

The Student and Schools Partnership Declaration

Global Congress on Integrated Coastal Management

EMECS 10 and MEDCOAST2013 Joint Conference

November 3, 2013

Lessons Learned to Address New Challenges

Global Communication in Action

This declaration serves as the unified voice of the students, coming from Japan, Turkey, and the United States, who have had the opportunity to benefit from the EMECS 10 and MEDCOAST 2013 Joint Conference, an academic and cultural experience for which we are all grateful. Throughout this conference, we have come together, across language barriers and other challenges, to enjoy the company of our fellow students, as well as conference members from over forty countries.

The idea of applying previous lessons to help remedy new challenges is one which we find provocative and inviting. We are the generation of change, the generation for which technology is not an additive, but a component of our lives. It is our belief that these technologies can bring us closer with nature, as opposed to separating people from nature. We feel that we may yet be of great service in finding ways to apply new lessons to the tasks which currently seem so daunting. Yet, to do this, we still need assistance from you, our mentors, educators, role models, and forbearers.

First and foremost, we need constant and meaningful communication. There is nothing which can replace the sharing of ideas and information, as this is what moulds our decisions as well as our dreams. We ask that you facilitate our interactions with members of the international community. If this conference has taught us anything, it is that it is foolish to approach environmental problems while ignoring the experiences of the broader community, so again, we ask you to guide us so that we may learn the way.

We also need opportunity. As researchers, if you are able, please engage with your colleagues as well as youth. Not only do we need technical assistance, but by involving us in research and hands-on experiences, you help to install lifelong passions, a thirst for knowledge, and a drive for sustainability which may never be quenched.

At this conference, we have heard professionals express appreciation for the honesty of youth. When allowed to work beside you, we offer feedback from a new perspective, and more importantly, we observe and learn from you. This allows us to shape our own futures in a more active way.

We ask that scientists and educators appreciate the value of connections between people and the places, in which they live, that basic inspiration which brought many of us to the environmental field. Continue to advocate for change, turning your research into real improvements in the world. Teach your students to do the same. We are inspired by the natural world. It amazes us, and we can only ask you to help us understand our place in it so that we may help in the effort to improve our environment.

Just as we ask things of you, our adult role models, we hope you can place demands on us. Expect students to challenge themselves and to broaden their horizons to include the many dimensions of this changing world. Do not accept answers from us that are anything less than extraordinary. Though we may be young, we hope to be held to high standards. Expect us to ignore the improbability of success when tackling environmental issues. Just as you once were, we are blind of the biases that come with age. Help us discover our talents by pushing us to attempt the impossible.

If we can all come together as scientists, teachers, policy makers, stakeholders, and students to support mutually beneficial endeavours, much like we have at this conference, then new challenges can be addressed, and solutions will always be found.