

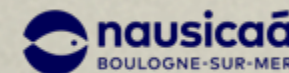


YOUTH GUIDE TO INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCES:

What to Expect at UNOC3



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YOUTH GUIDE TO INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCES:



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1. What Is an International Conference?

International conferences are global decision-making spaces where governments, experts, civil society, and other stakeholders gather to address key global challenges. For environmental issues, these often happen under the umbrella of the United Nations and follow formal diplomatic protocols.

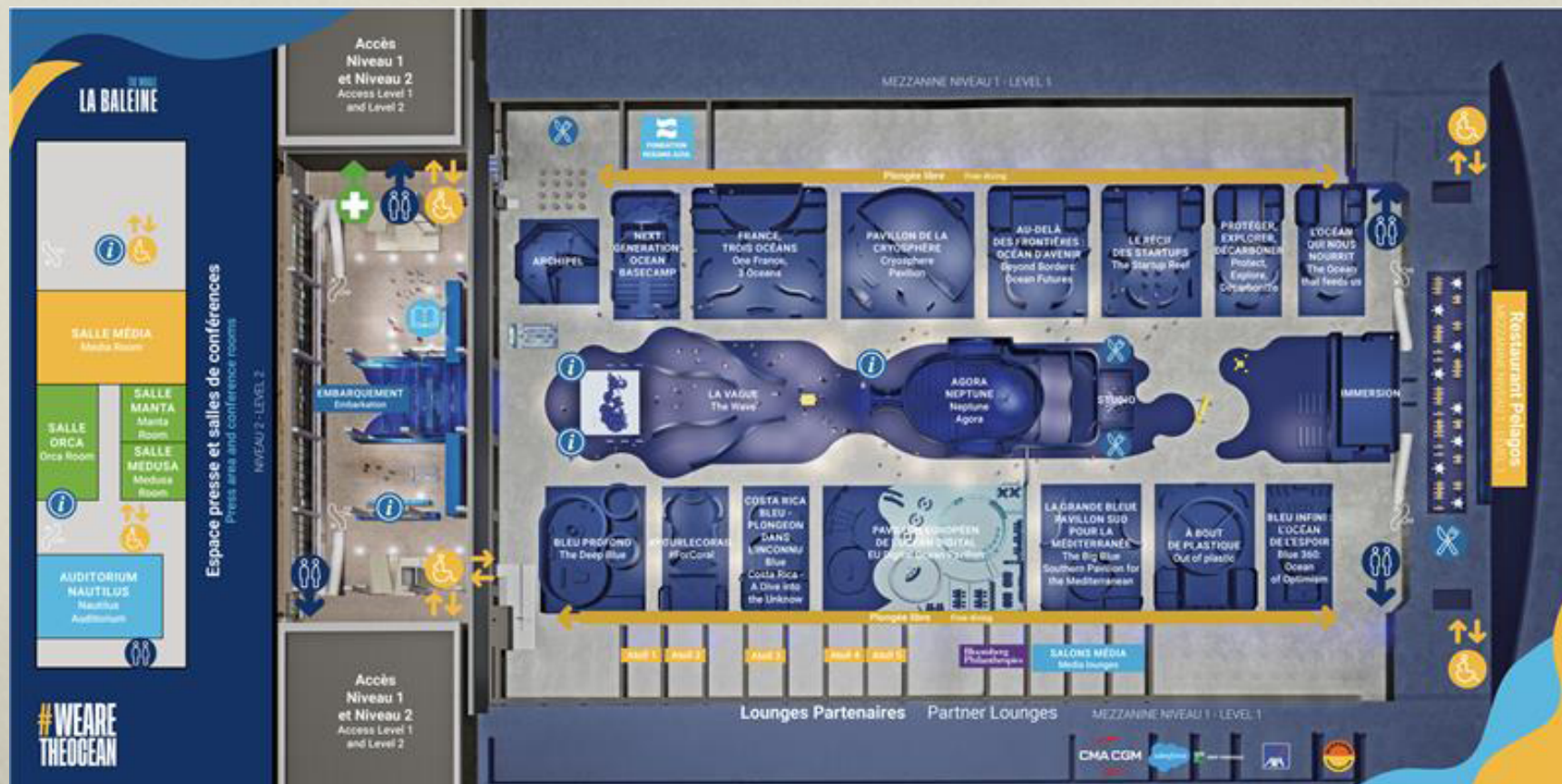
At the conference, you might hear about different «zones»:

Blue zone

This is the official negotiation space. Access is restricted to accredited delegates. It includes plenary rooms, negotiation halls and high-level events.

Green zone

Green Zone: This is a more public-facing area open to civil society, NGOs and the general public. It often hosts exhibitions, cultural events and spaces for dialogue.

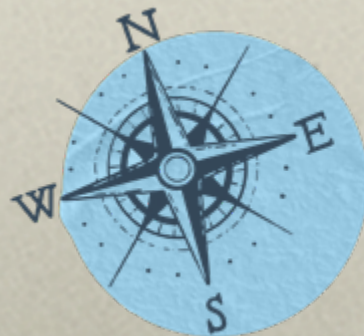


«LA BALEINE»
MAP

1. What Is an International Conference?

Accreditation & Protocol

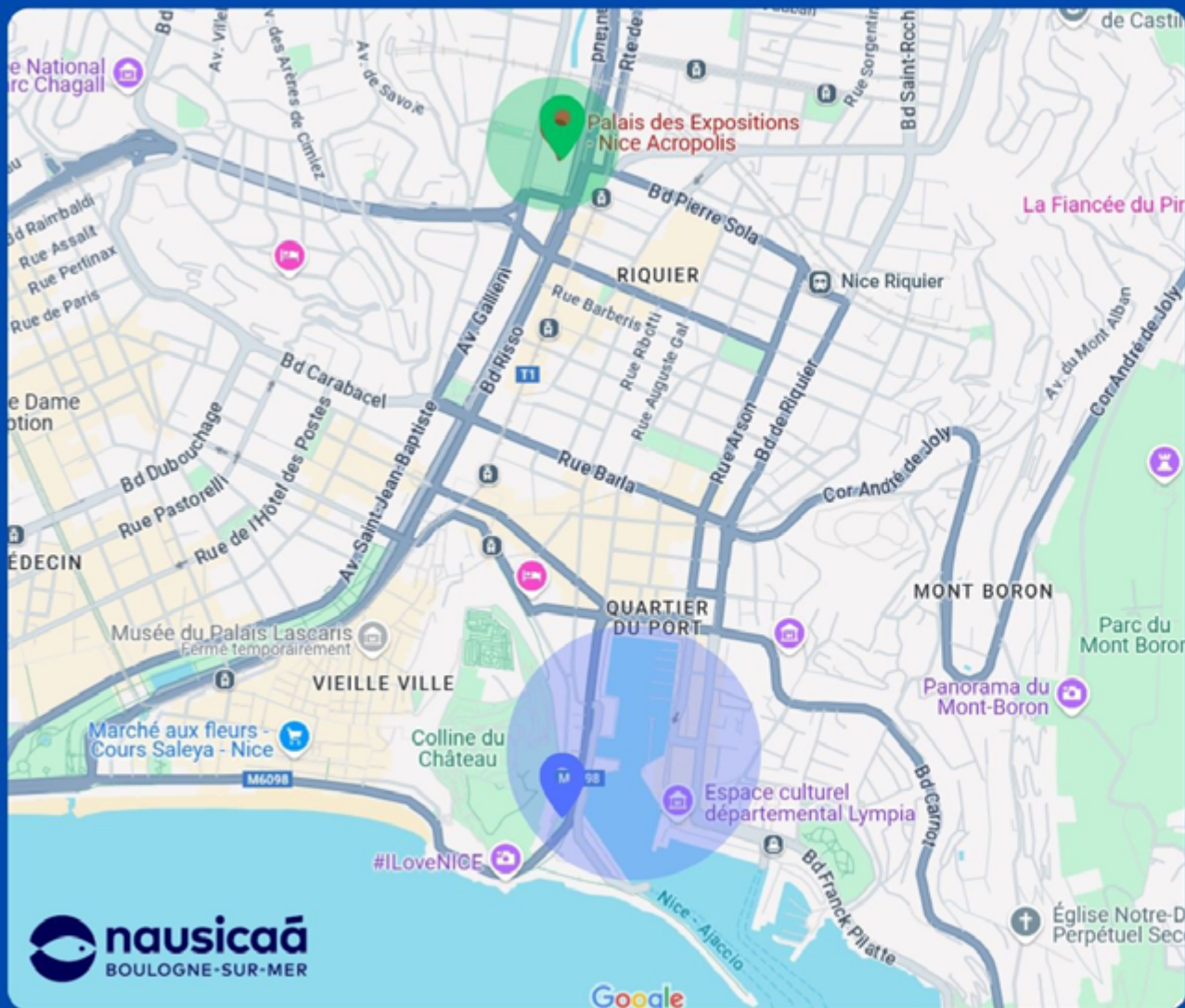
- As civil society delegates, you will be **accredited under the status of an observer organization**. This means that while you are granted access to the official conference spaces (Blue & Green Zones), you do not have voting rights and cannot directly participate in negotiations.
- However, observers play a crucial role in monitoring the process, and contributing through side events, bilateral meetings, statements, and informal advocacy.
- **Badge Colors:** Pay attention to the color of your badge — it indicates your access level (e.g. Party delegate, UN staff, observer/NGO, media, etc.). It also helps you identify others and adapt your approach accordingly.
- Plan ahead: Arrive early each day — security lines can be long, especially during high-level days.



2. What is UNOC3?

The **Third United Nations Ocean Conference (UNOC3)** will take place in Nice, France, from 9th to 13th June 2025. Its goal is to support the implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14 (Life Below Water) and advance global commitments to ocean protection and restoration.

- Brief history of UNOC
- UNOC1 (New York, 2017) was the 1st major global event dedicated to ocean action.
 - UNOC2 (Lisbon, 2022).



Finding your way around Nice during UNOC3



Green Zone

"The Whale"

Nice Acropolis Exhibition Center
(Palais des Expositions Nice Acropolis)
Parv. de l'Europe, 06000 Nice
<https://palaisdesexpos.nice.fr/>



Blue Zone

Quai Amiral Infernet, Port of Nice

How to get from one to the other ?

- Tramway L1 : stop Palais des Expositions to stop Garibaldi
- Bus 33 : stop XV corps to stop Bavastro
- Bus 07 : stop Riquier to stop Port Lympia
- Ticket price : 1,70euros



About 25 minutes walk



3. Advocacy Opportunities at International Conferences

Advocacy doesn't only happen in formal negotiations. International conferences are full of spaces where young people can take action, speak up and build alliances.

NEGOTIATIONS



Only official state negotiators take part in the negotiation of the final outcome document, which is usually adopted at the end of the conference. Most of the groundwork—draft texts and main sticking points—is often negotiated in advance, for example in New York or at dedicated preparatory meetings (like the Bonn sessions before the climate COPs). However, wording can still change during the conference—and they matter.

Sometimes, civil society or “constituency” representatives are allowed to make statements during negotiation sessions (e.g. through a ticket system at COPs), but these are only advisory. **Only states can negotiate.**



3. Advocacy Opportunities at International Conferences

SIDE EVENTS



Side events are a major part of international conferences and take place in both the Blue Zone (official UN space) and the Green Zone (public or civil society space). They include panels, roundtables, workshops, and other interactive formats organized by governments, UN agencies, accredited civil society organizations, and other stakeholders. While both types of side events are valuable, they often serve slightly different purposes:

- In the **Blue Zone**, side events aim to inform decision-makers and negotiators, highlight policy-relevant issues, and create entry points for high-level advocacy. They are more formal and can be used to strategically influence the agenda or raise visibility among key actors.
- In the **Green Zone**, side events tend to focus on public engagement, awareness-raising, and grassroots mobilization. They offer a more open and creative space to reach a broader audience and build momentum around specific causes.

Both are an opportunity to:

- Speak or co-organize an event and bring visibility to your advocacy.
- Network by attending relevant sessions and meeting key actors.
- Raise questions and engage publicly with speakers.



3. Advocacy Opportunities at International Conferences

BILATERAL MEETINGS



Bilateral meetings happen on the sidelines of negotiations—between state delegates, officials, and other actors like NGOs, youth, civil society, or businesses. They offer a unique opportunity to raise your advocacy points directly with decision-makers or to bring attention to a specific aspect of the negotiations. These informal spaces can be a door to longer-term collaboration, especially with government representatives who may be harder to reach in your home country.

PAVILIONS



Governments often have dedicated physical spaces—pavilions—to showcase their work, host side events, and meet with stakeholders. At UNOC3 there will also be pavilions dedicated to key targets of SDG 14 like conservation and ocean literacy. Each pavilion has a public area, often with exhibitions, and sometimes a private area for delegation meetings and bilaterals. Pavilions are good spaces to network and find spontaneous entry points for advocacy.



3. Advocacy Opportunities at International Conferences

YOUTH NETWORKS



Youth networks are your best allies at a conference. There are usually several, ranging from national and regional delegations to thematic coalitions (e.g. ocean, climate, gender). Joining/Reaching to these networks helps you:

- Stay updated on **last-minute opportunities** (e.g. open speaking slots, bilateral meeting invites).
- Coordinate joint actions and share advocacy priorities.
- Avoid duplication and amplify each other's efforts.
- Build long-lasting relationships for post-conference work.

Conferences move fast. Schedules change, access shifts, and opportunities appear and disappear quickly. **Stay flexible, connected, and strategic.**



3. Advocacy Opportunities at International Conferences

MOBILIZATIONS AND DEMONSTRATIONS



Peaceful demonstrations are often part of international conferences. These are usually **declared, authorized, and take place within the official conference venue**—in specific areas assigned by the organizers.

They are an important tool to:

- Visually amplify a message (with banners, performances, chants),
- Draw media attention to urgent issues,
- And demonstrate collective pressure on negotiators and decision-makers.

The rules for mobilizations depend on the host country and the UN system's guidelines:

- In some countries, space for demonstrations is wide open and dynamic.
- In others, freedom of expression may be more restricted, and the formats allowed may be very controlled (e.g. silent, seated, limited number of participants).

To organize or join a demo:

- Check with your youth or civil society constituency (e.g. YOUNGO),
- Follow the daily coordination meetings,
- Be sure to register in advance, respect the designated time and space, and follow the UN rules on nonviolence and decorum.



3. Advocacy Opportunities at International Conferences

MEDIA ENGAGEMENT



International conferences attract a lot of media attention. Journalists, press agencies, influencers, and communications teams all gather to cover key announcements. If your advocacy work could benefit from more visibility, this is a great place to pitch stories and connect with journalists. Don't hesitate to introduce yourself, share a clear message, and suggest a specific angle.

Tip: Journalists are often very busy covering high-level officials and negotiations, so don't take it personally if they can't follow up right away. Maintain the connection and follow up after the conference!



3. Advocacy Opportunities at International Conferences

SOCIAL MEDIA



- **Before you go**

- ✓ Go through your social media profiles, especially LinkedIn, and ensure your profile is ready to be viewed by new connections, collaborators, or opportunities that come your way. Be sure to update them to reflect your advocacy work and any recent accomplishments.

- **During**

- ✓ Share your experience online—but check photo restrictions, especially in the Blue Zone.
- ✓ Use your platform to amplify others, especially youth from underrepresented regions.
- ✓ Suggested posts for maximum engagement
 - > A pre-conference announcement post
 - > Daily highlights or reflection
 - > A closing summary and takeaways post

- **After the Conference**

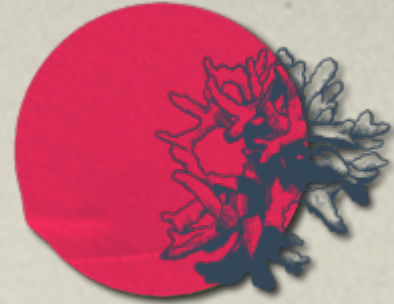
- ✓ **Follow up:** Connect with other attendees and speakers across platforms like LinkedIn or Instagram.
- ✓ Keep the momentum going by reaching out to continue conversations and explore future collaborations.



4. Mental Health Matters

International conferences can be intense.
It's okay to feel overwhelmed — here are a few reminders:

- Stress & Fatigue: Pace yourself. Don't try to do everything.
- Eat & Hydrate: It's easy to forget—schedule snack breaks!
- Conflicts & Pressure: There might be tension in groups. Practice active listening and take space if needed.
- Rest: Protect your sleep. It's essential for clarity and energy.



5. Practical Tips Before You Go

- **Business Cards:** Have some printed with your name, affiliation, contact info, and social media (if you're comfortable).
 - ✓ Non single use alternatives/backups:
 - > **Dot Card:** reusable physical card that others can scan with their phones to view your professional profiles and contact information.
 - > **Blinq:** A digital business card you can pull up on your phone as a QR code for others to scan.
 - > You can also use the generated QR code from LinkedIn or WhatsApp.
- **Advocacy Pitch:** Prepare a short, sharp 30-second intro about who you are, what you care about, and what you're asking for.
- **Know the Agenda:** Review the program and identify key sessions.
- **Join WhatsApp or Signal groups** for coordination and support with other youth participants.



6. After the Conference

- Stay in touch with the people you met — follow up by email or LinkedIn.
- Think about how this experience fits into your long-term goals or advocacy.



7. Contacts to reach if you have questions

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