



**UNITED NATIONS
OFFICE OF LEGAL
AFFAIRS**

World Oceans Day Reception

Statement

by

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**General Assembly Visitor's Entrance
(Sputnik Lounge)
8 June 2016**

Excellences,
Distinguished Guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would like to start by welcoming you all on behalf of the Secretary-General to this evening's reception to celebrate World Oceans Day.

The official designation of 8 June as World Oceans Day by the United Nations is intended to raise global awareness of the benefits derived from our oceans, and the current challenges faced by the international community in protecting them. The day provides an annual opportunity to reflect on our individual and collective duty to interact with our oceans in a sustainable manner. Only this will allow us to meet the current needs of the billions of people whose livelihoods depend on our oceans, without compromising the livelihoods of future generations.

Healthy oceans are critical to sustaining life on this planet.

They regulate the climate, and provide a wide range of services, including natural resources, nutritious food and jobs that benefit billions of people. The theme of this year's World Oceans Day is, "Healthy oceans, healthy planet." It captures the essential truth that healthy oceans are the cornerstone for a healthy future for humankind.



As the Secretary-General indicated in his World Oceans Day Message earlier today, although our oceans are seemingly endless, their capacity to withstand pressures from certain human activities is limited, particularly as they also cope with the threats posed by climate change and ocean acidification. It is clear therefore that urgent action on a global scale is needed to alleviate the world's oceans from the many pressures they currently face, and to protect them from future ones that may tip them beyond the limits of their carrying capacity.

Today's reception is just one of the many events taking place all over the world to celebrate this important day and to remind us of the importance of healthy oceans. Here in New York, the United Nations has collaborated with several partners on a series of events to commemorate the occasion. This morning the Secretary-General attended a ceremony in Gantry Park where he welcomed the Hōkūleʻa, a traditional Polynesian canoe, that has embarked on a worldwide voyage to raise awareness of the plight of our oceans.

This afternoon, His Excellency, the President of Palau, in partnership with the Permanent Missions to the United Nations of Micronesia, the Seychelles and Grenada hosted an important Talk Story Uniting Leadership on Oceans.

This evening we must remember that, although World Oceans Days is celebrated on June 8, we must work to protect our oceans all 365 days of the year.

On behalf of my staff, in particular the Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea, which has worked diligently, together with partners, to organize this event, I invite you to enjoy tonight's festivities and to take this opportunity to join forces with the community of peoples determined to protect our oceans, our common heritage.