

Committee: General Assembly

Topic: Ensuring the help of ocean cleaning.

Chair: Maria Jose Ramos Herrera

Moderator: Gabriela García Ordoñez



## **I. Committee**

The General Assembly (GA) is the main deliberative, policymaking and representative organ of the United Nations (UN) where different countries discuss and work together for solving international issues covered by the UN Charter. It is also one of the six main organs of the United Nations, and the only committee in which all Member States have equal representation “one nation, one vote”.

The General Assembly was established in 1945 by the United Nations. It is composed of 193 members, whose duty is to provide a formal discussion for international issues. Each member of the General Assembly has one vote, which is used to approve and establish different types of solutions. The member of GA makes decisions on important questions in topics related to peace and security. Admission of new members and budgetary matters requires two-thirds of the members being in favor of the solution so it can pass. Decisions on other questions are solved by a simple majority.

GA discusses international issues covered by the UN Charter, such as the development of third world countries, peace among nations, creating international laws and security for all the citizens of the world, among other issues. The GA has also initiated political, economic, humanitarian, social and legal actions. The United Nations also implements the defense of human rights and fundamental freedoms.

## **II. Statement of the problem**

The ocean covers about 70.9% of Earth's surface, meaning the area of the ocean is around 361.9 million square kilometers. The ocean is one of Earth's most valuable natural resources, a source of biodiversity, food, and life, with numerous different animal and plant species, a mean of transportation, and a large amount of natural resources as minerals and drilled for crude oil are found in our oceans. Also, the ocean plays a critical role in removing carbon from the atmosphere and providing oxygen, and it regulates Earth's climate thanks to the currents.

Due to its enormous extension and its deepness, humans do not understand that waste should not be thrown at the ocean, as human actions have a big impact on our oceans. A wide range of pollution, from plastic pollution to light pollution, affect our oceans nowadays. It is estimated that 5.25 trillion pieces of plastic debris lies in the ocean. Out of this, 269,000 tons of plastic float on the water's surface, and the rest of the debris pollutes the deep sea. Before 1972, people started throwing trash, sewage sludge, and chemical, industrial, and radioactive waste into the ocean without having any problems; and nowadays our oceans are filled with all this waste. If we do not start raising awareness for having our oceans clean, marine life will be damaged, we will start having problems with oxygen, we will lack food, and the damage will not be reversible.

## **III. The Problem**

There are many types of ocean pollution, such as chemical pollution, which is the introduction of harmful contaminants, like pesticides, detergents, oil, industrial chemicals, etc. Also, there is light pollution, which happens when it penetrates under the water, creating a different biome for their living species in shallow reef near urban environments, causing species to evolve timing of migration, reproduction, and feeding. Also, there is noise pollution, which is the pollution caused by ships, sonar devices, and oil rigs that disrupt natural noises in the marine environment. And the most common type of ocean pollution is plastic debris. The amount of plastic in the Atlantic Ocean has tripled since 1960 and the garbage patch floating in the Pacific Ocean, is almost 620,000 square miles.

Plastic debris kills marine life: more than 100,000 mammals and seabirds are killed every year, as fish or mammals tangle in the plastic fibers, restricting their movement or their ability to feed and breathe, or the plastic is ingested by the species which is toxic for them and they die. Nonetheless, plastic debris is the most common way of ocean pollution, the rest of it is contributed by wastewater and industrial waste, as it is believed that 90% of wastewater and 70% of industrial wastewater dumped by developing countries are not treated prior to their release. In addition, cruise ships dump more than one billion gallons of sewage into the ocean every year.

Waste dumped into the oceans creates “dead zones”, which are zones where pollution concentrate in a specific zone of the ocean, as diffusion takes time. Marine life cannot live in these zones, which are more than 500 of them around the open sea and coastal water, forcing

animals to migrate and disrupt the balance of the existing marine life in that place. An example of a big dead zone is The Great Pacific Garbage Patch, which is a 1.6 million square kilometer area filled with floating trash (three times bigger than the extension of France), as a consequence of the 46,000 pieces of plastic in every one square mile of ocean, continuously carried over by the waves and the disturbances caused by wind and rain.

We must stop taking for granted ocean pollution and start helping to clean our oceans, as it has become a global crisis, and this will give big consequences for us. Effects are already being seen, as it is estimated that 1 of 3 fish caught for human consumption contains plastic, and 1 billion people are getting sick every year. The only solution for eradicating this problem is ocean cleanup, and the cost of cleaning the ocean is 500 million dollars per year. However, innovative ideas and engineering solutions have been proposed, and they might offer us an alternative for cleaning our oceans.

#### **IV. Conclusion**

We must start acting more consciously as if oceans continue being polluted, human activities will be extremely affected. Because of oceans, 56 million people have employment as fishers and aquacultures. Oceans are a very important source of food. They also provide vital renewable energy, as devices are being developed to generate electricity from waves and tides, as well as offshore wind farms. Besides, oceans are a very essential factor for tourism, coastal areas receive millions of tourists per year, and that generates jobs for the people who live in countries with beaches, and people tend to vacay there as oceans influence our health and well-being.

There are organizations like The Ocean Cleanup that are doing remarkable contributions for building sustainable ocean cleanup devices, whose main focus is to research plastics, trying to figure out a way to decompose plastics without causing any harm to our planet, and their latest invention was a system that extends over the ocean creating a controlled coast. Recycling technologies are also a very innovative and effective way for ocean cleaning. The British company, Recycling Technologies, announced a new process that could turn plastic into virgin plastic, oils, and wax.

## **V. Viable Solutions**

- Thirty countries from Kenya to Indonesia and from Canada to Brazil are helping to clean oceans by counteracting the overflow of plastic debris that are degrading our oceans and endangering life beings.
- The countries, all members of UN Environment have entered the #CleanSeas campaign, for helping around 40 percent of the world's coastlines. They are making up laws, establishing marine reserves, banning plastic bags and clean up the waste choking their beaches and reefs.
- Create campaigns to spread the word and create awareness, to educate people on global issues.
- Create laws for banning plastic use in stores as supermarkets, and plastic straws in restaurants, to reduce the plastic debris.
- Make volunteers for citizens to join help cleaning the ocean.
- Put signs for not throwing trash on the beaches, and give fines if people do not respect

them.

## VI. Useful Website Resources

- <https://www.superyachtcrewagency.com/blog/6-ways-to-help-clean-up-the-ocean/14476>
- from <https://marinebio.org/conservation/ocean-dumping/ocean-resources/>
- <https://www.worldatlas.com/articles/countries-putting-the-most-plastic-waste-into-the-oceans.html>
- <https://www.noaa.gov/education/resource-collections/ocean-coasts-education-resources/ocean-pollution>
- <https://www.nrdc.org/stories/ocean-pollution-dirty-facts>
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