

# CHANGWON YOUTH DECLARATION for the Protection of the Seas of East Asia



**We, the young champions for the oceans, envision a blue economy for the communities in East Asia that see and understand the value of the marine ecosystem and biodiversity through sustainable residential and industrial practices and knowledge enrichment.**

## **BACKGROUND**

The Seas of East Asia are famous for their rich marine biodiversity. They are the home of more than a thousand species of flora and fauna. They are a major source of food, livelihood, and income from the transportation of goods and tourism activities. Tourism is one of the driving forces in the advancement of our countries' economies.

However, the marine ecosystem is threatened from illegal and irresponsible fisheries operations, the filthy production processes of companies, the conversion of coastal areas into commercial and industrial establishments, the invasion of exotic species, and global warming.

Thus, we need to put emphasis on the interconnection between oceans and human beings to conserve our seas.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

We believe that there needs to be a multi-stakeholder and multi-lateral approach to solve these problems.

**Governments** need to engage NGOs and volunteer groups. They should open funding opportunities for research projects. The governments should enforce the use of environment-friendly technology for waste prevention and management. They should create additional policies and impose strict penalties to the violators of environmental laws.

The central governments and the **local communities** need to team up for more effective implementation of laws and projects. Communities must be directly involved in decision-making processes combining traditional knowledge with groundbreaking innovations. We encourage community-based protection of tourist sites by limiting the number of tourists and promoting sustainable practices. Their participation is essential in improved management of wastes and response to natural and manmade disasters such as oil spills, earthquakes, tsunamis, flooding and landslides.

**Education** is a major player in achieving a blue economy. Mandatory environmental subjects should be introduced to schools starting at the pre-school level. These subjects should be proper, gradual, continuous, and must focus on issues relevant to their countries.

We should take advantage of **social networking sites** such as Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube to raise awareness about coastal and marine issues, and constructively engage the youth by sharing opportunities to be involved in environmental initiatives.

There should be emphasis on **individual action**. Every person must commit to a more environment-friendly lifestyle by purchasing quality local products, being more proactive in managing wastes, and supporting promising local projects.

In summary, these are our proposed EASY (East Asian Seas Youth) ACTIONS:

**Awareness**  
**Collaboration**  
**Technology**  
**Initiative**  
**Organization**  
**Negotiation**  
**Sustainability**

We, the young champions for the oceans, are already taking action.

We, the young champions for the oceans, will not remain idle and apathetic because this is for our survival. Recognizing the efforts and sacrifices of the past generations, we are eagerly fighting for justice of the present and future generations.

**We are the young champions for the seas of East Asia. Save our seas, save our future!**

*\*Agreed upon by the delegates of the Third East Asian Seas Youth Forum, held in Changwon City, Republic of Korea from July 8 to 13, 2012, supported by the Partnerships in Environmental Management of the Seas of East Asia, Swedish International Development Agency, Ministry of Land, Transport and Maritime Affairs of RO Korea, and the City Government of Changwon.*