

World Bank proposes global coalition to save oceans

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A palm frond is blown along the beach as the sun begins to rise over the Atlantic Ocean in 2011. The World Bank was on Friday to propose a coalition of governments, global organisations and other groups to protect the oceans, aiming to raise \$1.5 billion in the next five years for the purpose.

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World Bank president Robert Zoellick was to tell a global conference in Singapore that the new partnership would bring together various groups to confront problems of over-fishing, marine degradation and loss of habitat.

"The world's oceans are in danger, and the enormity of the challenge is

bigger than one country or organisation," Zoellick, who is in Singapore for the [World Oceans](#) Summit, was expected to say, according to prepared remarks released by the World Bank ahead of his speech.

"We need coordinated global action to restore our oceans to health. Together we'll build on the excellent work already being done to address the threats to oceans, identify workable solutions, and scale them up."

"So today, I want to propose a new approach -- an unprecedented Global Partnership for Oceans," he added.

Zoellick said the coalition "will bring together countries, scientific centers, NGOs, international organisations, foundations and the private sector to pool knowledge, experience, expertise, and investment around a set of agreed upon goals."

As a starting point, the partnership is committing to raise at least \$300 million in "catalytic finance", meaning funds that would be used for technical assistance for key governance reforms, he said.

Another \$1.2 billion would be raised "to support healthy and sustainable oceans," he added.

"This would total \$1.5 billion in new commitments over five years," he said, adding that the [World Bank](#) would convene the first meeting of the partnership in Washington in April.

Zoellick proposed several targets for the coalition to achieve in the next 10 years, including rebuilding at least half of the world's [fish stocks](#).

About 85 percent of [ocean](#) fisheries are fully exploited, over-exploited or depleted, including most of the stocks of the top 10 species, he said.

The partnership should also aim to "increase the annual net benefits of fisheries to between \$20 billion and \$30 billion" from the current net economic loss of about \$5 billion a year.

Marine protected areas should be more than doubled, he said, noting that less than two percent of the ocean's surface is protected compared to around 12 percent of land.

"Let's increase this to five percent," he said.

On the economic side alone, the implications are enormous if little is done, he said.

In developing countries, one billion people depend on fish and seafood for their primary source of protein and over half a billion rely on fishing as a means of livelihood, Zoellick said.

For developing countries, including many island and coastal nations, fish represent the single most traded food product, and for many Pacific Island states, fish make up 80 percent of total exports.

"The world's oceans are in danger," Zoellick said. "Send out the S-O-S: We need to Save Our Seas."

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