

**Opening Speech by Dr. Biliiana Cicin-Sain, Co-Chair, Global Oceans Conference 2010
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Welcome to the Global Oceans Conference 2010!

It is my distinct pleasure to welcome 859 participants from 80 countries, 63 percent of which are developing countries, to the 5th Global Oceans Conference at UNESCO in Paris.

The global oceans conferences, which have been held since 2001, are based on the following premise: National governments are the key actors and have the key responsibility for achieving sustainable development, but all other segments: international organizations, non-governmental organizations, scientific groups, industry, museums and aquaria, and the public, all play an essential role and are very much needed to advance the global oceans agenda. The global oceans conferences represent the only venue where these varying perspectives are brought together in relatively equal numbers, with no one perspective dominating.

We have been organizing these global conferences since 2001. The last conference was held in 2008 in Hanoi, Vietnam, and it is with sincere gratitude that I want to recognize the key role played by the Vietnamese government in hosting the 2008 global conference.

The global oceans conferences are generally marked by a distinctive spirit:

- a spirit of collaboration across sectors
- a global vision rooted in national and regional and local realities
- candid dialogue between North and South, East and West, and all regions of the world
- practically oriented dialogue to assess the current situation and to chart new visions and specific actions that need to be taken

What are our aims for the Global Oceans Conferences? What do we try to do?

1. **We try to take the pulse:** We try to assess “How Well Are We Doing?” in meeting politically-agreed to global commitments on oceans and coasts, as well as analyze new and emerging issues that need to be addressed by national governments and the international community.
2. **We try to build a vision for the future and develop a blueprint for specific actions:** We think about the responses that should be crafted to the existing problems related to oceans, coasts, and Small Island States, and try to detail the next steps that should be taken for the consideration of national authorities and international agencies.
3. **We try to build consensus** on the policy options among different countries and regions and different interests.
4. **We encourage political will at the highest political levels.**

This is a tall order, and we must often operate in the absence of good information, but we do our best based on the contributions from experts around the world -- all of you.

Why is this conference important?

We are at a critical juncture in time on all of the three major issues we are addressing at the conference:

Climate

This is no doubt the key issue of our time. Prior to 2008, with the exception of the scientific community, the global oceans policy community was not deeply engaged in this issue. But after the 2007 report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, everything changed. The global oceans community put “climate” squarely on the agenda of the 2008 Global Oceans Conference in Hanoi.

In Vietnam, we also vowed to mobilize an oceans presence in the UNFCCC climate negotiations, through Bonn, Barcelona, and Copenhagen, and together with more than 30 governments and groups around the world, and with the leadership of the Government of Indonesia, we held Oceans Day at Copenhagen, calling attention to the central role of oceans in climate

Most of us are, no doubt, disappointed that the global community did not achieve more in Copenhagen. However, in a perverse way, the time delay allows the global oceans community to make a stronger and more coherent case for the importance of oceans and coasts in the emerging climate regime.

In this regard, the global oceans community needs to develop a comprehensive program related to oceans and coasts, both inside and outside the UNFCCC, emphasizing:

- the adoption of the most stringent reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, within a short time frame

- the positive contribution that oceans can play in mitigation of global warming, such as: Using natural carbon sinks in coastal areas; Carbon capture and storage; Reducing air pollution from ships; and Developing ocean-based renewable energy

A comprehensive oceans/climate program must have a well-funded adaptation component, including capacity building and public education aspects, to respond to the needs of 183 coastal countries, including 44 Small Island Developing States, which are at the frontline of climate change. We would argue that a minimum of half of the adaptation fund should be devoted to coastal and island communities, since half of the world’s population lives in coastal areas.

Adaptation efforts must encourage ecosystem-based adaptation to increase the resilience of marine and coastal ecosystems; must address the human tragedy of possible displacement of millions of coastal and island peoples; and be implemented through existing and experienced integrated coastal and ocean institutions.

We look forward to advancing thinking on a climate/oceans program at the global conference and to further this agenda at the UNFCCC conference of the parties COP-16 in Cancun, Mexico in December 2010 at the second Oceans Day at the UNFCCC, and in other forums as well.

Biodiversity

In 2002, the world's heads of state set targets to achieve by 2010 a significant reduction of the current rate of biodiversity loss and to develop and facilitate the use of networks of marine protected areas by 2012.

It is clear that these targets have not been achieved at the global scale, although there have been some notable examples of success at national and local levels.

A challenge for this conference will be to determine how we can provide a realistic vision for action that will achieve results in the next phase?

On this issue, we do have the political opportunity offered by the 2010 International Year of Biodiversity and the Convention on Biological Diversity 10th Conference of the Parties at Nagoya, Japan, to reach high-level decision-makers and foster support for a renewed global mandate to conserve marine biodiversity for present and future generations.

To help mobilize the oceans community, we have scheduled the Oceans Day at Nagoya on October 23, 2010, to develop high-level consensus on a Nagoya Oceans Mandate to provide the next action agenda to enable progress in protecting and enhancing marine biodiversity in the next phase.

Achieving integrated governance—Ecosystem-based management (EBM), integrated coastal and ocean management (ICM)

Faced with increasing resource and user conflicts in ocean areas, both national governments and international authorities have recognized the need to take a more integrated or ecosystem-based approach to ocean governance. The 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development thus endorsed the “application by 2010 of the ecosystem approach,” and the “promotion of integrated coastal and ocean management at the national level and “encouragement and assistance to countries in developing ocean policies and mechanisms on integrated coastal management.”

The information on how well are we doing in this area is, unfortunately, more anecdotal than systematic and empirical, partly because no UN agency has clear responsibility for monitoring this important area.

Nevertheless:

--we know how to do Ecosystem Based Management/Integrated Ocean Coastal Management (EBM/ICM), and that they are closely interrelated.

--there have been many new applications of EBM/ICM in the last decade:

- e.g., under national jurisdiction, in France, the US, UK, Canada, Vietnam, Japan, Australia, Brazil, China, Germany, Jamaica, the Russian Federation, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Portugal, India, Mexico, and the Philippines, to name some leading examples.
- In regional areas—especially in the 16 Large Marine Ecosystem Programmes (encompassing 110 nations around the world), and in the 18 Regional Seas Programmes

- In the European Union, with its pioneering work on the European Integrated Maritime Policy.
- In East Asia, with the pioneering work done by the Partnerships on Environmental Management of East Asian Seas (PEMSEA)

With climate change, EBM/ICM become even more important-- it is essential that adaptation and mitigation in coastal areas take place through the already established and experienced EBM/ICM institutions.

Given the nature of the added challenges that we will be facing in ocean and coastal areas and in Small Island States as a result of climate change, it is imperative that we scale up our EBM/ICM efforts and significantly enhance our collective investments.

A major challenge for the next phase, too, will be how to extend the practice of integrated ecosystem-based management to the 64% of the ocean that lies beyond national jurisdiction. Management of these areas is sectorally-based and fragmented, making it very difficult to address inter-connected issues, such as fishing; extraction of genetic resources; maritime transportation; pollution; offshore oil and gas development; marine scientific research; climate change; carbon sequestration and storage. There are significant differences of opinion among developed and developing countries, industries, and environmental interests, on what needs to be done to improve governance of these important ocean areas. A major challenge will be to find areas of commonality and possible avenues of agreement among nations and interests to make progress in this area.

Science

At the Global Oceans Conference, we will also be celebrating 50 years of international cooperation on marine science (natural and social sciences) by the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission.

Science has never been more important than now, especially as we face the uncertainties and risks associated with climate change.

As we reflect on the past 50 years of IOC, we will also be thinking about charting the directions for the next 50 years. What will be the needs for scientific information and advice? How can they be provided most effectively and efficiently?

What is clear also in this case is that a significant increase of investment will be necessary to mobilize the scientific collaboration needed to respond to the challenges of a changing climate.

Capacity development and outreach to the public

Without capacity development and informing and mobilizing the public, nothing will happen.

As we plan recommendations for programs and actions related to climate, biodiversity, and EBM/ICM, we must always include elements on capacity development and public outreach. Larger proportions of budgets must be devoted to these essential matters.

In conclusion, we have a tall order ahead of us this week, and I hope that our discussions will be candid, visionary, and at the same time very pragmatic.

I want to thank very sincerely UNESCO and the IOC for their hospitality—we salute our hosts, Dr. Wendy Watson-Wright and the very able IOC staff, especially Conference Coordinator Julian Barbieri.

A special thanks goes to the French government for its strong substantive involvement and financial and organizational support, including to the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs; the Ministry of Ecology, Energy, Sustainable Development and the Sea; the Secretary General of the Sea; and the French Marine Protected Areas Agency, with a special personal thank you to Ambassador Laurent Stefanini for his personal leadership and engagement.

Also, a special thanks to the Global Environment Facility (GEF), and especially to its CEO, Madame Monique Barbut, for GEF's financial and substantive support.

And to all the remaining partners—governments, UN agencies, NGOs, institutes, and foundations--we express our sincere appreciation.