



## Ocean Bootcamp Showcases Youth-Led Solutions on the World Stage

**October 24th, 2019 - Oslo, Norway** — [Sustainable Ocean Alliance](#) (SOA) and the [Arctic University of Norway](#) (UiT) co-hosted this year's Our Ocean Youth Leadership Summit in cooperation with the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which brought together 100 young people from 48 countries to collaboratively develop solutions to critical ocean problems. ([Watch highlights video](#) and [ocean initiatives video](#)).

Over the two day summit, young leaders participated in a design thinking boot camp and witnessed presentations from His Royal Highness Haakon, Crown Prince of Norway, Norwegian Prime Minister Erna Solberg, former U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry, E.U. Commissioner Karmenu Vella, First Lady Debbie Remengesau of the Republic of Palau, and other leaders across the government and the private sector. Speakers urged young leaders in the room to act with urgency and to take their place at the forefront of a growing movement to demand action on climate change and effective ocean policy.

"You must stand up to those who spread disinformation and challenge your politicians to do better," urged Former Secretary of State John Kerry. Afroz Shah, Champion of the Earth at UNEP and instigator of the [world's largest beach cleanup](#), echoed these sentiments and issued a similar call to action to the room, reminding participants that they are "equally in charge as high-level leadership."

"If you are choosing between protesting or acting, always choose acting", emphasized European Commissioner Karmenu Vella.

His Royal Highness Haakon, Crown Prince of Norway, who was present throughout the youth summit, witnessed firsthand the ways in which "youth have proven that they are a part of the solution. They will build resilience and refuse to give up."

Summit programming demonstrated how the next generation can go beyond activism and address global ocean challenges through the lens of entrepreneurship.

After actively working to build prototypes of their ideas during the summit, the 20 youth teams pitched their innovative solutions in front of a panel of judges, including Vincent Pieribone, vice chairman at OceanX, Tom Grasso, Oceans initiative lead and senior program officer at the Walton Family Foundation, Elizabeth Kim, Office of Ocean and Polar Affairs at the U.S Department of State and Gry Ulverud, COO at REV Ocean. Some solutions that emerged included: using ocean energy technologies to cool coral reefs, learning from and working with youth climate movements to shine a spotlight on the problems facing our oceans, and working with the International Maritime Organization (IMO) to help transition the shipping industry to zero carbon emissions.

The winning team was comprised of four young people from Pakistan, Thailand, Ireland, and Ghana. They presented their solution—a mobile application that will put consumers in competition with their peers to lower their energy consumption while allowing governments to evaluate emissions reductions—on the main stage alongside SOA's Founder and CEO, Daniela Fernandez, at the conclusion of the Our Ocean Conference.

In her closing remarks delivered to Our Ocean Conference participants, Fernandez made three requests of the world leaders in the room:

- to accelerate the timeline of their targets to within the next five years
- to reject proposals to advance seabed mining
- to increase efforts to empower the next generation of ocean stewards

To capitalize on the energy and ideas that resulted from the conference, Sustainable Ocean Alliance (SOA) has made microgrants available to all 20 teams who participated in the boot camp, and will continue to support all the attendees through the Sustainable Ocean Alliance's Ocean Leadership and Ocean Solutions Accelerator programs.

Sustainable Ocean Alliance (SOA) will be co-hosting the Our Youth Leadership Summit in Palau in August 2020.

"I say to all you future leaders that Palau stands with you and for a healthy planet for this generation .... We are all visitors in this world, and we are now borrowing it from our children," stated the First Lady Debbie Remengesau of the Republic of Palau.

The 2019 summit was sponsored by the Walton Family Foundation, OceanX, Waitt Foundation, the Anthropocene Institute, REV Ocean, The Arctic University of Norway (UiT), and WWF. Additionally, community supporters included Divers Clean Action, Global Changemakers, Global Shapers Oslo, Mandalah and Peace Boat.

## **About Our Ocean Youth Leadership Summit**

*Our Ocean* conferences were initiated by Secretary of State John Kerry in 2014, with the aim to put oceans on the foreign policy agenda and create a platform where leaders from government, business, and civil society meet on an equal footing to promote action and innovation for clean, healthy and productive oceans.

For the past four years, the Sustainable Ocean Alliance has co-organized the Our Ocean Youth Leadership Summit, which aims to inspire, inform, and empower young participants between the ages of 18-35 to build high impact and integrated solutions for the ocean and society. [More information is available on our website.](#)

## **About Sustainable Ocean Alliance**

[Sustainable Ocean Alliance](#) (SOA) is a global non-profit organization that advances the impact of startups, social enterprises and initiatives that are developing solutions to protect and sustain our ocean. SOA's pipeline of ocean leaders is cultivated through a hub-based model, led by students at the collegiate and young professional levels.

Sustainable Ocean Alliance (SOA) was founded in 2014 as a college-room idea. With phenomenal speed, SOA has created the world's largest network of young ocean leaders – through establishing a presence in over 155 countries, launching the first-ever Ocean Solutions Accelerator in 2018 to support ocean tech startups, and partnering with corporations and governments to develop technological solutions that can address the greatest threats facing our planet.

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