



UN Ocean Conference—Nice, France | June 2025

In June 2025, I had the privilege of attending the United Nations Ocean Conference (UNOC) in Nice, France—a pivotal global gathering that united heads of state, ministers, scientists, civil society, and youth leaders to shape the future of ocean governance. As a delegate of the Katija Hyoungjoo Neuber Institute under DMUN and an advocate from the Global South, I proudly represented both **Ethiopia and the African continent** on this world stage.

This occasion was particularly historic as I led and mentored a youth delegation from Ethiopia—the first of its kind to participate meaningfully in such a major international ocean conference. Our presence marked a powerful milestone: Ethiopia, though landlocked, reaffirmed its commitment to the global ocean agenda through the voices of its youth.

Experience and Professional Growth

My participation involved engagement in high-level plenaries, stakeholder dialogues, and youth-led strategy sessions. I worked alongside diplomats, UN officials, and leading marine experts to explore innovative, justice-centered approaches to ocean sustainability.

I actively contributed to breakout discussions centered on youth inclusion, deep-sea mining, and freshwater-ocean linkages—bringing inland perspectives to the table and advocating for

the equitable inclusion of countries like Ethiopia in marine resource dialogues. This strengthened Ethiopia's visibility within global ocean networks and positioned our national youth movement as a credible partner in multilateral spaces.

Leading a homegrown youth delegation that I personally trained and supported was a defining moment of leadership. It demonstrated not only our growing diplomatic readiness but also the power of community-driven international advocacy.

Post-Conference Contributions

Upon returning home, I began formalizing the structure and strategic direction of **Sustainable Ocean Alliance—Ethiopia**. Building on the momentum from UNOC, we are going to launch educational campaigns, climate-ocean workshops, and advocacy training to scale youth engagement in marine and freshwater protection.

The experience in Nice sparked renewed interest among Ethiopian youth. Dozens of young changemakers have since joined SOA Ethiopia and related initiatives, inspired by the tangible impact they saw through our delegation's participation.

This moment solidified a long-held belief: **when youth are trusted to lead in diplomacy, the ripple effect goes far beyond the conference halls—it reshapes communities, builds institutions, and inspires a new generation of global leaders.**