

Dear Durban Youth Climate Council,

Durban Youth Climate Council (DYCC)

A message of support

Youth for Marine Protected Areas (Y4MPA's) is delighted and grateful to be a part of the launch and association of Durban Youth Climate Council (DYCC). In an age where there is need for more action against climate, having a youth group in South Africa that does this is an initiative that we as Y4MPAs are excited for.

We are in support of the DYCC and look forward to working closely with you as the marine space is largely impacted by climate change. As Y4MPAs we recognize that there are many marine threats that also have an impact on climate change.

Oil and gas exploration, as well as the accompanied seismic surveys, negatively affect the marine environment as they introduce chronic and acute disturbances to the ocean, affecting important underwater sound propagation such as whale songs. Consequently, these major threats potentially lead to the extinction of marine species, particularly those, which are sensitive and difficult to monitor. MPAs play a role in managing these threats. Furthermore, overexploited resources will recover as the extraction/removal of resources will be controlled. MPAs which envelope mangroves are able to protect coastal regions from storms and floods. They also serve as security/pension funds for the future as future generations will have access to the resources current generations have access to today. Sustainable jobs may also be derived from MPAs, which increases economic security.

Whether it is through direct means such as employment, extraction, tourism, trade and recreation or through indirect means such as deriving pharmaceutical products from rare coral reefs, South Africa's ocean continuously plays an integral role in building our economy. Our fisheries contribute to our GDP with an annual production/contribution of over R6 billion. Marine ecosystems play an economically important role for both coastal and inland regions through protection and climate regulation. However, environmental degradation due to irresponsible development and mismanagement results in vital coastal ecosystems becoming vulnerable. The natural mitigation capacity of coastal ecosystems becomes compromised consequently requiring human intervention, with government having to source funds to rehabilitate them. Prioritizing the protection of ecosystem functions before they are compromised benefits us in the future. MPAs similarly have a current and foreseeable monetary value. They allow us the opportunity to protect and sustain the 48% of fisheries which are underexploited, and similarly create an environment where collapsed and fully exploited fisheries can replenish themselves. MPAs are able to protect economically important marine habitats such as estuaries, fishery spawning grounds and the general untapped biodiversity of the ocean.

The link between Y4MPAs and DYCC is that we are fighting the same fight from different perspectives. As your supporters and MPA advocates we qualify as climate change fighters and we are keen on the work ahead.

Kind regards,

Jamila