

SDG No.14: Life below Water  
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R: Hello, I'm Reina Ohshima, and

K: Kanato Zenitani from A class.

R: Today, we would like to make a presentation about SGD number 14, "Life below water."

R: Hey, Kanato!

K: What?

R: Did you know that about 20 thousand to 60 thousand tons of plastic garbage is thrown into the ocean in our country?

K: Wow, that's the same weight as 10 thousand African elephants!

R: The ocean is home to many kinds of marine life, such as sea turtles, dolphins, whales, and coral. It also provides water and food for humans and regulates the world's weather. If we cannot keep the ocean clean and healthy, we won't be able to do these things.

K: Recently, we especially need to think about the problem of ocean plastic. Look at these statistics. These show the amount of plastic in the ocean. You can see that it is increasing rapidly. Can you imagine if this plastic keeps increasing? Certainly, sea life will die, and we won't be able to see many creatures in the sea.

R: There are other reasons why we can't keep the ocean rich. Overfishing is another problem in Japan. Overfishing means to catch too many fish at once, so that the breeding population decreases too much to recover. For example, coral reefs in Okinawa prefecture suffer great damage due to overfishing. Herbivore fish, such as parrotfish, keep the ecosystem in balance by eating algae to keep the coral clean and healthy. Consequently, catching too many parrot fish can weaken the reef and make it more vulnerable to extreme weather and climate change.

K: I had no idea there were so many problems in the ocean that needed to be solved for the future.

R: Right. These are not a problem in the distant future, but a problem that will occur in our generation, and our children's generations. We need to come up with a solution now!

K: So, first, we thought of a solution to the ocean plastic which is getting worse. Do you know the plastic which humans throw away in the sea breaks down to microplastics? Microplastics are tiny particles of plastic which are harmful for all creatures, including people. So, if we eat fish that is polluted by microplastics, our health will get worse. Therefore, Kaneka corporation developed biodegradable plastic to solve this problem. This plastic is really kind for nature because it can decompose and disappear by becoming micro-organisms. Based on this, we think that changing the material of items made with plastic to biodegradable eco-plastic is the best way to solve this problem.

R: Next, we would like to explain our solution to the overfishing problem. One way to solve this problem is by promoting policies that protect vulnerable species from getting caught by fishermen. For example, it is estimated that only 2.6% of the original population of bluefin tuna are left in the Pacific Ocean. Also, about 90% of blue sharks are mistakenly caught by fishing

boats every year. These predators have an important role in the ecosystem, so we need to protect them. By promoting policies that can help these species, we can reduce the number of sea life that becomes endangered and keep the ecosystem healthy. We may not be able to enforce the polices on our own, but we can start by raising awareness of this problem. Also, we can write to politicians and pressure the government, and if more and more people take these actions, we can eventually change laws and make better policies that helps the sea life.

K: So, today we talked about problems and solutions for SDG number 14 “Life below water.” Through researching this presentation, we think that the best way to solve these problems is by changing our lifestyle to be more ecological such as by buying more eco-friendly items such as label-less water bottles, and biological plastic bags or enforce the policy against overfishing. It might be difficult to solve the problem by the action of one person. However, if we take put our hands together, and take individual actions to help our oceans, such as picking up trash, bringing your eco-bag, and recycling plastic, we will be able to keep the ocean rich. Let’s be aware about what we can do to solve these problems.

Thank you for your attention.