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UN agencies to present plan for sustainable future of oceans



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Four United Nations agencies have prepared a plan to limit the degradation of oceans and address issues such as overfishing, pollution and declining biodiversity to encourage countries to renew their commitment to improve oceans' governance, the UN announced today.

The plan, *Blueprint for Ocean and Coastal Sustainability*, seeks to highlight the opportunity that countries have to set up more effective institutional mechanisms to protect both the ocean and coastal areas ahead of the UN Conference on Sustainable Development, Rio+20 in June next year, where world leaders will meet to assess their progress on sustainable development and address new challenges.

According to a news release issued by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization ([UNESCO](#)), the plan will be presented by its Director-General Irina Bokova at the headquarters of the agency in Paris on Tuesday. The event will be one of the highlights of the 36th session of UNESCO's general conference.

The plan was produced jointly by UNESCO, UN Development Programme ([UNDP](#)), Food and Agriculture Organization ([FAO](#)) and the International Maritime Organization (IMO), who will present the ten recommendations featured in the plan at the event.

According to UNESCO, oceans account for 70 per cent of the Earth's surface, but only one per cent of their area is protected. In addition, 60 per cent of major marine ecosystems are damaged or over-exploited, having negative effects on mangroves and coral reefs.

The ocean also absorbs close to 26 per cent of carbon dioxide emission in the atmosphere, increasing acidification, which affects plankton, and these in turn affect the entire food chain, significantly increasing the impact oceans have on all ecosystems.

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