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UN-backed marine expedition highlights impact of climate change in oceans



Tara oceans vessel in front of UN Headquarters. Photo: Tara Expeditions/Vincent Hilaire

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A United Nations-backed scientific expedition which has been travelling the world's oceans for almost three years is in New York seeking to raise public awareness of the impact of climate change in oceans.

The mission, known as Tara Oceans, has travelled 70,000 miles across the Atlantic, Pacific, Antarctic and Indian oceans investigating the effects of global warming on biodiversity and marine life, particularly focusing on marine plankton, and aims to bridge the knowledge gap

between the scientific community and the public by regularly sharing its findings and data and allowing visitors into the Tara vessel wherever it docks.

“The Tara expedition represents an extraordinary human endeavour by focusing on the key major gaps in our knowledge on plankton,” said Andrew Hudson, the Coordinator of UN Oceans, adding that it is facilitating communication not only between scientists and the public but also with policy-makers so they know how the ocean works and how human activity impacts this vital ecosystem.

Mr. Hudson also spotlighted the importance of this initiative in raising awareness before the UN Sustainable Development Conference (Rio+20) in June, where Tara researchers will be sharing their message as they try to rally support for new initiatives, reforms and financing needed for ocean sustainability.

Philippe Kridelka, Director of the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization ([UNESCO](#)) office in New York, echoed Mr. Hudson’s remarks and emphasized the importance of the mission in bringing the topic of oceans into the development agenda.

The vessel has also had artists and journalists on board to help promote the mission, including French fashion designer agnès b., who is also one of the main sponsors of Tara.

The designer, along with other members of the Tara crew, met [Secretary-General](#) Ban Ki-moon earlier today and talked to him about the activities of the mission.

The mission is carried out under the auspices of the UN Environmental Programme ([UNEP](#)) and in partnership with UNESCO’s International Union for Conservation of Nature and the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission.

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