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## On World Oceans Day, UN chief issues call to protect marine environment

8 June 2013 – Marking World Oceans Day, United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon urged the international community to do more to reverse degradation of the marine environment, which influences virtually all aspects of life on the planet.

"Let us work together to create new waves of action for ocean sustainability – for people and the planet," Mr. Ban said in a message marking the Day.

"From trade to food to climate regulation, the oceans are integral to all of humanity. This is particularly so for coastal dwellers whose income and culture are irrevocably bound to the sea," the UN chief said.

"If we are to fully benefit from the oceans, we must reverse the degradation of the marine environment due to pollution, overexploitation and acidification," he said, urging all nations to work towards that end, including by joining and implementing the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea, the broad based treaty governing the world's waters, often referred to as "the Constitution of the oceans."

Given the important role played by oceans for the planet's food security, and the health and survival of all life, as well energy needs, the General Assembly decided that, from 2009, 8 June would be designated by the United Nations as 'World Oceans Day' to raise global awareness of the current challenges faced by the international community in connection with the oceans.

This year's theme for the Day is "Oceans and People." The United Nations has planned a host of activities organized by the world body's Division for Oceans and the Law of the Sea.

The observance of the Day will take place at UN Headquarters on Monday starting at 1:15 p.m., with opening remarks by Patricia O'Brien, Under-Secretary-General for Legal Affairs. The event is being held in coordination with the American Museum of Natural History.

Meanwhile, later this evening, New York City landmark, the Empire State Building will be lit in white, blue and purple representing the different layers of the ocean.