



Press Release

Need for Better Ocean Management Key Focus of World Oceans Day, 8 June

The United Nations will officially observe World Oceans Day for the first time on 8 June, with the theme “**Our Oceans, Our Responsibility**”. To commemorate the observance, the Empire State Building will be lit in an ocean of blue.

While World Oceans Day has been celebrated by many countries since the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro in 1992, the United Nations General Assembly decided last year to make the day an officially recognized UN observance. The official designation of World Oceans Day by the United Nations is an opportunity to raise global awareness of the current challenges faced by the international community in connection with the oceans.

The oceans cover about two-thirds of the surface of the Earth and affect all. They generate most of the oxygen we breathe, absorb carbon dioxide emissions, provide food and nutrients, regulate climate, and are important economically for countries that rely on tourism, fishing and other marine resources for income. Unfortunately the vitality of the world’s oceans is under threat due to human activity and climate change.

United Nations **Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon**, in a message for World Oceans Day, said “human activities are taking a terrible toll on the world’s oceans and seas. Vulnerable marine ecosystems, such as corals and important fisheries, are being damaged by over-exploitation, illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing, destructive fishing practices, invasive alien species and marine pollution, especially from land-based sources.”

Mr. Ban also said that increased sea temperatures, sea-level rise and ocean acidification caused by climate change pose a further threat to marine life, coastal and island communities and national economies.

“The theme of World Oceans Day,” he added, “emphasizes our individual and collective duty to protect the marine environment and carefully manage its resources.”

Programme for UN Headquarters Events on World Oceans Day

Press Conference, 1:00 p.m., Room S-226

In commemoration of World Oceans Day, Ambassador Hasjim Djalal, Senior Advisor to the Minister of Marine Affairs and Fisheries of the Republic of Indonesia, and Professor David Freestone, Lobingier Visiting Professor of Comparative Law and Jurisprudence, George Washington University Law School, and Visiting Professor, United Nations University, will brief on current challenges regarding the oceans.

Expert Panel Discussion, 3:00 p.m., Trusteeship Council Chamber

Panel Discussion on the theme "Our oceans, our responsibility", followed by a question-and-answer session. The discussion will be moderated by Professor David Freestone, Lobingier Visiting Professor of Comparative Law and Jurisprudence, George Washington University Law School, and Visiting Professor, United Nations University.

Panelists include: Dr. Lorna Inniss, Deputy Director, Coastal Zone Management Unit, Government of Barbados; Dr. Magnus Ngoile, Policy and Governance Coordinator, Agulhas and Somali Current Large Marine Ecosystems (ASCLME) Project; Ambassador Hasjim Djalal, Senior Advisor to the Minister of Marine Affairs and Fisheries of the Republic of Indonesia, and Advisor to the Indonesian Navy's Chief of Staff; Dr. Harlan Cohen, Advisor, Ocean Governance, Global Marine Programme, International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN); Dr. John Stegeman, Senior Scientist, Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution, and Director, Woods Hole Center for Oceans and Human Health.

The panel discussion is sponsored by the Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea, Office of Legal Affairs.

Documentary film screening of "A Sea Change", 6:00 p.m., Conference Room 1

This film screening on ocean acidification will be followed by a question-and-answer session. The screening is sponsored by the Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea, Office of Legal Affairs, and the United Nations Staff Recreation Council Film Society.

Other Observances

The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations will be launching the International Guidelines for the Management of Deep-sea Fisheries in the High Seas in three languages, for use by States and regional fisheries management organizations.

Other specialized agencies, organizations, bodies, programmes and funds of the United Nations system will be holding various events and activities to raise awareness of oceans issues on World Oceans Day.

The Empire State Building in New York City will be lit in blue to mark the first observance of World Oceans Day. http://www.esbnyc.com/tourism/tourism_lightingschedule.cfm

For additional information on World Oceans Day, please see:
http://www.un.org/Depts/los/reference_files/worldoceansday.htm

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