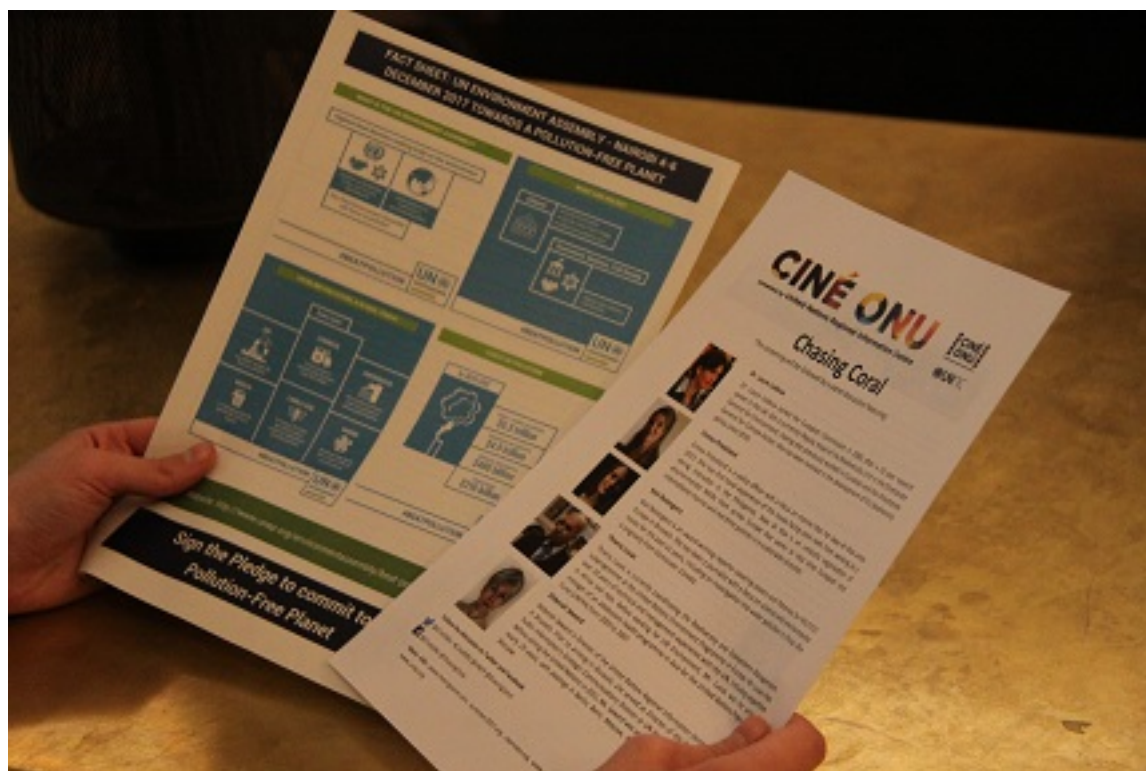


5 October 2017 - Coral reefs are dying. In the last few decades, a large proportion of the world's corals have gone extinct or have been seriously damaged. The major threats facing these beautiful underwater organisms are caused by humankind, with global climate change being the number one culprit. The rise in sea temperatures has seen coral bleaching levels increase immensely. Tourism, damaging fishing practices, and mining are also dangers. However, coral reefs can still be saved. But first, we must recognize the problem and act.

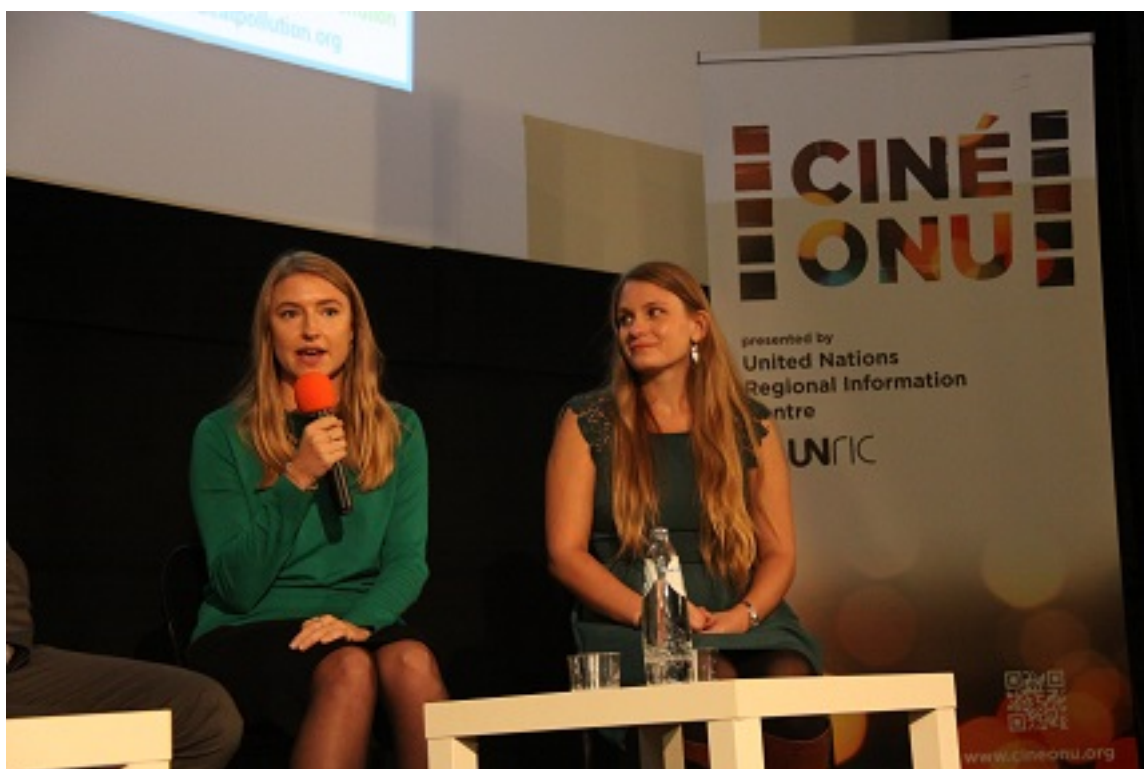
To mark the [Our Ocean Conference 2017](#), Ciné-ONU screened 'Chasing Coral' from the award-winning director Jeff Orlowski. The documentary provides an overview of the ecosystem of coral, and attempts to provide an answer to the question, why are coral reefs vanishing all over the globe? With stunning undersea imagery, 'Chasing Coral' highlights the importance of preserving these unique and important marine animals.



The screening was followed by a panel discussion chaired by Deborah Seward (Director of UNRIC), with four guest speakers: Dr. Laure Ledoux (Deputy Head – Biodiversity Unit in DG Environment of the European Commission); Emma Priestland (Marine Litter Policy Officer – Seas at Risk); Kait Bolongaro (Journalist – POLITICO) and Thierry Lucas (Biodiversity and

Ecosystems Management Coordinator – UNEP).

Emma Priestland emphasized that even though each one of us must make voluntary changes in our day to day lives to combat environmental issues, the most important thing is to demand better legislation from all the decision makers, and hold states accountable for the goals they have agreed upon. Kait Bolongaro from POLITICO concurred that asking tough questions of legislators is important, and that she as a journalist has a big responsibility on making sure this happens.



Dr. Ledoux spoke about the Our Ocean Conference in Malta, organized to motivate action on all sides. She also revealed that the European Union will be announcing commitments at the Conference to protect diverse marine environments around the globe.

Thierry Lucas from UN Environment echoed the sentiments of an audience member that it would be a tragedy if the next generation were not be able to experience coral reefs as current generations have, and thus each one has a duty to make sure the Paris Agreement is implemented. Mr. Lucas also encouraged the audience to make a pledge to [Beat Pollution](#) .

When the speakers were asked about the impact of tourism on coral reefs, the consensus was that even though tourism is often damaging for the reefs, it can also have beneficial effects when managed sustainably.



While coral reefs and our oceans are under serious stress due to human activity, both the audience and the panellists believed that much can, and must, be saved for future generations. Everyone at the event agreed that communicating effectively and raising awareness, both at the local level and throughout Europe, is of paramount importance in this effort.

The handout from our event is available [here](#)

For more info on 'Chasing Coral' click [here](#)

Learn more about the [Our Ocean Conference](#)

Make a pledge to [Beat Pollution](#)

Why not have a look at photos from the event on our [Flickr](#) ?

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