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VENICE DECLARATION FOR OCEAN LITERACY IN ACTION

OCEAN LITERACY WORLD CONFERENCE

Completion of the two-day event organized by the Prada Group and UNESCO-IOC as part of SEA BEYOND

Endorsement of the “Venice Declaration for Ocean Literacy in Action”

Unveiling of the first SEA BEYOND Ideas Box

Afternoon of workshops for the children and young people of Venice

Venice, 8 June 2024 – The second day of the first UN conference dedicated to ocean education, the ‘**Ocean Literacy World Conference**’, opened with the **endorsement of the ‘Venice Declaration for Ocean Literacy in Action’**.

The Declaration is designed to catalyze a new wave of action to establish Ocean Literacy in the spheres of education, science, policy, economics and culture. By **expanding humanity’s understanding of the ocean**, Ocean Literacy will empower communities to respect the marine environment and preserve ocean cultures around the world. Ultimately, it can become the foundation for wider sustainable development.

[Discover the “Venice Declaration for Ocean Literacy in Action”](#)

Francesca Santoro, Senior Programme Officer of UNESCO-IOC, together with **Aurore Asso**, Council Advisor (Nice Côte d’Azur) for Ocean Conservation & Marine Protect Area and **Enrico Vicenti**, Secretary General, Italian National Commission for UNESCO, started the day with the official presentation of the document. Ten participants from the institutions and academic world were chosen to announce a single “action” from the Declaration, collectively representing the 131 experts who attended the two-day event.

Lorenzo Bertelli, Executive Director of the Prada Group and Patron of the Ocean Decade Alliance, commented: *“Today is an important day, highlighted by the contents of the Venice Declaration, which we hope will stimulate the debate on the importance of ocean literacy and the need for action, leading us to the next conference in Nice with enthusiasm and a positive spirit”*.

Francesca Santoro, Senior Programme Officer of UNESCO-IOC, stated: *“The Venice Declaration is a community: what we are endorsing today is not the end but the beginning. The document will travel around the world and arrive to Nice, from Venice. We want people to embrace it as an opportunity to tell all stakeholders what ocean literacy is. It is a fundamental tool in facing environmental challenges and issues, a deep enabling factor to reach sustainable goals. The Venice Declaration is a living document”*.

This was followed by the presentation of the **first SEA BEYOND Ideas Box**, the result of a collaboration with the international NGO Bibliothèques Sans Frontières, which aims to facilitate

access to education for children and young citizens in vulnerable communities. Designed by Philippe Starck in 2014, the Ideas Box is a mobile multimedia center of over 100 square metres, equipped with internet connection, tablets, laptops and over 250 books and games, as well as hundreds of training materials. To celebrate the Ideas Box's tenth anniversary, **Philippe Starck and Patrick Weil**, Founder and President of Bibliothèques Sans Frontières, told the story of its inception in a dedicated conversation. The contents of the media center were curated by UNESCO's ocean literacy team in collaboration with Bibliothèques Sans Frontières and a selection will also be integrated into those already operating in metropolitan France and overseas regions (8 Ideas Boxes), Burundi (4 Ideas Boxes) and Ivory Coast (6 Ideas Boxes). The teams responsible for managing the individual Ideas Boxes will be trained by UNESCO's ocean literacy team.

Patrick Weil, Founder and President of Bibliothèques Sans Frontières, declared: *"The Ocean is the source of life on our planet, and it is crucial for us to have partners who are profoundly engaged in spreading this message at an international level. At Bibliothèques sans Frontières, we are very proud to be part of the SEA BEYOND project because it allows the SEA BEYOND Ideas Box to be deployed for priority actions, such as offering younger generations the possibility to access fundamental knowledge about ocean, and therefore making Ocean Education inclusive worldwide."*

Philippe Starck, French creator, commented: *"Bibliothèques Sans Frontières brings peace to the world for those who have lost it. Bibliothèques Sans Fontieres brings hope through dreaming, intelligence, culture and education. SEA BEYOND has that same goal of peace and intelligence, but for the 71% of the rest of the world that is the ocean."*

After Venice, the SEA BEYOND Ideas Box will be donated to Fondazione Quartieri Spagnoli of Naples, with a program of outings planned in the Metropolitan City of Naples, with the aim to reach even more children. The Ideas Box will stop at Stazione Zoologica Anton Dohrn, Fondazione Terzoluogo Cultural Space of Sant'Anna a Capuana and in East Naples area in collaboration with Maestri di Strada Onlus - Centro Polifunzionale Ciro Colonna. It will also visit the islands of Ischia and Procida, in collaboration with the Area Marina Protetta Regno di Nettuno.

The morning ended with **testimonies from the SEA BEYONDers**, the project's ambassadors – a diverse group of professionals who spoke about their special connection with the sea to inspire the audience.

In the afternoon, over 80 children and young people from Venice experienced the SEA BEYOND Ideas Box through an educational journey consisting of ocean-themed workshops, led by the SEA BEYONDers and supported by educators from the Italian branch of Bibliothèques Sans Frontières.

Maya Gabeira, Big Wave Surfer and UNESCO Champion for Ocean and Youth, read to young visitors from her upcoming book, “*Maya Makes Waves*”, due out at the beginning of August and published by Abrams; **Titouan Bernicot**, Founder and CEO of Coral Gardeners and National Geographic Explorer, showed the children the coral gardens he cultivates in Tahiti; **Giovanni Chimienti**, Marine Biologist and National Geographic Explorer, educated them on the extraordinary characteristics of deep-sea ecosystems through the power of underwater images; **Valentina Gottlieb**, Environmental Advocate and Actress, offered a meditation class inspired by the movements of yoga and the waves; **Carmelo Isgrò**, Biologist and Founder of the MuMa Milazzo Sea Museum, entertained the young guests with a game of ‘charades’ inspired by the animals that live in or near the ocean.

About SEA BEYOND

Conducted in partnership with the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of UNESCO (UNESCO-IOC) to raise awareness of sustainability and ocean preservation, SEA BEYOND is an educational program supported by Prada Group since 2019. The project has contributed to the progress of ocean education on a global scale, through a series of training initiatives dedicated to younger generations. Since its debut, and over the course of three editions, the educational module has shared the principles of ocean literacy with more than 35,000 secondary students around the world. Moreover, the “Kindergarten of the Lagoon” project – outdoor education activities in Venice for children in pre-school – was launched in 2023 with the aim of creating a link between kids and the lagoon ecosystem.

While the main focus remains education, in 2023 SEA BEYOND extended its scope beyond education with two new areas of focus: support for scientific research dissemination and humanitarian projects, both dedicated to the ocean. This is thanks to the fact that, as of July 2023, 1% of the proceeds from the Prada Re-Nylon Collection support SEA BEYOND.

The most recent projects undertaken are:

- Dissemination of the scientific discovery of black coral in the waters of the Egadi Islands, Italy, by Giovanni Chimienti, marine biologist and National Geographic Explorer;
- A partnership with Bibliothèques Sans Frontières to facilitate access to ocean education for children and young citizens in vulnerable communities through the Ideas Box, a mobile multimedia centre of over 100 square meters which hosts an internet connection, tablets, laptops and over 250 books and games, as well as hundreds of training materials.

Through SEA BEYOND, Prada Group has also trained its more than 14,000 employees worldwide on ocean literacy principles via VR educational content and the AWorld app, the official platform selected by the United Nations to live more sustainably.

About Prada Group

Prada Group is socially engaged to contribute to the sustainable development of the communities and stimulate the cultural debate in all its forms of expression. The Group partners with recognized players and international entities to develop educational and training programs, value talent, support scientific research, foster women’s empowerment, and promote local culture and artistic heritage. Prada Group operates in the luxury sector through the Prada, Miu Miu, Church’s, Car Shoe, Marchesi 1824, and Luna Rossa brands.

UNESCO-IOC

The Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of UNESCO (UNESCO-IOC) promotes international cooperation in marine sciences to improve management of the ocean, costs and marine resources. The IOC enables its 150 member States to work together by coordinating programmes in capacity development, ocean observations and services, ocean science, tsunami warning and ocean literacy. The work of IOC contributes to the mission of UNESCO to promote the advancement of science and its applications to develop knowledge and capacity, key to economic and social progress.,

the basis of peace and sustainable development. The UNESCO-IOC is the entity in charge of coordinating the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development 2021-2030 (the Ocean Decade).

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