforts in the event of a spill or leak prior to operation;

    d. Supporting corporations implementing spill response training to encourage swift cleanup to minimize environmental impact;

5. *Recognizes* the importance of working to expand and further fund non-governmental organizations (NGOs) actively involved in reducing marine pollution by:

    a. Aiming to increase the amount of funding given to international NGOs by seeking voluntary contributions from Member States;

    b. Seeking a collaboration with the UN Environment Programme (UNEP) as it pertains to researching more efficient methods towards combating and reducing marine pollution;

6. *Urges* Member States to consider implementing measures to mitigate carbon emissions within the atmosphere such as:

    a. The United Nations Strategic Plan for Forests 2017-2030 that aims to mitigate and halt deforestation and forest degradation;

    b. Increasing afforestation and reforestation efforts on a global scale through sustainable forest management put forth by the UNECE and FAO;

7. *Emphasizes* the necessity of implementing a regenerative marine aqua-culture program to reduce acidity levels in the ocean to:

    a. Ensure the recultivation of seagrass, shellfish, reefs into global waters;

    b. Aim to use the nations pre-existing suitable-diverse ecosystem as a means to enhance weakened unprotected marine habitats;

    c. Recruit individuals, local communities, government agencies and private businesses under The Nature Conservancy to protect the natural landscapes that harbor the diversity of plant and marine life;

    d. Utilize resources to recultivate products such as the vast production of flora and fauna timber resources that other struggling marine habitats and ecosystems are lacking.

Code: UNEA/1/2
Committee: United Nations Environment Assembly
Topic: Protecting and Restoring Marine Habitats

The United Nations Environment Assembly,

Noting with gratitude organizations including the United Nations (UN) Clean Seas Campaign and the Climate and Climate and Clear Air Coalition to educate the youth on the importance of promoting sustainable practices, avoiding the utilization of single use plastics through various programs and initiatives,

Recognizing the need to expand on the ongoing work being done by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in their Ocean Literacy program,

Stressing the need for greater incentives at the national level for agriculture and manufacturing to ensure the protection of marine habitats,

Underlining that further international action is needed to develop an international instrument on plastic pollution, including in the marine environment,

Contributing to the process of introducing methods to prevent plastic pollution in order to support United Nations Environment Assembly resolution 5/14 (2022), “the principle of equitable geographical distribution, in accordance with paragraph 3 of article 101 of the Charter of the UN” especially considering the overabundance of single-use plastics in marine ecosystems, while applauding successful prevention acts, such as *Procedures and Principles Regarding the Charging of Plastic Bags* (2019),

Recalling the critical work of globally maintaining the marine habitats, undertaken by the International Oceanic Committee (IOC) bi-annually,

Reaffirming the precedent set by Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 12, Responsible Consumption and Production, and recognizing United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) declaration HLS.1 (2019), “Innovative solutions for environmental challenges and sustainable consumption and production”, in support of new multifaceted strategies pioneered by Member States*,*

Alarmed by the lack of awareness and knowledge surrounding the process of recycling*,*

Emphasizing the UNEA resolution 2/11 (2016) “Marine plastic litter and microplastics”, which identified knowledge gaps in marine litter,

Acknowledging the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) Agreement on Port State Measures (PSMA), the threats of illegal fishing operations and the severity of their impacts on the safety and protection of marine habitats,

Highly distressed by the 2022 UN *Sustainable Development Goals Report* and the FAO *Blue Transformation* report that exploitative and illegal overfishing practices, including migratory species, sharks and rays, has continued to increase which causes harm to the global marine ecosystem,

Recognizing the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 14, Life Below Water, and SDG 6.5 which aims to implement water resources management as a pressing and urging matter and the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), which provides a legal framework for the conservation and sustainable use of oceans and their resources at national, regional, and global levels*,*

Establishing the significance of marine ecosystems to food security and the economies of developing nations,

*Committing t*o the international duty to protect both terrestrial and marine ecosystems and habitats,

Emphasizing the significance of coral reefs as a nursery ground and significant economic resource, and mitigating global decline via restoration efforts,

Reaffirming the UN Convention on Biological Diversity's Aichi Biodiversity, target 11, in effective conservation of at least 10% of coastal and marine areas by 2020,

Underlining the importance of Marine Spatial Planning (MSP) initiative, which brings together all ocean users for multi-sectoral decision-making and ensuring the sustainable use and conservation of the seas,

Recognizing the ongoing work of UN-led initiatives such as the Global Wastewater Initiative (GWˆ2I) and encourages Member States to continue to support its important work,

Acknowledging the harmful impacts of fertilizer runoff on marine habitats,

Urging the need of the removal and restoration of the Floating Storage Offloading (FSO) Safer, an oil storage and offloading vessel, that is currently threatening the livelihood of millions of people in the Red Sea Region,

Highlighting the need to regulate and form substantial response plans to regional and national oil spills as they threaten the safety of marine biomes and economies internationally,

Promoting sustainable ecotourism as the effects of travel and overuse of vulnerable areas affects marine environments,

1. *Encourages* Member States to raise awareness of the importance of preserving water bodies and marine habitats among population by:
    a. Incorporating academia within school systems to focus on recognizing the importance of marine life and methods of community improvement;
    b. Establishing partnerships with regional non-governmental organizations, such as the Nature Conservation Centre (DKM), which has projects that work on coastal cleanups in conjunction with the community in order to promote recycling rates and reduce the amount of litter that ends up in the ocean;
    c. Educating civil society on capacities to identify failing marine ecosystems and conserve them through the guidance and assistance from:
        i. The UN Clean Seas Campaign which informs youth, individuals and sports sectors on minimizing the use of plastics;
        ii. The Climate and Clean Air Coalition, which promotes best practices and improves scientific understanding of marine pollution;
    d. Providing public transparency in annual recycling reports, which will be reviewed and regulated by the Committee of Permanent Representatives;
    e. Promoting the creation of workshops and classes educating agricultural and manufacturing stakeholders about alternative methods aimed at reducing the use of harmful substances;

2. *Welcomes* commitment from Member States in order to reduce various types of plastic pollution, through:

    a. Replicating successful plastic bag reduction acts in such as Türkiye's *Procedures and Principles Regarding the Charging of Plastic Bags* (2019), which has been able to reduce plastic bag usage by 75% in 2019 and 2020, along with other successful national action plans that have succeeded in prevention, reduction, and eradication of pollution;

    b. Striving for the prevention of single use plastics in order to intercept the environmental degradation that single-use plastics introduce into marine ecosystems by stressing the environmental degradation that single-use plastics introduce into marine ecosystems;

    c. Sharing resources, efficient product design and environmentally friendly waste management techniques, such as circular economy strategies, to promote the sustainable manufacture and consumption of plastics;

    d. Reaffirming UNEA resolution 5/14 (2022) through the implementation of domestic policies regarding sustainably produced plastics;

    e. Furthering partnerships with NGOs, such as with the Plastic Free Foundation, which has projects such as Plastic Free July, which encourages individuals to limit the use of single-use plastics, along with other regional and international efforts towards decreasing the amount of plastic pollution in marine habitats;

3. *Recommends* the promotion of partnerships between Member States and UN-backed initiatives for sustainable fishing practices, to create educational networks between local, corporate, and national fishing pursuits:

    a. Utilizing organizations in the UN, such as UNESCO's Education for Sustainable Development (ESD), as well as UN-supported NGOs like FishSCORE, to partner with Member States through the auspices of UNESCO and the ESD, by:

        i. Promoting both formal and non-formal education initiatives through ESD within Member States, pairing Member States with fishing education organizations like FishSCORE to bring in experts and educators to corporations and communities to teach sustainable fishing practices;

        ii. Developing and maintain practices to facilitate sustainable fishing that persist into future generations;

    b. Encouraging Member States to further implement national educational resources based on accessibility and inclusion in explaining how to properly recycle;

    c. Encouraging Member States to work alongside Beyond Plastics which seeks to educate policy makers and the public on the plastic pollution crisis;

4. *Expresses satisfaction* for recognition and participation in the PSMA, and encourages the cooperation of all Member States:

a. Emphasizing the growth and collaboration of the PSMA with increased multilateral relations and urging all Member States to join;

b. Reinforcing the agreement to prevent, deter, and eliminate illegal, unreported, unregulated fishing;

c. Investigating particular areas in which overfishing, unsustainable fishing, and/or illegal fishing appears to be practiced extensively;

d. Identifying the methods and practices used in overfishing, unsustainable fishing, and/or illegal fishing;

e. *Preventing* illegal electric and explosive fishing practices through fines and greater awareness in the PSMA;

5. *Suggesting* the IOC meet annually as opposed to their current bi-annual schedule in order to prioritize the effort of marine habitat restoration;

6. *Encourages* Member States to facilitate Sustainable Consumption and Production (SCP) within plastics industries through public-private partnerships such as through market incentives like lower tax rates and subsidies to private enterprises that design and submit plans demonstrating their commitment to SCP;

7. *Encourages* all Member States to continue and step up efforts to combat pollution and bring in investments to introduce a new set of instruments to fight plastic pollution of waters by:

    a. Developing and implementing national action plans such as those related to sustainable consumption and production, while fostering international action and initiatives under national regulatory frameworks, adopting voluntary measures such as economic strategies;

    b. Boosting technological research to combine the filtering of waters and the production and storage of clean energy through the analysis of statistical data provided by Member States;

    c. Creating infrastructures to tackle river pollution, which results in a direct pollution of the oceans, such as dams near river mouths in order to work towards SDG 6.5 through international cooperation;

8. *Further requests* a global cooperative effort to decrease marine pollution in aquatic environments:

    a. Reaffirming Chapter 19 of Agenda 21, which sought to strengthen cooperative efforts in recognizing and minimizing the risks presented when using and transporting hazardous chemicals by:

        i. Establishing a chemical risk reduction conference to be held by participating Member States on a rotating basis annually;
        ii. Creating a working group among participating Member States that standardizes management and disposal of hazardous materials via a manual and assessment program;

    b. Enforcing effective legal measures and social safeguards to reduce non-compliance and ensure proper waste disposal, for example national strategies on reducing, reused, and recycling strategies to be applied to corporates and municipalities;

9. *Encourages* FAO to develop and encourage farming practices in Member States that decrease the use of chemical fertilizers through:

    a. Implementing research plans to develop eco-friendly alternative solutions;

    b. Utilizing natural sources of nitrogen fertilizer via the introduction of sustainable composts between crop harvests;

    c. Reducing the use of fertilizer like nitrogen dioxide, particulate matter and sulfur dioxide to prevent further harmful runoff into bodies of water;

    d. Urging Member States to incentivize participation domestically via monetary means;

10. *Recommends* Member States to implement economic incentives at the national level for companies and industries that uphold ethical manufacturing practices to ensure the reduction of manufacturing and agriculture runoff arising from highly polluting activities:

    a. By utilizing the instrument of tax breaks and preferential tax treatment as well as additional measures that promote greater adherence to improved manufacturing practices;

    b. Furthering commitment to landlocked Member States as promised in the UN Special Fund for Land-locked Developing Countries;

        i. To encourage involvement for all Member States regardless of geographical characteristics;
        ii. To ensure participating Member States' needs are represented and accounted for;

11. *Encourages* the global community to further reduce pollution that affects oceans waters through:

    a. Remarking the importance of a joint approach with the aim to make ship owners and masters take all the possible precautions to avoid fuel leaks that may result in damage to the marine environment;

    b. Reducing water pollution generated by ships and other sources by implementing port receiving facilities;

    c. Increasing plastic recycling and study new solutions for all disposable objects to avoid waste;

12. *Recommends* Member States to join the Marine Spatial Planning (MSP) global initiative and develop a national plan to analyze and allocate the spatial and temporal distribution of human activities in marine areas to achieve SDG 14 by 2023 through:

    a. Development of international and regional databases through the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC) for recording plastic waste and recycled materials to mitigate microplastic pollution and improper plastic disposal;

    b. Welcoming NGOs, IGOs, and corporations to gather data to establish a more rational use of a marine space;

13. *Welcomes* Member States to aid marine conservation entities like UN Oceans in their global efforts to:

    a. Continue to collaborate over joint efforts towards marine conservation and protection among Member States individually and collectively, such as the Caribbean Environment Programme;

b. Establish more Marine Protected Areas (MPA's) with larger coverage and expand on existing MPA's, as MPA's are essential to the long-term protection of important marine ecosystems;

c. Declare more effective conservation areas on regional and national levels, for example Exclusive Economic Zones, Marine Reserve Areas, and Ecologically Critical Areas;

14. *Acknowledges* the importance of upholding General Assembly resolution (2021) titled, "Follow-up to the report of the to A/RES/72/277", and previous UNEA resolutions on human environment and oil danger, the establishment of a body that reinforces and ensures future environmental success:

    a. To remove the FSO Safer off of the Yemen coast in the Red Sea and raise USD 40 million to complete its removal operation;

    b. To provide physical infrastructure and equipment to the Red Sea Region that can be used for the removal of the FSO Safer off of the coast of Yemen;

    c. To build international response initiatives for oil spills to prevent the further degradation of marine habitats, especially coral reefs and mangrove forests;

    d. That will provide equipment to developing regions to respond to oil spills that contaminant waterways and seas;

15. *Encourages* Member States to work towards the development of sustainable ecotourism by establishing a working group aimed at implementing sustainable practices that will mitigate future degradation:

    a. Through establishing a framework for financially beneficial programs in local rural economies;

    b. By designing, standardizing, and supplying Member States with assessments for physical, social, behavioral, and psychological impacts of at-risk environments;

    c. By providing direct financial incentives to participating regions to further facilitate the movement towards sustainable practices;

    d. By organizing sustainable plans of action for regional operations regarding ecotourism and its byproducts;

16. *Recommends* that Member States work towards increasing the amount of Marine Protected Areas (MPA) more adequately in order to protect marine habitats by:

    a. Promoting the plan established by the UN Ocean Agreement which includes steps to become an MPA such as: identification, proposal, consultation, designation, conservation and management, monitoring, report and review, compliance, enforcement, and dispute settlement, all which are clearly outlined in the agreement;

    b. Recognizing The Red Sea Project as a current NGO working towards education for the good of the Red Sea and incorporating Scuba Divers, Local Communities, educators and students to encourage other Member States to implement the same;

    c. Encouraging United Nations Member States to voluntarily increase Inshore Exclusion Zones to mitigate the impacts of commercial fishing vessels;

17. *Encourages* innovation of sustainable fishing practices to improve fishing routines of local and corporate fishing methods by:

a. Funding game warden policing in order to protect endangered animals from illegal fishing;

b. Encouraging the establishment of regional standards for measuring illegal fishing practices and constructing a network to disseminate these activities to fellow Member States;

c. Urging Member States to remind citizens of the detrimental effects and repercussions of fishing practices like electro-shock fishing, cyanide fishing, and dynamite fishing;

d. Reviewing means of bottom trawling in order to prevent further devastation of marine habitats most notably sea turtles, marine mammals and coral reefs;

e. Supporting capacity limitations on fish farms to prevent the spread of diseases;

f. Urging Member States to implement more marine protected areas safely away from fishing locations;

18. *Promotes* the restoration of coral reefs and the generation of new reef habitats to promote the growth and recruitment of primary and secondary ecological production via:

    a. Furthering development of Rigs-to-Reefs programs where decommissioned oil rigs are left in place or partially removed, allowing the growth of encrusting algae and coralline species though:

        i. Increasing hard substrate surface area;
        ii. Promoting the recruitment of rock reef fishes;
        iii. Increasing shell mounds, expanding nursery grounds;

    b. Establishing artificial reefs to promote growth in diminishing coral reefs around the world;

    c. Removing invasive algae species that are detrimental to the growth of coral reefs to sustain fragile coral reef ecosystems;

    d. Identifying and locating reefs in high-risk areas of bleaching and deterioration;

19. *Enhancing* research on promoting resilience of the health of coral reefs by cooperating with NGOs like Coral Reef Advisory Group (CRAG), Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and the Coastal Zone Management Program (CZMP);

20. *Encourages* teaching of the importance of sustainable practices with marine habitats by:

    a. Urging Member States to add curriculum on the importance of environmental preservation through educational facilities;

    b. Encouraging education on the importance of marine life to the world’s sustainability.

Code: UNEA/1/3
Committee: United Nations Environment Assembly
Topic: Protecting and Restoring Marine Habitats

The United Nations Environment Assembly,

Expressing its thanks to all Member States for their efforts to tackle marine life, however declaring current efforts are not enough to achieve Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 14, Life Below Water,

Noting alarm towards the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) projection that by the year 2100 more than half of the world's marine species could be on the brink of extinction,

Noting with approval the great potential for Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) to create and sustain positive progress in restoring and conserving marine habitats, as referenced in the Rio+20 2012 Conference,

Underscoring the need for aid in infrastructure and technology in developing countries in order to support sustainable practices, as outlined in SDG 9, Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure, target 5,

Supporting land-locked Member States' marine habitats in man-made bodies of water by using universal standards of water testing,

Brings attention to the pollutants that are damaging marine ecosystems and habitats due to oil industries and chemical substances being deposited into the ocean,

Recognizing General Assembly resolution 72/73 (2017), declaring the "Decade for Ocean Science" in the years 2020 through 2030, thus calling to international attention the essential need for socially driven initiatives and science-based solutions in protecting and enhancing ocean ecosystem,

Deeply concerned by the *2021 Sustainable Development Goals Report*, noting the increase in dead zones, corresponding to the continued degradation of both oyster and coral reef ecosystems,

Aware that coastal erosion poses a notably high risk (34%) to coastline communities, as according to General Assembly resolution 71/257 (2017) and the First Global Integrated Marine Assessment,

Guided by the United Nations Environment Assembly's (UNEA) second session in 2016, addressing coral reef management, erosion, coral reef loss, and ocean acidification as major issues the global marine environment is facing,

Reaffirming the United Nations (UN) twenty-third session of the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum which addresses initiatives or organizations that can assist protecting vulnerable ecosystems like coral reefs,

Stressing the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, titled "The Future We Want," which calls Member States to recognize the significant economic, social and environmental contributions of coral reefs in particular to islands and other coastal States, as well as the significant vulnerability of these ecosystems to climate change, ocean acidification, overfishing, destructive fishing practices, and pollution,

Taking note of Reefs at Risk, a report from the World's Resources Institute, documenting the damages done to coral reefs, it is known that coastal development, overfishing, and warming waters pose an overwhelming threat to marine health,

Emphasizing the importance of kelp beds in combating ocean acidification and eutrophication as well as providing food for marine and human life as well as economic development,

Recognizing kelps unique features of not requiring roots, thus giving it the ability to be relocated more sufficiently in order to combat high risk areas quicker without the need of growing an entire new colony,

Expecting the development and usage of algae farms to increase the pH of marine waters, natural restoration of habitats, and decreasing greenhouse gas emissions through production of oxygen,

Distressed that the United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP) estimates 8 million tonnes of plastic end up in oceans each year, which is currently destroying biodiversity within marine ecosystems,

Alarmed and concerned with the sitting plastics blocking and degrading in our water sources and washing onto shores,

Drawing attention to new technology such as plastic bricks, which are a combination of plastic waste, acting as a binding agent which eradicates the use of water, and sand/dust, are 2.5 times the strength of traditional red clay bricks and consume 80% less use of natural resources,

Alarmed by the detrimental impact of commercial fertilizers on marine ecosystems,

Highlighting SDG 9, target 5, as described by General Assembly resolution 70/1 (2015) "Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development" by developed countries and regional organizations in order to further technology in developing countries that allows for the growth of a Blue Economy,

Noting that the widespread use of commercial fertilizers contributes to toxic algal blooms and water contamination in the marine environment as ammonia-based fertilizers are prone to environmental contamination due to its increased solubility which facilitates the release of noxious chemicals away from the soil and into marine habitats,

Remembering the United Nations General Assembly resolution 65/150 (1982) where the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) provides the legal framework to regulate ocean activities,

Drawing attention to the issue of overfishing, and is urging the amendment of current legislation that deters overfishing and replenishes the marine ecosystem,

1. *Petitioning* for other Member States to adopt the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) proposal of increasing the planting of kelp beds and creating specific hatcheries revolving around the breeding of algae with the following goals of:

    a. Effectively tackling issues of both ocean acidification and eutrophication with added production of oxygen and plant energy to reduce carbon levels in the ocean by up to 2.7 tonnes per day as reported by the Institute of Physics (IOP) conference series (2019);

    b. Addressing issues of invasiveness through the relocation of kelp to areas that are highly impacted by the effects of ocean acidification and eutrophication;

c. Providing a useful food source for various cultures through kelp farming through the continuation of programs such as the FAO, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Regional Small-Scale Coastal Fisheries Development Project (1988), which:

    i. Provides job opportunities for local farmers and increased diversification of crops;
    ii. Expands the food market for Member States to tackle food insecurity;

d. Focusing on the breeding of phaeophyceae, chlorophyta, rhodophyta, and prochlorococcus algae by:

    i. Acting as a leading producer of the world's oxygen;
    ii. Actively working as natural filter and breaks down carbon dioxide by converting it to biomass at rapid rates;
    iii. Contributing to the breakdown of plastics through the enzymes weakening the bonding agent of plastic polymers;

e. Encouraging Member States to dedicate at least one square kilometer portion of their seafloor to kelp forests;

2. *Promoting* global research and development into environmentally friendly fertilizers via collaboration with non-governmental organizations (NGOs), government agencies, and private corporations based on nitrogen-fixing bacteria;

3. *Encouraging* the amendment of current global fishing legislation, supported by already existing resources from the United Nations and Regional Fisheries Management Organizations (RMFOs), with respect to the following by:

    a. Working together with RFMO's and scientists from all Member States to implement legislation requiring the utmost up-to-date data collection from fisherman across the globe, enforced with fines that are proportional and dependent on the individual's revenue and size;

    b. Looking to other Member States and their successes in gathering information, notably through statistics conducted via the agricultural ministries of certain Member States, urging the implementation of a comprehensive global census to determine each Member States' catch quota;

    c. The implementation of up-to-date and Member State specific catch quotas to be strictly enforced by Member States, the UN, and the RMFOs to deter over-harvesting of our oceans;

    d. Emphasizing the support that developing countries need in this issue, urging larger Member States to look to the progress and work done through the ASEAN to allocate funds to developing countries to aid them with this resolution;

4. *Underlining with concern* the urgency of preserving the coral reef by encouraging Member States to partner with NGOs and local organizations focusing on:

    a. Creating a project to increase understanding of the value of coral reef catering across all of the Member States;

b. Providing financial support through programs such as the NOAA Marine Debris Program for countries that do not have the economic resources to protect their coral reefs;

c. Establishing conferences managed by Coral Restoration Foundation on an annual basis to report the data obtained on degradation and restoration of the main coral reefs with the aim of providing the results to the UN Ocean Conferences;

d. Urging the establishment and revitalization of a partnership between relevant NGOs such as Oceana and the Global Coral Reef Alliance (GCRA) to promote the removal of litter sourced from marine vessels;

5. *Stressing the need* for Member States to develop Seaweed Aquaculture Farms to alleviate the pressures of the fishing industry and resolve ocean acidification while continuing to keep their established economies by:

    a. Assistance from preexisting organizations, such as NOAA;

    b. Suggesting that all fisheries implement 5% of their annual profit towards the development of these Seaweed Aquaculture Farms;

    c. Making strides towards achieving SDGs 13, “Climate Action,” and 14 “Life Below Water” by:

        i. Incorporating the Hydromet Gap Report in order to develop accurate forecast-resilient Seaweed Aquaculture Farms to withstand extreme weather through SDG 13;
        ii. Sharing information among Member States through the First Integrated Global Marine Assessment to document the data in regards to SDG 14;

6. *Improving* the conditions of the world's oceans and strides towards the re-evaluation of substances allowed to be dumped in marine waters by:

    a. Re-establishing the qualifications necessary to dump certain chemicals into marine waters;

    b. Offering Member States the resources necessary to enforce stricter legislation regarding substances dumped in marine waters;

    c. Establishing an international emergency infrastructure to respond immediately to oil spills or other environmental disasters;

7. *Standing for* international cooperation in achieving ambitions to conserve coral reef and mangrove ecosystems and realizing their social, economic and environmental benefits as well as facilitating technical collaboration and voluntary information-sharing;

8. *Encouraging Member States* to reduce the usage of plastic bags and implement biodegradable substitutes by allocating a percentage of the revenue from plastic and biodegradable bags to protecting and restoring marine habitats collect the money from the sale of plastic bags earmarked for the Environmental Protection’s Maintenance of Cleanliness Fund;

9. *Recommending* that Member States create partnerships with agricultural industries to increase educational material available on the methods of collecting, growing, and re-establishing declining marine species through:

    a. The implementation of education programs and opportunities for further knowledge of young academics in developing nations to prioritize marine health;

    b. Upholding the UNESCO Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC) mission of increasing oceanic literacy;

10. *Endorsing* efforts to combat mass marine death and response to critical decrease in coral and oyster reef ecosystems through technology, education, and expanding upon existing UN initiatives to:

    a. Support, recognize, and appreciate the International Coral Reef Initiative (ICRI) and the Coral Reef Unit (CRU) for their initiatives to protect and repair coral reefs due to these habitat's pivotal role in achieving the 2030 SDG Agenda, especially for small island developing States;

    b. Focus specifically on developing, researching, and implementing coral seeding technologies, which involves the collection of coral gametes, followed by fertilization in a laboratory setting, then nurturing juvenile polyps until the age of one to two years, at which point they are re-established into native populations;

    c. Prioritize of artificial oyster reefs as an additive to existing UN Artificial Coral Reef Program (ARP), as:

        i. Referenced in General Assembly resolution 65/150 (2010), artificial reefs have been greatly successful in both establishing marine parks, rehabilitating degraded reef ecosystems, and garnering positive public attention to marine issues;
        ii. Prioritizing the salvaging of oyster populations, as well as providing additional and abundant sources of nutrients for the marine ecosystems within which it exists and neighboring human communities;

    d. The pivoted goals of will utilize UN existing funds from the UN-supported ICRI through the CRU, wherein additional funding will be provided by voluntary contributions from Member States and corporate donations;

11. *Inviting* Member States to utilize natural marine habitats, including kelp beds, coral reefs, and oyster reefs in seeking to mitigate the threats of coastal erosion posed by human development and natural disasters strengthened by climate change as:

    a. Outlined in the *2022 Sixth Assessment Report from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change* (IPCC), referring to the increasing intensity, severity, and frequency of natural disasters, to which coastal communities are especially susceptible;

    b. Referenced in The First Global Integrated Marine Assessment (2017), utilizing artificial techniques to curb coastal erosion and promote land reclamation poses a threat to local wildlife, whereas incorporating the aforementioned natural habitats is proven to be 5-7 times more cost-effective than artificial erosion barriers.

Code: UNEA/1/4
Committee: United Nations Environment Assembly
Topic: Protecting and Restoring Marine Habitats

The United Nations Environment Assembly,

Recalling the influence of the General Assembly resolution 70/1 (2015) “Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development” and its implications on the international community, Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 14, Life Below Water, is crucial for transitioning to more sustainable use and conservation of the oceans,

Bearing in mind the loss of 25,900 marine mammals through oil spills and lack of regulation towards the conservation of all sea life according to the *Center for Biological Diversity 2011 Report*,

Supporting fully the further construction and conservation of algae farming to combat carbon dioxide emissions and fertilizer runoff from farms,

Stressing the urgency of coral reef protections based on the *Status of Coral Reefs of the World: 2020 Report* by the Global Coral Reef Monitoring Network, which stated that coral reefs experienced a 14% decrease between 2008 and 2018,

Having reviewed the statistics presented by The Ocean Cleanup, a non-profit organization (NPO), indicating that 80% of marine plastic pollution comes from rivers which highlights the impact of plastic waste from landlocked countries is very apparent,

Emphasizing the community-based approach established by the United Nations Environment Programme’s (UNEP) Clean Seas Campaign (CSC) in 2018,

Recognizing the successful programs in the Asia-Pacific region that help mitigate marine plastic pollution and assess marine debris on Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) economies,

Taking note of the 5.25 trillion microplastic particles floating in the world’s oceans by the 5 Gyres Institute, as well as the need for implementing restrictions on dumpable materials, similar to the CSC,

Highly distressed by the findings in the 2022 United Nations (UN) SDG Report and as identified by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) that exploitative fishing practices has continued to increase, causing great harm to the global marine biodiversity and ecosystem,

*Recalling t*he United Nations Convention of the Law and Sea (UNCLOS) in 1982, an international agreement establishing the legal framework for global regulation on fishing,

Noting the Ministry of Climate Change and Environment (MCCE) establishing minimum length requirements for catch and market,

Acknowledging the importance of monitoring systems and processes of plastic mitigation,

Deeply concerned with coral bleaching and habitat loss in all oceans and their coral reefs,

Cognizant that the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) recommends at least USD $13 million in funding for marine restoration projects, and marine biodiversity efforts are often underfunded and lack necessary resources,

1. *Supports* the promotion of integrated coastal management that would encourage small-scale fishing, and the creation of marine safe zones free of fishing that would aid in restoring biodiversity in an effort to establish sustainable use of marine resources;

2. *Directs attention* to consider the construction of algae farming for efficient absorption carbon dioxide emissions, increased production of oxygen and improve natural restoration by:

    a. Supporting current algae farms, such as Green Stream Farms through the:

        i. Implementation of federal grants towards small preservation groups through the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's Sea Grant and Marine Aquaculture Grant Program;
        ii. Incorporation of the help of the UNEP towards these goals;

    b. Creating new algae farms that would double the breeding process:

        i. Encouraging small and large scale farms to introduce algae farming to current farm management plans;
        ii. Expansion on current algae farms structured by NOAA;
        iii. International scaling revolving around specific algae for specific marine habitats;

    c. Encouraging farmers to use natural fertilizers by:

        i. Restructuring Member States mandates on fertilizer regulations to incorporate the health of aquatic animals;
        ii. Advising the use of natural fertilizers such as garbage scraps, grass clippings, animal feces, and coffee grounds, by:
        iii. Understanding that chemical fertilizer runoff has contributed to 6.9% of the current population within the ocean, causing several "dead zones";
        iv. Implementing water sampling within areas that have high farming to ensure not having high levels of chemical runoff within the waters;

3. *Further recommends* the implementation of oil spill relief in the Member States currently affected by oil spills, by implementing a spill response team in each Member State that has oil rigs, as well as further conservation of affected waters to encourage Member States to have better regulations towards the oil rigs by having weekly checkups on pressure and monthly checkups on the line;

4. *Promotes* the increased establishment of new Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) under UNEP, and:

    a. Helps facilitate the protection and enforcement of these areas, both domestically and internationally, by providing informational resources to local governments on how to keep these areas safe and protected, and encouraging the assistance in protecting these areas;

    b. Extends monitoring efforts in MPAs, and provide up to date information on the health of marine life in the area, and making the information readily available to states;

    c. Reduces and prevents environmental damage and illegal fisheries in nationally preserved marine habitats;

5. *Suggests* the implementation of the UN Environment Assembly (UNEA) resolution 5/14 (2022), focusing on regulating the waste management to prevent plastic waste from inland countries

ending up in the oceans, akin to the agreements and regulations proposed in the *Convention of Plastic Pollution;*

6. *Encourages* further implementation of regionally and internationally coordinated platforms to allow for systems of accountability when addressing shared ecosystems, mirroring the framework of programs such as the Mesoamerican Reef Fund (MAR), which works alongside conservation funds and Member States in Latin America to establish coordinated marine protection efforts;

7. *Invites* regulation through governments and relevant agencies in all Member States for plastic debris management, using PROBLUE, funded by the World Bank, to help support the development of integrated, sustainable and healthy marine and coastal resources;

8. *Endorses* the regulation of dumpable pollutants including the reduction of consumer product pollutants that include cigarette, textile, and cosmetic products, by:

    a. Requesting that inter-governmental organizations (IGOs) that have focused funding on the Responsible Consumption and Production goal under the General Assembly resolution 70/1 (2015) “Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development” to consider providing funding for the reduction of consumer product pollutants;

    b. Reducing single-use plastics and other major marine pollution by encouraging industry to minimize and redesign plastic packaging by encouraging cooperation among international communities, including the World Health Organization (WHO), the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) and UNEP, as well as within individual Member States to implement environmental regulation policy;

    c. Reminding Member States of the CSC commitments made to address environmental sustainability, including establishing major plastic recycling plants, allocating funds towards environmental marine policy, moving away from plastic straws and bags, moving towards reusable plastics, and creating and implementing action plans regarding marine litter;

9. *Requests* for Member States to work in creating multilateral coalition to increase trade pressure, enforcement of fishing standards and to share intelligence to combat illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing through:

    a. Firm measures to jointly prevent, discourage and tackle foreign IUU fishing near exclusive economic zones and to optimize the exchange of information instantaneously;

    b. Recognizing and following the legal fishing limits for migratory species, sharks and rays as set forth by Regional Fishery Management Organizations (RFMOs);

10. *Further encourages* Member States to collaborate with voluntary agreements to regulate fishing practices by only capturing fish that reach the minimum length requirement based on the species to reduce overfishing and other detrimental fishing issues, similar to the MCCE;

11. *Recommends* multinational treaties to monitor, regulate, and prohibit the transference of hazardous materials through obligations for members to ensure the environmentally friendly disposal of hazardous material as well as minimization of the quantity of hazardous material

transported, similar to the Basel Convention on the Control of the Transboundary movement of Hazardous Materials and their Disposal;

12. *Further invites* Member States to push for legislation that will incentivize expansion of coral reefs that will be implemented through the International Coral Reef Initiative (ICRI) and funded by the world bank;

13. *Further invites* Member States to utilize the General Assembly Fifth Committee, which considers the budgets of specialized agencies, to raising and allocating diverted funds for the protection and preservation of marine habitats through:

    a. Funding by the UNEP Environment Fund to replenish funds into the gaps of existing international frameworks;

    b. Implementation by the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the Trilateral Commission, and other local funds whose principle is stimulating global economic progress;

    c. Biannual international conferences to track the progress of Member States within the 2030 Agenda and provide developing nations with proper mitigation resources.

Code: UNEA/1/5
Committee: United Nations Environment Assembly
Topic: Protecting and Restoring Marine Habitats

The United Nations Environment Assembly,

Aware that marine habitats are affected by inland water systems such as lakes, inland seas, rivers, deltas, estuaries, and all habitats that support marine life,

Reaffirming the principles expressed by the impacts of the United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP26), General Assembly resolution 72/73 (2018), “Oceans and the Laws of the Sea” the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC), the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the Rio+20 2012 Conference and the Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs),

Approving of the work of Non-Government Organizations, such as Conservation International, that have worked to protect 730 million hectares of marine and coastal areas and provides funding and financial assistance to countries to work on ocean conservation and protect and restore coastal areas,

Bearing in mind Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 14, Life Below Water, calling for the sustainable use of marine resources,

Alerted to the insufficient current United Nations Volunteers (UNV), and calls for a stronger internationally organized force dedicated to marine habitat protection and restoration,

Acknowledging the geographic, ecological, and geological differences between Member States,

Referring to the IRP (2021) Governing Coastal Resources: Implications for a Sustainable Blue Economy, the impact of agricultural runoff on coral reefs and other marine habitats through processes like eutrophication, which consists of excessive algal growth due to increased runoff of nutrients like nitrogen and phosphorous, is alarming,

Affirming that eutrophication costs more than USD $2.2 billion per year to the world economy,

Recalling goals of United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA) 5.2 Sustainable Nitrogen Management to halve nitrogen waste by 2030 and UNEA-5.2 Sound Management of Chemicals and Waste to improve upon marine health and slow the loss of biodiversity,

Noting that education is the primary agent of social change and a crucial instrument in achieving the SDGs,

Understanding that education on environmental awareness and sustainable practices for both corporations and individuals is one of the most effective ways to influence environmental behavior,

Being conscious that according to *Microplastics as an emerging threat to terrestrial ecosystem study* (2018) plastic is the primary source of pollution and destruction of marine life,

Watchful of the increasing presence of microplastics in the ocean negatively affects human well-being as approximately 1 million microplastics are added to the oceans annually,

Underlining that fish farming is expected to generate USD $376.48 billion in annual global revenue by 2025,

Observant that global fish production from aquaculture is approximately 85 million metric tons annually, and that following current trends, fish farming will soon surpass fishing as the number one source of fish,

Alarmed by rising sea surface temperatures which are largely responsible for and further accelerate the harmful processes of coral bleaching, biodiversity loss, and the destruction of island nations and their distinct and valuable cultures,

Mindful of green algae proliferation and toxin production, which are harmful to our world's marine habitats and wildlife,

Recognizing the importance of coral reefs, which generate around USD $375 billion annually and provide economic services to 850 million people whilst covering only 0.2% of the seafloor,

Deeply concerned that according to the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) estimates approximately 25-50% of the world's coral reefs are destroyed and nearly all the rest are under threat,

Taking into consideration fossil fuel nations and the economic impact on them regarding moving away from fossil fuels, and making sure that they are involved and listened to about their concerns,

1. *Discourages* the excessive use of single-use plastics by incentivizing biodegradable and sustainable alternatives, such as:

    a. Collecting green algae for processing and usage as a sustainable alternative to plastic and usage in progressing towards things such as bioplastic;

    b. Urging an increase in brown algae farms which produce oxygen and can also be used as a sustainable alternative to plastic;

    c. Endorsing industrial output of new technologies with the ability to decompose to reduce the long-term damages of single-use plastic products;

    d. Recommending the implementation of a recycling program by urging the use of biodegradable paper bags;

    e. Providing a new industrial output of biodegradable technologies to reduce the long-term damages of single-use plastic products;

2. *Promotes* the provision of finances through the UNEP to aid lower-income Member States in reparations for the cost of climate change and sustainable development by:

    a. Prioritizing developing Member States in receiving additional funding from the UNEP to put towards climate action programs and implementation of sustainable development;

    b. Imploring developed Member States to strive for zero plastic by 2040 by increasing zero-plastic production and use;

3. *Recommends* the creation of an international recycling program and tax credits or financial incentives for corporations to fund and assist these initiatives, keeping the prioritization of developing Member States in mind, by:

    a. Introducing laws and regulatory systems to monitor the recycling and disposal of plastic waste to decrease the amount of new marine litter;

    b. Calls upon intergovernmental organizations (IGOs) and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) that emphasize sustainable development to fund credits;

c. Requests the General Assembly to decide on allocating deficits and internal funding programs;

4. *Promotes* the development of sustainable agricultural and aquacultural practices through grants and other economic incentives to agricultural and aquacultural entities within the Member States through:

    a. Encouraging the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank to fund incentives to be distributed by Member States to eligible corporations;

    b. Recommending guidelines for runoff management, including:

        i. The adoption of aforementioned goals described within UNEA-5.2 resolutions regarding sustainable nitrogen management and management of chemicals;
        ii. Greater implementation of green infrastructure and environmental engineering practices, such as permeable pavements, bioswales, and bioretention cells, to mitigate the quantity and quality of stormwater runoff;
        iii. Implementation of regional plans to gather data in the river and coastal systems including quantity and quality of runoff, measure flow and amount of toxins in water, and direct funds from aforementioned entities to support mitigation of systems with the greatest need;

    c. Recommending fish practices, including:

        i. Increased funding toward the monitoring of fishing farms for ethical and health reasons;
        ii. The promotion of Integrated Multi-Trophic Aquaculture (IMTA) systems, which utilize natural processes to cultivate marine organisms at various trophic levels within farming systems;

    d. Acknowledging that Member States have complete sovereignty to determine what entities are eligible; however, Member States who mismanage these funds by giving grants to corporations who fail to meet the goals of this UNEA will be at risk of disqualification;

    e. Advocating for stronger commitment to research on marine habitats and species by:

        i. Increasing the number of marine environmental assessments to best target restoration projects and regulatory actions;
        ii. Encouraging open access to marine habitat research and best practice sharing with Member States and civil society groups;
        iii. Expanding knowledge on marine species affected by rising sea temperatures and other effects of climate change;
        iv. Continuing the United Nations' archiving records and monitoring the trends of species in order to identify invasive species and protect native species;

5. *Strongly encourages* discussion among the General Assembly and the Green Corps in regards to incorporating the nonprofit as a permanent branch of the UNV programme with the following mandate:

    a. Setting the purpose of the Green Corps through a Code of Meaning that is as follows:

        i. Cleaning up pollution and toxins, including macro and microplastics and eutrophic algae blooms, that affect rivers, lakes, coastal areas, marshes and wetlands, inland seas, estuaries, and other marine habitats;

ii. Removing invasive species from the environments of Member States and promoting the reintroduction and breeding of native species;
iii. Installing this to have radical and immediate action, which is needed to clean, protect, and restore global marine environments and habitats;
iv. Enforcing international commercial fishing laws by increasing monitoring efforts, including the use of satellite imagery to observe boating trends and fishing areas;

b. Accepting monetary and material donations from willing Member States in the following areas:

i. Fully disarmed naval vessels, small boats, and mining equipment for removing waste;
ii. Warehouses for properly storing equipment;
iii. Planes and helicopters for geospatial observation, transportation, and remote sensing;
iv. Hand-held tools for the volunteers, such as shovels or gloves, and personal protection gear from environmental harm;

c. Developing regional hubs where aforementioned equipment can be stored for better access, better response, and better effort;

d. Constructing and repairing sustainable infrastructure by utilizing volunteer resources to build nature-based solutions;

6. *Recommends* Member States develop Marine Spatial Plans under the guidance of the IOC's pilot spatial document, *MSP Global International Guide on Marine/Maritime Spatial Planning,* with the values of marine sustainability, economic security, and regional cooperation in an effort to further:

a. The development of sustainable fisheries, which are:

i. Established by zoning internal & territorial waters and exclusive economic zones for the sustainable economic and environmental use of global fish populations;
ii. Supported by the development of local legal framework and regional cooperation to support the enforcement of zones and collaborative use of geographical resources;

b. The limiting of the environmental impact of oceanic industrial work, including presently sanctioned dumping and dredging, which is instituted in the form of centralized, environmentally sound spatial points to support limiting the environmental impact of necessary acts;

c. The active preservation of endangered and at-risk marine species and habitats, which is:

i. Initiated by existing environmental protection organizations and furthered by increased research to produce the spatial plan;
ii. Further accomplished by states providing legal protections to designated marine reserves;

d. The decrease in the environmental impact of international maritime trade and travel, which is fulfilled by reducing the total area of international and domestic maritime routes;

e. The development of regionally-focused partnerships to produce fully interoperable spatial plans, which is:

i. Executed through the recognition of shared marine assets and responsibilities;

ii. Realized through cooperation among geographic partners to produce compatible strategies;

7. *Advocates* for research and development of low-cost and environmentally sustainable raw materials for Member States by:

    a. Encouraging collaboration between Member States to foster research-based innovation that would lower the cost of biodegradable plastics and other substitutive raw materials through UNEP-sponsored programs;

    b. Pushing for a focus on providing sustainable products at affordable costs to lower-income demographics and Member States;

    c. Understanding that lower-income demographics and Member States will benefit from cheaper inelastic goods through the implementation of sustainable-living advisories and the education between both producers and consumers to incentivize more environmentally aware economies;

    d. Establish Cooperative Green Industrialization Programs (CGIPs), which:

        i. Collaborates with existing fossil fuel industries to ensure that they incorporate sustainable techniques and are eventually phased out entirely;
        ii. Ensures support from Member States heavily dependent on fossil fuel production and consumption, recognizing the importance of their populations' livelihoods and promising to not leave them behind;

8. *Suggesting that* the General Assembly considers the establishment the Registry of Climate Endangered Nations (RCEN), which in accordance with the Ecological Threat Report (ETR) and the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR):

    a. Ranks Member States on how endangered they are by the level or approximation to complete or severe destruction due to Climate Change and Global Warming;

    b. Includes the following criteria:

        i. Approximation to the sea level at low tide;
        ii. Flooding impacts;
        iii. Forest fires and deforestation;
        iv. Desertification;

    c. Provides support to those Member States who are at most risk of environmental destruction, most notably island Member States which are affected by rising sea levels at a disproportionate rate;

    d. Moves those with sudden disasters or issues to the top of the list, but below those facing imminent environmental destruction;

9. *Inviting* Member States to expand national and regional initiatives to preserve and restore marine habitats by:

    a. Promoting conservation practices by Member States and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), such as Conservation International, that target coral reefs, mangroves, rivers and river deltas, marshes and wetlands, inland seas and lakes, and any state-registered bodies of water;

b. Recommends Member States to establish new and grow existing restoration projects such as:

    i. Constructing artificial reefs and increasing the sponsorship of national and regional coral reef banks through collaborative efforts with the International Coral Reef Initiative (ICRI) and NGOs;
    ii. Carrying out mangrove restoration projects with a preference for community-based ecological approaches to include local stakeholders and to produce highly efficient results.

Code: UNEA/1/6
Committee: United Nations Environment Assembly
Topic: Protecting and Restoring Marine Habitats

The United Nations Environment Assembly,

Reaffirming the goals of the 2022 United Nations Conference to Support the Implementation of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 14: Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas, and marine resources for sustainable development,

Sincerely concerned by the decrease of fish stocks worldwide, both by climate change and exploitative fishing practices, and the lack of political will to protect our oceanic resources, both at the international and national levels,

Acknowledging the existing laws and policies of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act within to protect fish habitats and manage overfishing,

Observing the rich economic rewards of a robust fishing industry, particularly among developing nations,

Keeping in mind the issues named by the Group of Experts on the Scientific Aspects of Marine Environmental Protection, including overfishing and environmental degradation,

Affirming the necessity of effectively enforcing legal frameworks, both new and existing, at the national, regional, and international levels, in accordance with SDGs 13, climate action, 14, life below water, and 17, partnerships for the goals,

Deeply disturbed by the increase in waste polluting the world's oceans, lakes, and waterways,

Keeping in mind the positive effects of pisciculture fish farming on fish populations and biodiversity,

Noting also the economic dependence of local subsistence fishermen on their oceans, and the products of the ocean,

Recalling the critical work of globally maintaining the marine habitats, undertaken by the International Oceanographic Commission (IOC) bi-annually,

Emphasizing the need to strengthen the legal protection of nature, life on land, and beyond water under the legal justice system,

Highlighting the work done by the International Court of Justice (ICJ) on environmental issues, further recognizing the essentiality of national enforcement of international maritime laws with a focus of restoring and protecting marine habitats and wildlife,

Recognizing the fact that the ICJ’s main legal focus is on international political conflicts, including human rights abuses and terrorism, and that it has not explored the crucial possibilities of prosecuting environmental crimes, especially in relation to marine habitats,

Acknowledging that crimes against the environment are crimes against humanity, in accordance with SDGs 12, responsible consumption, 13, climate action, 16, peace, justice, and strong institutions,

Noting with concern the problem of wide-spread poaching among keystone species,

Recognizing the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee (INC) on Plastic Pollution to create solidified legal actions to reduce plastic pollution by the end of 2024,

Urging Member States to expand collaboration with Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) for protecting and preserving international waters and cooperating with regional Member States,

Guided by the success of the Zero Waste International Alliance, encouraging the continued expansion of this program and an increase in efforts,

1. *Urges* its fellow Member States to adopt strategies and policies that help to preserve the marine habitats by endorsing more sustainable fisheries protecting the aquatic populations that are being diminished by excessive amounts of fishing by:

    a. Recommending to the General Assembly that a committee of 30 individuals, with an emphasis on selecting scientists, local subsistence fishermen, and relevant actors who work in enforcing environmental law be established;

    b. Requesting that this committee be referred to as the Sustainable Oceans Research Cabinet (SORC);

    c. Suggesting that the SORC conduct bi-annual research operations, especially considering the profitability of pisciculture and sustainable fishing practices in general, in the interest of promoting profitable solutions for those dependent on fishery resources and generating interest in such solutions from those parties;

    d. Recommending that Member States' domestic intelligence organizations review the findings of the SORC at an annual conference to be held in a nation selected by the SORC which consents to hosting such a conference;

    e. Requesting that Member States in the United Nations Environment Assembly appoint the original members of the SORC and that, thereafter, future appointments be considered by the SORC for a moderated debate period longer than one day in length and shorter than one month, and appointments be passed by a simple majority within the body of the SORC;

    f. Reiterating its request that Member States adopt and endorse policies under the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act in order to allow fish habitats to respawn and grow, prevent fishing industries from overfishing, and continue to increase benefits concerned with their economies and societies;

    g. Further inviting Member States to build off the policies and laws present in the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act to create in-depth policies unique to each Member State that take into account individual Member States' economic and social goals and their ability to achieve such individual goals in a timely manner;

2. *Recommends* the further expansion of Member State based, grassroot community efforts with goals of collecting plastics and waste, motivated by monetary incentives provided and funded through a Member State sanctioned recycling program;

3. *Encourages* Member States to strengthen their enforcement of current maritime laws, with respect to state sovereignty, such as the existing *United Nations Convention on the Law of the*

Sea (UNCLOS) and Marine Mammal Protection Act, on a local, regional, and international level by:

a. Recommending the ICJ to more actively engage in the prosecution in cases regarding the violation of maritime law, specifically in cases where the health of marine habitats and wildlife is concerned, and upholding UNCLOS and the Marine Mammal Protection Act, on a globally cooperative scale;

b. Further recommending the ICJ to form a council created specifically for creating a set of optional, voluntary legal punishments focusing on protecting and restoring marine habitats and wildlife, which, when adopted by Member States, would allow for an internationally standardized system where current maritime law may be more effectively enforced, in order to discourage illegal activities from occurring;

c. Highlighting the cruciality of such regional and national protections through sharing practices regarding the security of the ocean which were effective in various Member States, and affirming such practices through scientific research backed by UN experts; as exemplified by the United Nations Ocean Conference 2022 hosted by Portugal and Kenya in Lisbon promoting the sharing of sustainable green and blue practices, policy, and scientific research;

d. Encouraging Member States to include their coastal communities when developing marine protection policies;

e. Requesting the Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations to consider creating a commercial fishing license which requires a two week seminar on ethical sustainable fishing methods and technologies, at which pisciculture will be a core component, as they are a new technology that can be used to raise fish without damaging the natural population;

4. *Invites* Member States to begin using technology such as marine booms for reducing the amount of land-based debris flowing downstream into the oceans;

5. *Engages* in regional cooperation with governments and NGOs, such as the Ocean Stewardship Coalition to:

    a. Create an international committee on the improvement of fishing gear and technology that supports better, safer fishing practices that are more sustainable and give more value to fishermen’s work;

    b. Expand the 1972 Marine Mammal Protection Act to encompass not only mammals, but all species that are critically endangered or essential to the environment;

6. *Endorses* the development of a green economy transition compass based on the recommendations of the Green Economy Coalition and the International Union for Conservation of Nature to avoid an economic disaster for population that will have to change their fishing methods in regulated areas by:

    a. Promoting sustainable fisheries to create a Green dynamic able to influence governments’ policies;

    b. Ensuring the cohabitation between coastal mineral resource exploitation and fishing activities in a way that will not endanger marine habitats;

c. Inviting Member States to reduce prices for essential goods in Member States identifying as economically dependent on fishing and on the risk of food insecurity to ensure that fishery resources are not being over-exploited;

7. *Suggesting* the IOC meet annually as opposed to their current biannual schedule in order to prioritize the effort of marine habitat restoration;

8. *Encourages* local populations and corporations to use more efficient, green technologies, like smaller cast-nets, to ensure a sustainable fishery that respects marine ecosystems;

9. *Encourages* joint regional cooperation between Member States within different ocean basins by:

    a. Advocating for the strengthening and extension of regional agreements which expand the responsibility of Member States to conserve, regulate, and restore all bodies of water close to or within their borders, within the jurisdiction of the regional cooperative coalition, with due respect to national sovereignty; exemplified by the regional agreements of the European Union, such as the recent creation of “Blue Parks” to conserve and restore marine habitats, the expansion of the scope of the Mission Restore our Ocean and Waters, as well as the EU Coastal and Marine Policy, which forms a legal instrument to hold European Member States accountable to protecting and cleaning marine habitats and sustainably regulate them;

    b. Creating specific regional guidelines based on scientific, economic, and geographic research to encourage the regional establishment of particular zones for subsistence fishing to limit the exploitative practices of large industrial fishing corporations;

    c. Promoting the inclusion of targets and indicators of SDGs 13,14, and 17 for the facilitation of regional and international cooperation for marine preservation efforts;

10. *Encourages* the INC on Plastic Pollution to continue negotiations with a goal of reaching a conclusion by 2024.

Code: UNEA/1/7
Committee: United Nations Environment Assembly
Topic: Protecting and Restoring Marine Habitats

The United Nations Environment Assembly,

Guided by the universal and unified character of the *United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea* (UNCLOS) in all activities under the sea and acknowledging its economic benefits generated by environmental passion, ecotourism, and international shipping,

Bearing in mind the role of education as a fundamental human right and the foundation for peace and sustainable development, as stated by the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO),

Emphasizing the importance of funding for education in marine biodiversity in order to further prevent environmental degradation in marine and coastal areas to further achieve Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 14, life below water,

Recognizing the success of the Decade of African Seas and Oceans, established by the African Union's Department of Agriculture, Rural Development, Blue Economy, and Sustainable Environment (DARBE) committee in 2015, in addressing education and climate literacy at the regional level,

Affirming education for the global standards for sustainable travel and tourism established by the Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC) and the efforts made by the United Nations World Tourism Organization in the promotion of responsible, sustainable, and universally accessible tourism,

Expressing concern over the increase in ocean temperatures caused by the absorption of greenhouse gasses into the sea, endangering the livelihoods of marine species,

Stressing the negative effect that garbage burning, and dumping has on efforts to preserve the ocean, including the detrimental effects of the Great Pacific Garbage Patch that spans nearly 1.6 million square kilometers,

Reminding Member States of the negative effects of burning biomass fuels for heating and cooking, including the rise in oceanic carbon dioxide,

Declaring concern over the amount of agricultural and industrial runoff making its way into the world's oceans, leading to compromised marine habitats and contaminated water supplies,

Noting the historic United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA) 5.2 resolution EA.5/Res.14 (2022) titled "End plastic pollution: towards an international legally binding instrument" that paved the way for international accountability regarding plastic pollution,

Alarmed by the lack of current research and funding on water filtration systems to assuage the 1.3 metric tons of microplastics in the oceans*,*

Acknowledging Member States' efforts to implement legislation to reduce plastic waste while keeping in mind SDGs 6, clean water and sanitation, 13, climate action, and 14,

Recognizing the significant rising risks from inadequate management and disposal of plastic, including the 400 million tons of plastic produced annually that accounts for 85% of all marine litter,

Cognizant that local and regional economies rely on coastal and marine life for economic livelihood, while also recognizing its contribution to marine biodiversity loss,

Taking into consideration that 90% of employment in fishery-sectors across all nations results from small-scale and local fisheries,

Emphasizing the importance of sustainable fisheries and the promotion of aquaculture to ensure food security in accordance with SDGs 1, no poverty, 2, zero hunger, and 8, decent work and economic growth,

1. *Encourages* continued involvement of UNESCO to implement ocean literacy and climate change topics into local education systems by:

    a. The establishment of five distinct areas of education in environmental literacy as identified by UNESCO:

        i. Ecological foundation;
        ii. Human environment and development;
        iii. Environmental change and impact;
        iv. Sustainable development;
        v. Climate change in regards to marine ecosystems;

    b. The implementation of climate education and environmental literacy into existing aspects of Member States' political and social culture;

    c. The creation of climate change education for students of all ages and disciplines of learning, including:

        i. Didactic learning activities utilizing critical thinking and age-appropriate climate literature;
        ii. Experiential learning activities demonstrating proper strategies for marine and climate conservation;

    d. Stressing the importance of climate change education in teacher training by providing knowledge, effective pedagogies, and tools for educators of all levels, including technical and vocational education;

    e. Increasing opportunities for education and best practice sharing by:

        i. Bringing in resources from other Member States to promote safety and restoration;
        ii. Expanding youth programs and regional conferences to discuss how to combat plastic that is affecting marine life and the planet;
        iii. Encouraging Member States that have not joined the Clean Seas Campaign to join the initiative while expanding the campaign;

2. *Emphasizes* the importance of curbing destructive fishing habits through education, targeting fishermen through:

    a. The establishment of a bi-annual conference hosted by China and open to other Member States interested in co-hosting:

        i. Proper education specifically focused on small-scale and locally based fishermen and safe practices for local marine waters;
        ii. Efficient education specifically focused towards large industrial fisheries on safe practices for local and coastal bodies of water;
        iii. Necessary education given to countries heavily involved in global trade on safe trading practices in international waters;

    b. Regularly promoting fishermen-specific education initiatives in respective communities to curb destructive fishing habits, including:

        i. Designating communities within Member States with a prioritized need for marine species protection;

ii. Proper equipment usage, safety skills and licensing, sustainable fishing levels, and rescuing unintentional wildlife caught in gear;

3. *Encourages* education on sustainability through legislation, including:

    a. Implementing higher education institutions to make systematic changes towards sustainability by re-orienting education, research, operations, and community outreach activities;

    b. Encouraging the adoption of the legal framework established by UNCLOS, including rights and responsibilities Member States hold related to their respective bodies of water;

    c. Promoting inter-ministerial collaboration on climate change education, including partnerships between respective Member States' education and environmental departments and ministries;

4. *Recommends* extending the scope of the Decade of African Seas and Oceans established by the African Union's DARBE Committee in 2015 to apply to all members of the UNEA including:

    a. Highlighting 2022-2030 as the Decade for Ocean Sciences;

    b. Authorizing the international adoption of regionally based educational programs previously established by the DARBE targeting known gaps in education including:

        i. The promotion of sustainable ocean management;
        ii. Ocean and climate literacy programs;
        iii. Knowledge of marine species diversity and taxonomy;

    c. Integrating regionally based operational platforms and decision support systems to create a universal system for monitoring changes in oceans and seas;

5. *Appeals* to Member States to support ecotourism companies and organizations in an effort to:

    a. Build awareness surrounding marine habitat restoration and expansion of official Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) by:

        i. Calling upon Member States to strengthen and increase MPAs;
        ii. Urging investment to MPA in order to increase ocean protection from the current global rate of 10%;

    b. Cooperate in the advocacy for protection and preservation of archaeological heritage sites under the sea;

    c. Transform nature-positive tourism with the balance of business activities and marine habitat livelihood;

    d. Stress the implementation of certification of sustainable travel companies and hotels under the GSTC-Accredited Certification Body;

    e. Expand on the General Assembly resolution 75/229 (2020) titled "Promotion of sustainable tourism, including ecotourism, for poverty eradication and environment protection", highlighting policies that promote ecotourism as a means to aid developing nations in job creation, education, and income generation;

6. *Emphasizes* the adherence to the industry standards and principles for sustainable travel and tourism set by the GSTC such as:

    a. Sustainable accommodations which encompass tourism products and services in complying with social and environmental standards;

b. Tour operators maximizing local social and economical benefits under effective sustainability planning;

c. National, provincial, and municipal tourism policymakers increasing awareness in strategic direction to sustainable tourism;

d. Sustainable business travel regulations on managing costs and considering environmental consequences;

e. Educating tourists in order for them to choose responsible and sustainable tour operators;

f. The implementation of a uniform standard in the discovery and development of new Funderwater sites under UNCLOS;

g. An eco-friendly approach to tourism site development;

h. Increased funding for sustainable infrastructure projects that encourage carbon-neutral tourism;

7. *Reiterates* its commitment to work with non-governmental bodies in finding ways and encouraging efforts to turn plastic waste into profitable ventures by:

    a. Referencing the UN's Guidelines for Reducing Plastic Waste & Sustainable Ocean and Climate Action Acceleration for the development of ideas on reusing and recycling plastic waste;

    b. Furthering research into the development of processing of plastic waste through the bodies like the National Renewable Energy Laboratory which uses engineered bacteria that turns plastic waste into valuable chemicals;

8. *Welcomes* the facilitation of multilateral collaboration through continued, intentional international information sharing among Member States by:

    a. Having the UN Oceans Conference convene annually after the findings of the UNEA 5.2 working group are released, inviting Member States, the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee, UNEA experts, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) such as the Clean Seas Campaign, and other relevant parties with the goal of:

        i. Sharing the facets of the binding instrument, including disincentivizing the use of single use plastics;
        ii. Allowing Member States to provide feedback on the results;
        iii. Creating goals for future global implementation;
        iv. Facilitating information sharing between developing and developed Member States;
        v. Encouraging Member States to participate in regional environmental data-sharing blocs in order to:
        vi. Form regional databases for the recording of plastic waste and research of plastic alternatives;
        vii. Provide structural and measurable support for SDG target 14.1 with urgency to prevent and significantly reduce marine pollution of all kinds by 2025;

    b. Adding an initiative within the UNEA 5.2 working group to research plastic pollution related solutions beyond the legally binding instrument, including:

        i. Alternative solutions to plastics to increase capacity building in preparation for the transition to a plastic-free future;

ii. Potential marine filtration systems, such as oysters that can filter 50 gallons of water a day per oyster, to mitigate the increase of microplastics in coastal areas;

9. *Endorses* the use of sustainable fishing practices for developed Member States who are in the position to implement these practices through:

    a. Assessing deep sea bottom fishing activities and its impact on Vulnerable Marine Systems (VME);

    b. Encouraging Member States to pass legislation to prevent bottom fishing in areas where vulnerable marine ecosystems are known to exist;

    c. Putting protocols that call for stopping fishing when VMEs are encountered during fishing operations and reporting such encounters so that the site can take the necessary action;

    d. Creating measures that manage deep-sea fish stocks sustainably in accordance with the precautionary principle, ecosystem approaches, and international law;

10. *Suggests* the expansion of coral reef protection efforts through the maintenance of existing barriers through the utilization of the Coral Reef Unit and the United Nations Environment Programme's Global Coral Reef Monitoring Network to monitor:

    a. Levels of ocean acidification;

    b. Presence of invasive or harmful species;

    c. Chemical runoff and other pollutants;

11. *Advises* Member States to adopt similar national and local policies following the format of The National Aquaculture Act of 1980 by:

    a. Prioritizing and incentivizing the development of sustainable aquaculture in line with current regional seafood cultivation data;

    b. Supporting the expansion of aquaculture industry growth in developing Member States;

    c. Expanding aquaculture development to more comprehensively reach the African and Asia-Pacific Member States;

12. *Suggests* further development of the Marine Spatial Planning operational framework to guide decision making for the conservation of marine biodiversity while acknowledging its economic benefits to:

    a. Use this plan to improve the representation of biodiversity and protect ecologically important areas, whilst minimizing the economic impacts on those affected;

    b. Expand economical encouragement of farming and fishing of invasive marine life in hotspot areas that endanger keystone species;

13. *Recommends* further investment in new and existing cooperative frameworks, similar to those imposed by The Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-Based Activities to mitigate cross border pollution that drains into the ocean by:

    a. Placing an emphasis on streamlining shared information and education on efficient techniques for clean waste disposal;

    b. Comprehensively addressing the management of pesticides and fertilizers on a global scale;

14. *Advises* the regulation and reform of mining, agricultural, and industrial waste disposal into oceans and ocean feeding rivers in developing countries through:

    a. Encouraging developed nations assisting underdeveloped nations with monetary and material investments;

    b. Supporting foreign investment to diversify developing economies away from dependency on pollution heavy industries;

    c. Monitoring the proper disposal of waste in waste mine areas upon their closing as well as rebuilding the affected surrounding environment;

    d. Spreading awareness and education for both developed and underdeveloped Member States of more effective techniques of waste disposal for businesses;

15. *Requests* that Member States legislate safe drilling and transportation practices for offshore oil and gas rigs and emphasize the creation of better techniques to clean up oil spills by:

    a. Recommending the use of financial aid and tax incentives for drilling businesses as a form of compensation in exchange for safer practices;

    b. Encouraging oil and petroleum based international organizations, such as the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries, to emphasize the practice of safe and low risk drilling practices;

    c. Advising developed Member States to invest in companies based in developing Member States to fill the gap of incentives;

    d. Recommending that Member States specifically invest in research on environmentally safe drilling technology;

16. *Suggests* Member States set an agenda to withdraw from fossil fuel-based energy infrastructures by:

    a. Speeding the transition to clean energy sources such as solar, wind, hydropower, nuclear, or natural gas;

    b. Meeting the 2009 Conference of the Parties to the UN Convention on Biological Diversity climate financing pledge of $100 billion in climate financing per year for developing Member States;

17. *Recommends* multinational efforts be expanded to increase access to efficient wood burning stoves and other related technologies to reduce carbon emissions from the use of biomass as a fuel through:

    a. Increasing patronage of philanthropic organizations working to reduce carbon emissions, such as the International Cryosphere Climate Initiative, by encouraging:

        i. Replacement of biomass burning stoves with more efficient cooking methods;
        ii. Development of reliable black carbon testing protocol;
        iii. Promotion of the ecological benefits of clean cooking methods;

    b. Encouraging Member States to increase the funding in their foreign aid budgets for electrification projects in rural areas of developing Member States by coordinating these efforts at a multinational level with entities such as the World Bank;

18. *Underscores* the importance of increasing the proper handling and disposal of solid waste through:

a. Facilitating the creation of sustainable local recycling programs and education about the positive effects of these programs;

b. Increasing funding for new roads, landfills, and other infrastructure in the waste management chain for developing Member States.