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Press Release 2013/13

IAEA Meeting Focuses on Nuclear and Isotopic Science to Protect Oceans

17 September 2013 | The marine ecosystems that keep the oceans healthy are subject to increasing stress. Levels of acidity are rising in a process that is taking place at a more rapid pace than ever observed before. This poses risks to all life in the ocean – and all who depend on the oceans.

Starting today, some of the world's top marine scientists are meeting in Vienna to discuss this multi-faceted problem and ways to tackle it. Science conducted and coordinated by the IAEA that uses isotopic techniques plays a key role in learning about ocean acidification and its effects.

"In dealing with threats to the health of the seas, governments need accurate data. For that, they need skilled researchers who can devise accurate models to help predict future conditions. That way, governments can start implementing the appropriate strategies to protect the seas and oceans," IAEA Director General Yukiya Amano told participants in the IAEA's *Scientific Forum*, titled *The Blue Planet – Nuclear Applications for a Sustainable Marine Environment*.

"The IAEA helps to make this possible. We promote a comprehensive approach to the study, monitoring and protection of marine, coastal and terrestrial ecosystems. We support effective global cooperation to address the threats to our oceans."

The oceans not only produce as much as half of the world's oxygen; they also absorb more than a quarter of man-made CO₂. This reduces the greenhouse effect, but it also increases the acidity of seawater, resulting in a hostile environment for calciferous plankton, crustaceans, molluscs and coral reefs. With all parts of the ecosystem connected, all life in the oceans suffers from the increased level of acidity.

The two-day Forum, held on the sidelines of the IAEA's annual *General Conference*, is divided into three sessions. The first session focuses on the pressures faced by the coastal and marine systems and the need for partnerships and science to develop targeted responses. The second session addresses both radioactive and non-radioactive pollution of coastal and marine ecosystems, while the third looks at how nuclear and isotopic techniques improve the understanding of coastal processes and their role in sustainable development, and efforts to build the resilience of coastal and marine systems.

More information is available [here](#), including a [brochure](#) featuring brief biographies of forum panellists. Some of the experts taking part in the forum are available for interviews – please contact IAEA press officers [Susanna Löf](#) or [Peter Rickwood](#) for more details.

Additional Resources:

- » Video: [Keeping the Planet Blue – Nuclear Applications for a Healthy Marine Environment](#), 17 September 2013
- » Video: [From Hilltops to Oceans – Managing Pollution in Manila Bay With Isotopic Techniques](#), 18 September 2013
- » Video: [Shores of Resilience – Protecting Tunisia's Coastlines with Radionuclide Analysis](#), 18 September 2013
- » Video: [Oceans of Change – Using Nuclear Science to Study Ocean Acidification](#), 18 September 2013

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