

BIGMUN 2026
ECOSOC 1: High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF)

Research Report

Topic 3 : Developing methods, aligning with SDG 14, to clean the oceans and mitigate the effects of The Great Pacific Garbage Patch



Eve MAROTTE and Mert ÖZER

Table of Contents:

Introduction:	3
Definition of Key Terms:	3
Background Information:	3
Major Countries and Organisations Involved:	4
Relevant UN Resolutions:	4
Previous Attempts to Solve the Issue:	7
Possible Solutions:	8
Bibliography	9

Introduction:

As pollution levels increase and wastes are being thrown out to the ocean by major corporations, a global challenge arises that threatens the world and causes social, economic and ecological problems. The problem at hand is the continually growing Great Pacific Garbage Patch, formed by persistent plastic waste that has been circulating in the North Pacific Ocean. This patch impacts tourism, fishing and local marine life in a really negative way. In alignment with Sustainable Development Goal 14. The international community should pursue development-oriented and inclusive solutions. International communities should search for ways to combat this issue by strengthening global cooperation and further discussing the possible economic outcomes and social crises that can threaten the world in the future. Supporting technological advancements, promoting secure and eco-friendly production and consumption practices are also key for major cooperations and parties to comprehend the importance of this issue and act accordingly. In conclusion the severe impacts that The Great Pacific Garbage Patch has for the environment, economy and local communities is hefty and should be addressed by the affiliation of the delegates who are a part of the ECOSOC 1 committee.

Definition of Key Terms:

Sustainable Development Goals - a universal call to action to end poverty, protect the planet and ensure that all people enjoy peace and prosperity.

SDG 14 - conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources.

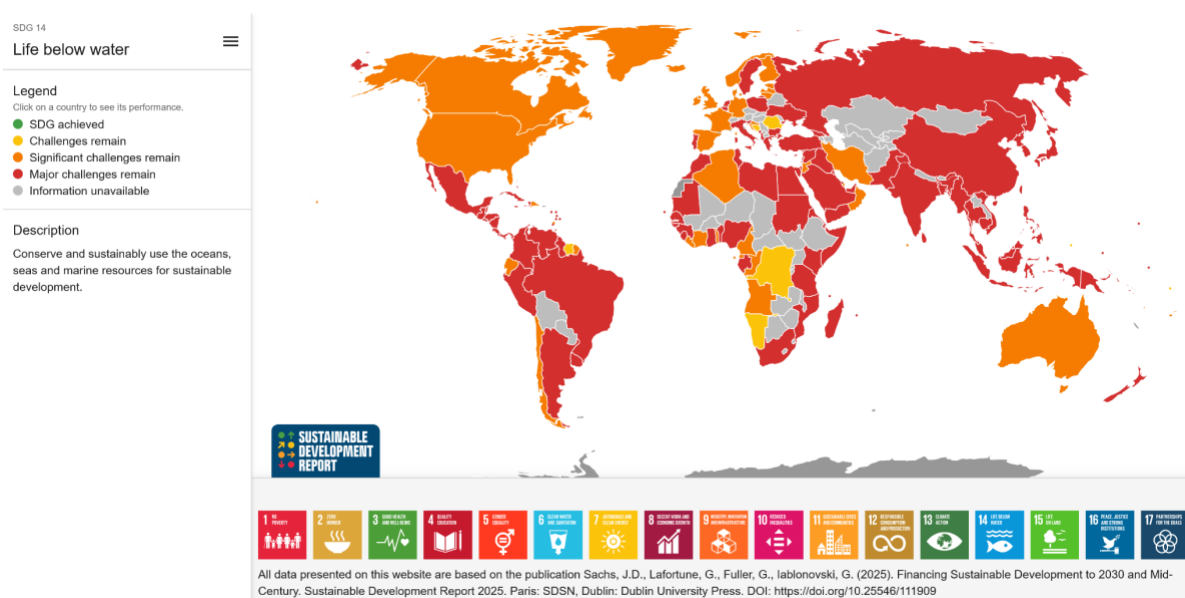
Gyre - large system of rotating ocean currents, e.g : the North and South Pacific Subtropical Gyres.

The Great Pacific Garbage Patch - areas of marine debris concentration in the North Pacific Ocean, circulated by the North Pacific gyre.

Background Information:

The Great Pacific Garbage Patch. Located between Hawaii and California is a million ton garbage pile floating in the sea consisting of mostly plastic waste. The primary cause of this issue was with the rapid rise in single-use consumption products, factories that are illegally littering the environment and poor waste management systems.

Major Countries and Organisations Involved:



This map has been filtered so that only the progress of Goal 14 can be seen.

Relevant UN Resolutions:

UNEA Resolution.7 - Marine Litter and Microplastics

- **Urges** all actors to step up actions to “ by 2025, prevent and significantly reduce marine pollution of all kinds, in particular from land-based activities, including marine debris and nutrient pollution”
- **Encourages** all member States, based on best available knowledge of sources and levels of marine litter and microplastics in the environment, to prioritize policies and measures at the appropriate scale to avoid marine litter and microplastics from entering the marine environment;
- **Also encourages** all member States and invites other actors, taking into account national conditions:
 - (a) To fully implement the recommendations and actions set out in its resolutions 1/6 and 2/11, as relevant, and emphasizes that those resolutions have important

elements and guidance that are not repeated in the present resolution;

- (b) To cooperate to establish common definitions and harmonized standards and methodologies for the measurement and monitoring of marine litter and microplastics;
 - (c) To develop and implement action plans for preventing marine litter and the discharge of microplastics; encouraging resource efficiency, and increasing collection and recycling rates of plastic waste and re-design and re-use of products and materials; and avoiding the unnecessary use of plastic and plastic containing chemicals of particular concern where appropriate;
- **Notes** the important role of key sectors such as plastics producers, retailers and the consumer goods industry, as well as importers, packaging firms and transport firms, to contribute to the reduction of marine litter, including microplastics, arising from their products and activities, as well as to provide information on the impacts arising from their products throughout their life cycle, and encourages innovative approaches such as the use of extended producer responsibility schemes, container deposit schemes and other initiatives;
 - **Invites** relevant international and regional organizations and conventions [...] to increase their action to prevent and reduce marine litter and microplastics and their harmful effects and to coordinate where appropriate to achieve that end;

UNEA Resolution - End Plastic Pollution : towards and International Legally Binding Instrument

- **Requests** the Executive Director to convene an intergovernmental negotiating committee, to begin its work during the second half of 2022, with the ambition of completing its work by the end of 2024;
- **Decides** that the intergovernmental negotiating committee is to develop an international legally binding instrument on plastic pollution, including in the marine environment, henceforth referred to as “the instrument”, which could include both binding and voluntary approaches, based on a comprehensive approach that addresses the full life cycle of plastic, taking into account, among other things, the principles of the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, as well as national circumstances and

capabilities, and including provisions :

- (a) To specify the objectives of the instrument;
- (b) To promote sustainable production and consumption of plastics through, among other things, product design and environmentally sound waste management, including through resource efficiency and circular economy approaches;
- (c) To promote national and international cooperative measures to reduce plastic pollution in the marine environment, including existing plastic pollution;
- (d) To develop, implement and update national action plans reflecting country-driven approaches to contribute to the objectives of the instrument;
- (e) To promote national action plans to work towards the prevention, reduction and elimination of plastic pollution, and to support regional and international cooperation;
- (f) To specify national reporting, as appropriate;
- (g) To periodically assess the progress of implementation of the instrument;
- (h) To periodically assess the effectiveness of the instrument in achieving its objectives;
- (i) To provide scientific and socioeconomic assessments related to plastic pollution;
- (j) To increase knowledge through awareness-raising, education and the exchange of information;
- (k) To promote cooperation and coordination with relevant regional and international conventions, instruments and organizations, while recognizing their respective mandates, avoiding duplication and promoting complementarity of action;
- (l) To encourage action by all stakeholders, including the private sector, and to promote cooperation at the local, national, regional and global levels;
- (m) To initiate a multi-stakeholder action agenda;
- (n) To specify arrangements for capacity-building and technical assistance, technology transfer on mutually agreed terms, and financial assistance, recognizing that

the effective implementation of some legal obligations under the instrument will depend on the availability of capacity-building and adequate financial and technical assistance;

(o) To promote research into and development of sustainable, affordable, innovative and cost-efficient approaches;

(p) To address compliance;

- **Requests** the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme to convene an ad hoc open-ended working group to hold one meeting during the first half of 2022 to prepare for the work of the intergovernmental negotiating committee and to discuss in particular the timetable and organization of the work of the committee, taking into account the provisions and elements identified in paragraphs 3 and 4 of the present resolution;
- **Calls upon** all Member States to continue and step up activities, and adopt voluntary measures, to combat plastic pollution, including measures related to sustainable consumption and production, which may include circular economy approaches, and to develop and implement national action plans, while fostering international action and initiatives under national regulatory frameworks, and, on a voluntary basis, to provide statistical information on the environmentally sound management of plastic waste, as appropriate, taking into account national circumstances;

Previous Attempts to Solve the Issue:

What needs to be addressed, however, are what the UN had already been doing in order to avoid the growth of cleaning the oceans and mitigate the effects of The Great Pacific Garbage Patch . A few of these measures to solve this are as follows:

The BBNJ Agreement (The Agreement on Marine Biological Diversity of Areas beyond National Jurisdictions) : this agreement provides a legal framework for all activities in the ocean and seas. In June 2025, this agreement had been ratified by 50 countries. However it still needs 10 ratifications in order for the Agreement to enter into force.

The third United Nations Ocean Conference : it was held in Nice in June 2025. It offered

renewed momentum as countries adopted a bold political declaration and made over 800 voluntary commitments on marine protection, pollution control, high-seas governance and support for vulnerable nations.

Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction Agreement : that agreement was agreed in 2023. Its goal is to increase international cooperation to protect vulnerable habitats. It's to establish complete, effective and equitably managed systems of government-protected areas should be pursued to conserve biodiversity and ensure a sustainable future for the fishing industry. this agreement also provides a legal framework for all activities in seas and oceans.

Possible Solutions:

We expect the delegates to discuss this topic by acting inclusive and open-minded towards all possible solutions. The debate should mainly focus on preserving the natural environment while also ensuring the continuation of the production line. The main goal is to create alternatives aligning with SDG 14 to mitigate the issues that the garbage patch causes and attempting to create original solutions. The topic mainly discussed should be about possible ways to clean the oceans and mitigate the garbage patch while also protecting the production lines, economy and people so that there won't be any socioeconomic negative effects on the people who may be involved in the issue at hand

Bibliography

Sustainable Development Report 2025: Life Below Water (SDG 14) Ratings. SDSN & partners, 2025, *Sustainable Development Report* dashboard,
<https://dashboards.sdgindex.org/map/goals/SDG14/ratings/>

National Ocean Service. *What Is a Gyre?*
NOAA, 16 June 2024,
<https://oceanservice.noaa.gov/facts/gyre.html>

European Commission, Joint Research Centre.
SDG 14 (Life Below Water), KnowSDGs,
<https://know-sdgs.jrc.ec.europa.eu/sdg/14>

United Nations. *Goal 14: Oceans — Conserve and Sustainably Use the Oceans, Seas and Marine Resources for Sustainable Development*.
United Nations,
<https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/oceans/>

United Nations Environment Programme.
Marine Litter and Microplastics.
UNEP/EA.3/Res.7, United Nations Environment Assembly, 30 Jan. 2018,
<https://apps1.unep.org/resolutions/uploads/k1800210.english.pdf?>

United Nations Environment Assembly. *End Plastic Pollution: Towards an International Legally Binding Instrument*.

UNEP/EA.5/Res.14, Mar. 2022, United Nations Digital Library,

<https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/3999257?ln=en>