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اللجنة الدولية الحكومية لعلوم المحيطات

政府间海洋学委员会

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To: Official National Coordinating Bodies for Liaison with the IOC
Executive Heads of Organizations part of UN-Oceans
Executive Heads of Intergovernmental and Non-governmental organizations
cooperating with the IOC

cc: Permanent Delegates/Observer Missions to UNESCO of IOC Member States
National Commissions for UNESCO of IOC Member States
The Chairperson and Vice-Chairpersons of the Commission
Officers of Major IOC Subsidiary Bodies (Scientific, Technical and Regional)

Subject: Release of the First Global Harmful Algal Blooms (HAB) Status Report (GHSR)

This global assessment was released by IOC-UNESCO on 8 June 2021. It summarizes a seven-year highly intensive work by 109 experts in 35 countries. The publication provides a baseline to detect and gauge the changing distribution, frequency, and intensity of harmful—often poisonous—algal blooms.

The first-ever global statistical analysis examined ~9,500 HABs events over 33 years and found that the harm caused by HABs rises in step with the growth of aquaculture industry and marine exploitation and calls for more research on their linkages.

The study found that reported HAB events have increased in some regions of the world and decreased or held steady in others. A widely-stated view that HABs are on the rise throughout the world, perhaps due to climate change, is not confirmed. "Perceived global increase in algal blooms is attributable to intensified monitoring and emerging bloom impacts," says the study in an article published in *Communications Earth & Environment*, an open access journal from Nature Research. GHSR thus creates the world's first baseline against which future shifts in the location, frequency and impacts of HABs will be tracked. The impact is depending on which of the 250 harmful marine algae species is involved and where, requiring a granular assessment by species and sites.

The outcomes of the Global HAB Status Report were the subject of several publications:

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1. "[Perceived global increase in algal blooms is attributable to intensified monitoring and emerging bloom impacts](#)", an article published in the Nature journal *Communications Earth & Environment*
2. A [Special issue of the Elsevier Journal Harmful Algae](#) (Open access to key papers)
3. [IOC-UNESCO Global HAB Status Report: A Scientific Summary for Policy Makers](#), (IOC Information document N° 1399)
4. The Harmful Algal Information System (HAIS) Data Portal: <https://data.hais.ioc-unesco.org/>

The IOC Intergovernmental Panel on Harmful Algal Blooms (IOC/IPHAB) initiated the development of the Global HAB Status Report in Paris in April 2013 with the support of the Government of Flanders (Kingdom of Belgium) within the IOC International Oceanographic Data and Information Exchange (IODE) Programme. IODE manages both the Harmful Algae Event Data Base (HAEDAT: <http://haedat.iode.org>) and the Ocean Biodiversity Information System (OBIS: <https://obis.org>). Partners include the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES), The North Pacific Marine Science Organization (PICES), and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

I would be grateful if you could convey information about this important study to interested stakeholders, policy-makers and partners working in such areas as protection against natural hazards, marine area management, and research in marine biology, to name a few.

Yours sincerely,

[signed]

Vladimir Ryabinin
Executive Secretary