PREAMBLE

The participants of the Youth and Blue Economy conference congratulate the Government and people of Kenya in its hosting of the Sustainable Blue Economy Conference – the first ever global conference on the blue economy. We are humbled by thousands of participants from around the world who will convene in Nairobi to share ideas on the critical issue of harnessing the potential of our oceans, seas, lakes and rivers to improve the lives of all, particularly for the people in developing countries such as women, young men and women and Indigenous peoples; while seeking to leverage the latest innovations, scientific advances and best practices to build prosperity while conserving our waters for future generations.

We thank the Governments of Kenya and the co-sponsors of the conference the Governments of Canada and Japan, for recognizing the potential of young men and women as a demographic dividend, especially those young men and women who live in Africa. Africa has the largest number of young men and women in the world with 42% of the global population under the age of 25 living in Sub-Saharan Africa.

To assure the voice of young men and women are heard and acted on, over 300 young men and women drawn from coastal communities globally have come together at the United Nations compound in Nairobi to discuss the roles and opportunities of young men and women in the Blue Economy.

Under the banner “Enhancing Young Men and Women’s Participation and Access to opportunities in the Blue Economy”, the participants examined international, regional, national and local best practices on how young men and women can best engage in the Blue Economy, with the goal of creating sustainable and prosperous communities globally.

YOUTH AND THE BLUE ECONOMY DECLARATION

The Youth and the Blue Economy promotes the sustainable development of aquatic resources for the benefit of communities who rely on them for their livelihoods and food security. It seeks to maximize economic and social benefits while minimizing environmental degradation from activities within the fisheries and aquaculture sector.

This declaration contains substantive policy and action oriented recommendations that have been informed by reports of fact-finding missions undertaken by the Youth Congress, and global responses from over 2,000 online respondents.

The communiqué has been reviewed and adopted by the conference participants.

The final call to action to the Blue Economy Conference and the governments and experts gathered there is to recognize young men and women as leaders of today and tomorrow in the Blue Economy.

General findings from the Youth and Blue Economy Conference

1. The participants of the Youth and Blue Economy conference recognize the importance of the Blue Economy and its positive impact on sustainable local and global development.

2. Special consideration must be given to the people living along the shores of oceans, lakes and rivers. In the African context that is predominantly young men and women.

3. While 120 million young people reach working age every year, the Blue Economy workforce in many developing countries is ageing. The need for access to investment resources and skills development is critical to assure the survival of fishing communities and the young men and women who live within them.

4. Women must be central to Blue Economy policies and practices. Traditionally, fisheries policy has focused on the role of men in harvesting, with less attention paid to the women.

Recommendations to National Governments

5. The focus on the Blue Economy as the world’s next frontier of economic growth i will only yield the desired results if education and training to boost marine-based economic development is fully embraced.

6. The Blue Economy should prioritize policies and incentives that unlock the potential of young men and women and empower them to safeguard natural resources while enhancing opportunities to access decent work.

7. The long-term viability of the Blue Economy and the sectors it supports depend on promoting young men and women and establishing policies that support the Blue Economy and facilitate their pursuit of innovation and entrepreneurship.
8. The Blue Economy can help drive Africa and the world’s economic growth to soaring height. If properly managed, the Blue Economy can create the much-needed opportunities for employment for young men and women and other groups and their communities.

9. Ensure that the young men and women benefit from Blue Economy through creation of job opportunities in the lakes and its tourism resources. Investing in young men and women can result in better resource management, greater decent work opportunities and reduced waste, as young people are more inclined to adopt new technologies and techniques.

10. Young men and women require access to credit. Innovative financing is an integral component of the Blue Economy.

11. Create community-based microfinance systems that benefit young men and women and help communities diversify livelihoods, reinforce local resilience, and contribute to poverty reduction.

12. Capacity building in business development and entrepreneurship help unlock new livelihood opportunities for young men and women by improving the efficiency and effectiveness of their work.

13. Governments should allocate funds towards the initiation of programs to strengthen the use of Blue Economy in enhancing livelihoods.

14. Free studies tailored for seamen and such which is to achieve curb both unemployment and also ensure total use of the ocean economy.

15. Investment in fisheries and aquaculture ensure that they are prioritized in national development plans.

16. Programs must be created to strengthen the conservation and sustainable use of marine and coastal biodiversity.

17. A level economic and legislative playing field that provides incentives to engage in the Blue Economy must be promoted.

Recommendation to Local Governments

18. Cities and towns in coastal areas are expanding faster than in non-coastal areas of the world. It is estimated that over 50 per cent of the world’s population lives closer than 3 kms to a surface freshwater body, and only 10 per cent of the global population lives further than 10 kms away.

19. Informal settlements and slums area often in environmentally-fragile locations near water such as floodplains, coastal shores and river banks.

20. Coastal cities play a vital role in the Blue Economy when adequately planned and managed. About 80 per cent of global tourism is placed on the coast. Shipping will grow dramatically over the coming decades and much of which is channeled through coastal cities.

21. The planning for spatial and economic development of coastal areas – including planning considerations for the waterbodies – is crucial, especially in view of enhancing sustainable development and reducing the negative footprint on natural resources and ecosystems.

22. In order to appropriately respond to the opportunities and challenges of the Blue Economy, cities require adequate urban planning and design, governance and legal structures. Only by taking into consideration resilience – both on land and in water – can cities and communities develop sustainably.

Recommendations to Regional Bodies


24. Sensitize and educate the young men and women about the Blue Economy at Regional Levels.

25. Bringing the voices young men and women into policy making and planning through Blue Economy growth dialogue.

Recommendations to the United Nations and development partners

26. The Blue Economy linkage to the Sustainable Development Goals, specifically to SDG 14 on conserving and sustainably using the oceans, seas and marine resources, and SDG 7 on Decent work on Economic Growth, is critical. It is as well important to link the Blue Economy to other key environmental and social SDGs.

27. In line with SDGs, the Blue Economy must have social inclusion and leaving no one behind as a key pillar of environment and social sustainability on which it rests.

28. These goals are closely aligned with the three pillars of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which pay special attention to traditionally marginalized groups.

29. Any development of the Blue Economy should not abrogate human rights nor harm local communities.

30. The regulation of the Blue Economy should be conducive to the protection of the rights of women and children, indigenous peoples, migrants and refugees, and other at-risk and marginalised groups. Promote the conservation of waters for future generations as well.

31. The support of climate action is critical to the Blue Economy.
32. Initiatives that seek to end hunger, secure food supplies and promote good health and sustainable fisheries are important actions to be supported.

33. The support of frequent clean up exercises is an excellent way to engage young men and women and the communities they live within.

Recommendations to Regional Bodies

34. Increase initiatives that make good use of water bodies to create job opportunities for jobs to young men and women.

35. Discourage activities that could lead to environmental degradation i.e. cutting trees, burning charcoal instead of environmentally friendly activities such as starting a greenhouse project for women groups, fish rearing project for young men and women etc. Increase support to planting more trees around the water catchment areas to reduce soil erosion and flooding.

36. Support capacity building in business development and entrepreneurship. This will help to unlock livelihoods opportunities for young men and women by improving the efficiency and viability of their activities.

37. Make efforts to encourage direct investment in the Blue Economy as it has the potential to solve many of the young men and women’s issues.

38. The support of innovation accelerators and supporting new technology and market based solutions is critical to the Blue Economy.

Recommendations for Governments Supporting Indigenous Peoples as equal partners in the Blue Economy

39. Today there are more than 370 million indigenous peoples living in some 90 countries. The Blue Economy must consider indigenous peoples as equal partners in the development decisions that affect them.

40. Indigenous peoples are often disproportionately impacted by environmental degradation, political and economic marginalization and development activities that negatively affect their ecosystems, livelihoods, cultural heritage and nutritional status.

41. The Blue Economy addresses the most pressing challenges facing indigenous peoples, including improved livelihoods and decent work, food security, environmental degradation, tenure rights, equitable access to natural resources and cultural renewal and survival.

42. Indigenous peoples are valued as custodians of biodiversity and ecosystem management through their traditional knowledge, culture and practices.

Partnership Recognition

43. The participants of the conference recognize the importance of the Government of Kenya’s co-hosting the first ever conference on the Blue Economy.

44. The Government of Kenya’s Vision 2030’s recognizes young men and women, a key and largest constituency in its country, and as a key partner and leader in the Blue Economy in Kenya, in Africa and globally.

45. The participants recognize the Government of Canada, as a co-host of the conference and a country which is bound by the Pacific, Arctic, and North Atlantic Oceans, as a leader in the blue economy. The GOCs recognition of women and indigenous peoples as key constituencies in the Blue Economy is to be commended.

46. The participants also recognize the Commonwealth’s role in the inception of the Blue Economy conference, and commend its Commonwealth Blue Charter which is a blueprint for the development of the Blue Economy.

Presented By;
The Participants of the Youth and the Blue Economy Conference
The Youth Congress;
www.theyoungmenandwomencongress.org