

YOUTH FOR OCEANS DIGITAL SUMMIT

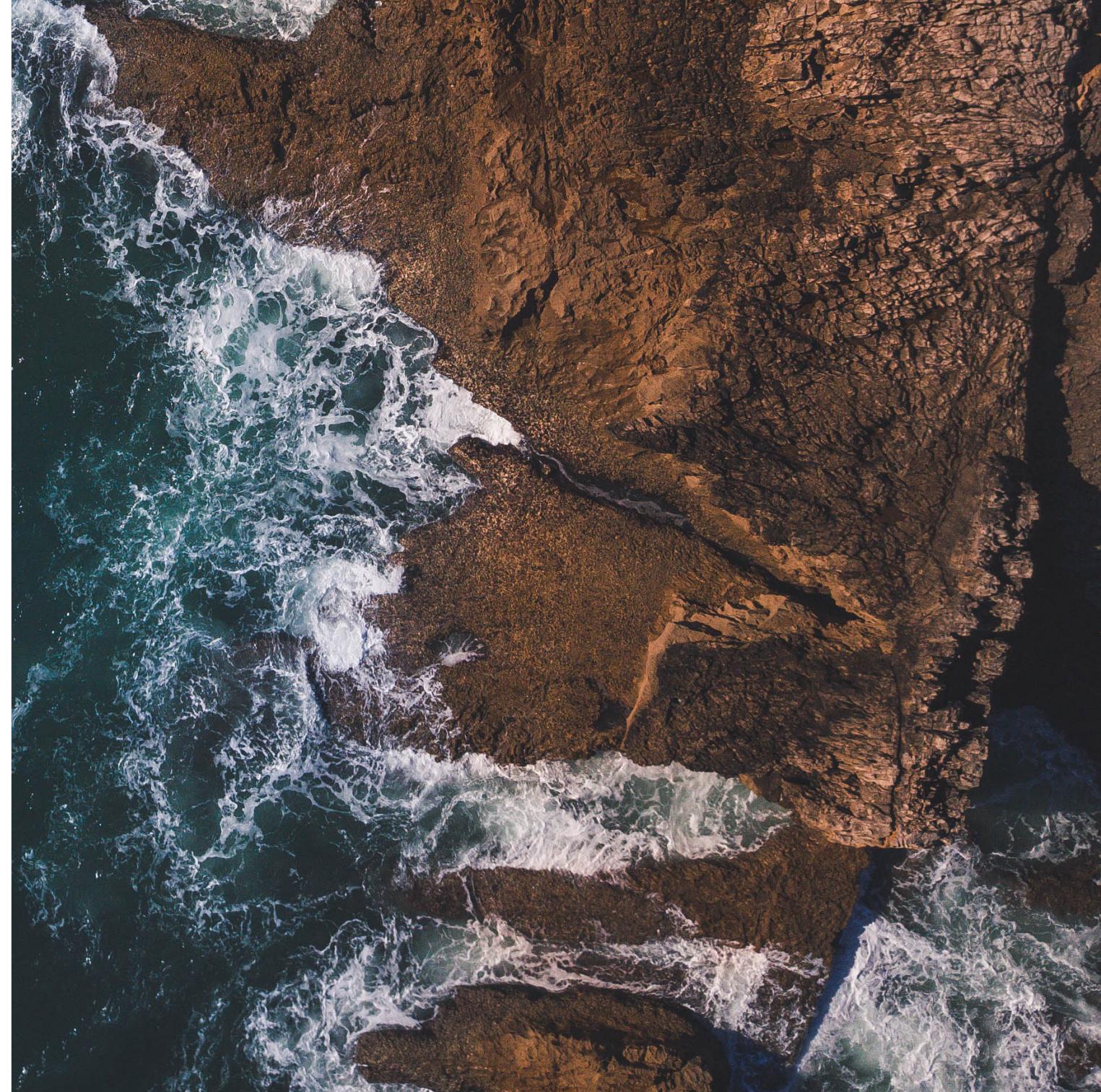
A Multi-movement Youth Mobilization
for the Defense of Oceans and their Rights



OCEANS WERE OUR BEGINNING, AND ARE OUR FUTURE

There is nothing as boundless or as beautiful as our oceans. Covering 70% of our planet's surface, oceans are the most extensive ecosystem on Earth. Oceans are the blue lungs of our planet, producing over 50% of the oxygen we breathe and absorbing over 70% of the carbon dioxide we create. However, with less than 4% protected by true marine protected areas, unsustainable exploitation and polluting of our oceans and coastlines is rife.

It is clear we are damaging our oceans through overfishing, ocean acidification, increasing sea temperatures and rising sea levels. Our high seas – areas of the ocean further than 200 miles away from land – make up half of our global ocean. Overexploited and struggling, our high seas need help now more than ever.



THE REALITY TODAY

- Plastic is the most common element that is found in the ocean.
- Over one million seabirds are killed by ocean pollution each year. 300 000 dolphins and porpoises die each year as a result of becoming entangled in discarded fishing nets, among other items.
- Overfishing has caused the global Bluefin Tuna population to decline by 96 percent in the last century.
- It took humans only about 55 years to wipe out 90% of the ocean's predators, causing a disruption of a marine ecosystem.
- At least 8 million tons of plastic enter the oceans each year. That's similar to emptying a garbage truck of plastic into an ocean every minute.
- The number of overfished stocks globally has tripled in half a century. Today, one-third of the world's assessed fisheries are currently pushed beyond their biological limits.
- Bottom trawling, a fishing method which involves dragging giant nets and chains across the seafloor, damages fragile corals and sponges which provide habitat for fish, and creates scars on the ocean bottom which can even be visible from space!





THE HIGH SEAS TREATY - A POTENTIAL GAME-CHANGER FOR THE OCEANS

After more than a decade of hard work at the UN, 2018 became the year when negotiations officially initiated for a new treaty which aims to improve conservation efforts for high seas and ensure sustainable management of marine biodiversity in the waters beyond national jurisdiction.

The treaty is currently being developed under the U.N. Convention on the Law of the Sea, a landmark agreement of environmental policies and protections which determines the ways in which nations may interact with the world's oceans.

During the negotiations, one of the ideas that emerged was to establish a framework for marine protected areas in the high seas. Today, very few such protected areas exist in the high seas because of the lack of international frameworks to guide the process.

The fourth session was planned for March this year but was postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic, which gives civil society and stakeholders an opportunity to better understand the treaty's potential contributions to marine conservation and protection of oceans, and to mobilize around the core issues that the treaty should include.

WHY ARE BOLD SOLUTIONS NEEDED?

On 1st March 2020, the United Nations General Assembly proclaimed 2021–2030 as the Decade on Ecosystem Restoration, following a proposal for action by over 70 countries. The UN Decade positions the restoration of ecosystems as a major Nature-based solution towards meeting a wide range of global development goals and national priorities.

The purpose is to prevent, halt and reverse the degradation of ecosystems worldwide through Nature-based solutions. More than ever before, it is essential to find ecocentric approaches to permanently protect wildlife and preserve coastal and marine ecosystems.

It is time to set clear, measurable goals and listen to the diverse voices of the young generations of the whole Earth system who will inherit this world.



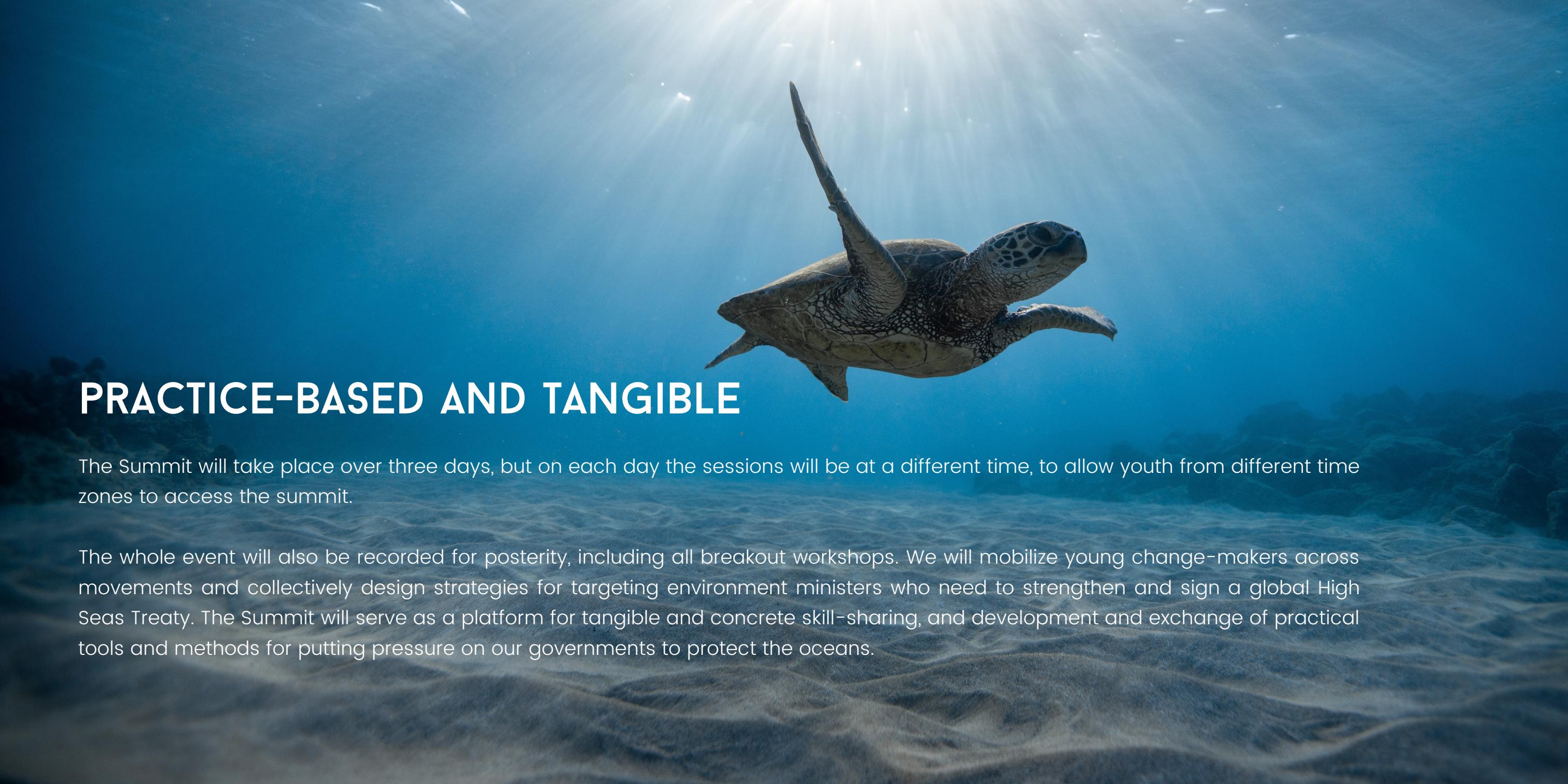
YOUTH DESIGNING STRATEGIES FOR A HIGH SEAS TREATY

To demand effective action to be taken by our governments for the protection of the high seas, we want to organize an online youth-led oceans summit where we inform, mobilize and design strategies through a creative programme made up of listening circles and panels for knowledge exchange, practical skill-enhancing workshops, working group sessions and networking/mingle bars.

We aim to bring together youth from around the world, online, to exchange knowledge, skills and expertise about the oceans, to learn from experts in the field, and to design country-specific strategies for targeting politicians and global decision makers who need to strengthen and sign a global High Seas Treaty.

A key aspect of the Summit is a series of practical and skill-enhancing workshops for designing the country-specific strategies for promoting the rights of the oceans and the High Seas Treaty, combined with pre-summit webinars from global experts, to not only inform young people about the state of the oceans but also prepare them for the Summit.

In this way, we strive to enable bridge-building between various global youth environmental and marine conservation movements for the same mission.

A sea turtle is swimming in clear blue water. Sunlight filters through from above, creating a bright, shimmering effect. The turtle is positioned in the upper right quadrant of the frame, swimming towards the right. The background is a deep blue gradient, with the sun's rays creating a starburst effect at the top center. The overall mood is serene and natural.

PRACTICE-BASED AND TANGIBLE

The Summit will take place over three days, but on each day the sessions will be at a different time, to allow youth from different time zones to access the summit.

The whole event will also be recorded for posterity, including all breakout workshops. We will mobilize young change-makers across movements and collectively design strategies for targeting environment ministers who need to strengthen and sign a global High Seas Treaty. The Summit will serve as a platform for tangible and concrete skill-sharing, and development and exchange of practical tools and methods for putting pressure on our governments to protect the oceans.



PROVISIONAL PROGRAMME

Pre-Summit: Before the Summit takes place, the programme will consist of free preparatory online webinars with global experts and scientists who will inform us on the current state of the oceans around the world, and what is being done to protect them. We will also create the working groups before the summit and begin inviting young people to the groups, as a way to ensure that we use the limited time of the summit as effectively as possible.

Day 1: Listening Circles and panels for exchange of knowledge, lessons learned. Closing day with online networking/mingle bar. Panel sessions for all participants on: threats to oceans; natural capital value of oceans; biodiversity of oceans; protection of oceans.

Day 2: 8 parallel workshops. Participants are split into three groups based on whether their countries are progressive (on oceans issues), neutral or blockers. This will allow the different workshops to tailor their content to the politics and campaign strategy young people in the group might implement. These workshops will include key social media, communications and campaigning skills.

Day 3: Working groups presenting country-specific strategies they have worked on together before and during the Summit, for how to promote a High Seas Treaty in various countries and promote the recognition of the inherent rights of the world's oceans. Closing day with online networking/mingle bar. Live concert via online platform. Young people develop a strategy for their country in small groups and share it back to their wider workshop group.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

- 3 strategies for pressuring governments for the protection of the world's oceans through the support of the High Seas Treaty have been designed, one for each country category (progressive, neutral, blockers) and are ready for implementation. This will be measured by the stages that the strategies will be in by the end of the Summit.
- At least 300 young people from various environmental movements with an interest in oceans and marine ecosystems have participated at the Summit. This will be measured by monitoring and counting the number of participants both registering for the digital summit and attending the Summit.
- 3 preparatory webinars with global experts about the current state of the oceans have been held prior to the conference, with at least 30 participants per webinar. This will be measured by the number of webinars and the number of participants joining each webinar.
- We will have raised awareness around oceans issues with global experts and scientists, and catalyzed powerful reactions and actions for the High Seas Treaty and the protection of the world's oceans.
- The strategies are implemented by mobilisers on the ground after the conference, putting pressure on their governments through the diverse elements of the strategies (depending on what country's government they are pressuring). This will be measured by the number of mobilisers adopting the strategies in their countries.
- Cross-movement collaborations will have emerged from this Summit, enabling diverse perspectives on conservation, climate and oceans to meet and interact.



INTERESTED IN SUPPORTING THE YOUTH FOR OCEANS DIGITAL SUMMIT?

Contact us!



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