



**UNITED NATIONS
OFFICE OF LEGAL AFFAIRS**

Statement at the opening of World Oceans Week at the Explorers' Club

by

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Under-Secretary-General for Legal Affairs and
United Nations Legal Counsel,

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Ladies and Gentlemen, Explorers,

It gives me great pleasure to be with you here today to open the Explorers Club's third annual World Oceans Week. As you know, this week-long celebration of the oceans is timed to coincide with World Oceans Day.

When the United Nations General Assembly designated 8 June as World Oceans Day in 2008, it was envisioned as a way to raise awareness of human actions in connection with the ocean and encourage a worldwide movement of citizens for the ocean, in particular towards its sustainable development.

The role of civil society organizations like the Explorers Club in this regard is invaluable. As a global center of excellence for scientific research and exploration, the Explorers Club and its members continue to light a path towards knowledge and science-based conservation and sustainable use of the ocean and its resources.

I am particularly pleased to note that the Explorers Club has not limited its celebration of World Oceans Day to a single day, but extended it to a full week of events. Although one day, one week or even one year is not enough to address all of the challenges facing the world's ocean today, which range from the impacts of climate change and ocean acidification, to marine litter and plastics pollution, to overexploitation of living marine resources. These impacts threaten the many benefits that a healthy and productive ocean can provide to Humanity, including food and nutrition, livelihoods, medicine, leisure and most certainly also its natural beauty.



Thankfully, the ocean has countless supporters, including young leaders who are participating in the United Nations-Nippon Foundation Fellowship and who you will hear from later this morning, as well as many members of your organization.

Given the breadth of ocean issues to be addressed, every year, the United Nations family of organizations chooses one theme for World Oceans Day, to draw particular attention to an important issue or set of issues. This year's theme of "Gender and the Ocean" provides an unparalleled opportunity to explore the gender dimensions of humankind's relationship with the ocean. It is important for men and women to have equal opportunities to contribute to, as well as to benefit from, the ocean, so as to maintain and maximize its value.

I hope that you will endeavor to address the gender dimension in all your events this week, as it is of utmost importance.

I wish you all the best in this week's series of important and timely events, and look forward to welcoming you all on Friday at the United Nations Headquarters for our Gender and the Ocean event.

