

**Forum:** Environment Commission I

**Issue:** Controlling the spread of harmful marine species

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## Introduction

Harmful marine species affect not only the ecosystem of an area but also the human activities held in that area. The spread of such species is accelerated by factors such as the climate change, the establishments industries on the coastlines, overfishing, ocean dumping, etc. Fishing industry has been severely interrupted due to such species, as demonstrated by algal bloom and fishing trawlers sunk by the giant jellyfish. The decline of commercial fisheries due to the domination of harmful marine species cripples the local fishing industry. Although many environmental organizations today are involved to resolve this issue, further measures with the international co-operation are need to slow down the universal spread of the harmful marine species.

## Definition of Key Terms

### Harmful marine species

“Harmful” marine species refers to the species that have a negative impact upon the regional ecosystems and local human activities.

### IPCC

Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change

### UNEP

United Nations Environment Programme

### PEMSEA

Partnerships in Environmental Management for the Seas of East Asia

### COF

Clean Ocean Foundation

## **IMO**

International Maritime Organization

## **MARPOL**

International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships

## **General Overview**

### **Spread of harmful species**

The spread of harmful marine species is quite a recent phenomenon. Such species are not as harmful if they exist in a smaller population; the problem arises when the population gets too dense in a particular region. Factors led by human, such as the establishments of industries on the coastlines, climatic change, overfishing, etc., are commonly known as the reason for these sudden increases. Algal blooms, for example, do not only affect the regional ecosystem but also the local human activities. Such algae consume too much oxygen in water, thus fish living in the region eventually die out due to suffocation; this impacts both the ecosystem and the fisheries. People involved in the fishing industry are severely affected by this issue.

### ***History***

Nations have been aware of this issue since 1970s, yet they dealt with this problem individually without calling for an international co-operation till the early 1980s. Despite the lack of international awareness on this problem, some regions, such as the coastlines in Nagasaki, Japan, still managed to improve on the condition due to the appropriate measures taken during this era. However, the spread of harmful marine species affect both MEDCs and LEDCs today around the world. Nations started to work together on this issue since 1992, in co-operations with relevant organizations, such as the IMO. With the modern technology, the elimination of harmful marine species from a region became more practical compare to the old days. However, more measures need to be taken in order to completely slow down the increase of the population of such harmful species.

### ***Possible solutions***

The resolution on this topic should propose the ways to achieve the long term goals, such as slowing down the pace of the spread of such species, preserving the ecosystem, implementing technologies to eliminate such species effectively and calling for more international

co-operations. Actions mentioned in a resolution should be sustainable and feasible as the issue at hand is no longer local but is universal.

## Timeline of Events

Date	Description of event
1982	International Maritime Organization (IMO) was established.
1992	United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) Agenda 21 called on the International Maritime Organization (IMO) to take action to address the transfer of harmful organizations by ships.
1997	Further actions were suggested at the International Maritime Organization Assembly.
2002	The World Summit on Sustainable Development was held at Johannesburg.

## UN Involvement, Relevant Resolutions, Treaties and Events

- Oceans and the Law of the Sea; Sustainable Fisheries, 4 December 2009 (**GA/10899**)
- Law of Sea, Sustainable Fisheries, 17 November 2004 (**GA/10299**)

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