



A Daily Report of the World Ocean Conference

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WOC2009 HIGHLIGHTS: THURSDAY, 14 MAY 2009

ON THURSDAY, 14 MAY 2009, THE WORLD OCEAN CONFERENCE 2009 (WOC2009) CONTINUED ITS DELIBERATIONS IN MANADO, INDONESIA. AT THE GRAND KAWANUA CENTRE, PARTICIPANTS ATTENDED THE MINISTERIAL/HIGH LEVEL MEETING, WHICH INCLUDED AN OPENING PLENARY, THEMATIC PANELS ON ISSUES SURROUNDING OCEANS AND CLIMATE CHANGE, AND A CLOSED SESSION TO ADOPT THE MANADO OCEAN DECLARATION. MEANWHILE, A VARIETY OF SIDE EVENTS WERE HELD THROUGHOUT MANADO, INCLUDING: THE MANADO OCEAN FESTIVAL; THE INTERNATIONAL OCEAN SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND INDUSTRY EXHIBITION; UNEP ECOSYSTEM-BASED MANAGEMENT FOR REGIONAL SEAS; AND AN EVENT ON ENGAGING THE PRIVATE SECTOR IN SUSTAINABLE FISHERIES MANAGEMENT. IN THE EVENING, DELEGATES ATTENDED A GALA DINNER HOSTED BY THE PRESIDENT OF INDONESIA.



A coelocanth figures prominently in the hallway of the Grand Kawanua Convention Centre, Manado.

MINISTERIAL/HIGH LEVEL MEETING

Opening Plenary

A musical jamboree opened the day's ceremonies, anticipating the arrival of the President of Indonesia, Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono. The Manado State University Choir sang "Save Our Planet," a song written and composed by the President. Freddy Numberi, Minister of Marine Affairs and Fisheries, Indonesia, reported on progress at WOC discussing the connections between the oceans and climate change, and expressed hope for the successful adoption of the Manado Ocean Declaration.

President Yudhoyono praised WOC2009, the Coral Triangle Initiative summit, and those assembled. He delineated the distressed state of the world's oceans and the urgent need for humanity to rescue the very

seas it has endangered. President Yudhoyono said that the WOC contributes to the implementation of Article 192 of UN Convention on the Law of the Sea, namely the obligation of parties to protect and preserve the marine environment. He also suggested that the WOC strengthens the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), and will serve to elevate the importance of oceans at its 15th Conference of the Parties (COP15) in Copenhagen. He described UNCLOS as an important step forward in the global governance of the oceans and the adoption of the Manado Ocean Declaration as the next important step. He concluded by officially inaugurating WOC2009.

THEME 1: OCEANS AND COASTS AND THE EFFECTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE

Peter Garrett, Minister of Environment, Heritage and the Arts, Australia, hoped that consensus could be reached on the Manado Ocean Declaration, based on a unified vision. He announced Australia's renewed

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Peter Garrett, Minister for the Environment, Heritage and the Arts, Australia, urged delegates to take active steps to address oceanic impacts of climate change rather than leave this task for future generations.

commitment to reduce marine debris and called for cooperation from other countries on this issue. He also drew upon several Australian initiatives that other countries can benefit from, including: the Bluelink ocean forecasting tool; the BleachWatch coral monitoring program; and the Reef Rescue initiative to reduce nutrient input into the Great Barrier Reef by 20% over five years.

Rolph Payet, Special Advisor to the President of Seychelles, emphasized that “killing the marine environment is killing ourselves.” Payet expressed concern regarding the serious over-exploitation of global fish stocks, particularly tuna, and warned that the decline in fisheries will impact impoverished fishing communities the most. He cautioned that climate change will tip the balance of fisheries management in favor of fisheries collapse and mentioned various marine initiatives

by the Seychelles, such as: marine protected area networks; marine species sanctuaries; and fisheries regulation. Payet emphasized the support of the Global Environment Facility and various UN agencies in addressing threats to oceans, through programmes such as: the Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-Based Activities and Large Marine Ecosystems (LMEs), and noted the important role of regional fisheries management organizations in this process.

Ambassador Melba Pria, Mexico’s Ambassador to Indonesia presented on human activities that threaten the oceans. She introduced the Mexican climate change programme, and noted the development and implementation of a national environmental policy for sustainable development of oceans and coasts, based on the ecosystem approach. On further actions, she noted the need for: identification of common regional priorities; identification of transboundary issues; development of specific actions related to LMEs; the adaptive enhancement of a legal framework; and enhancement of coordination mechanisms. In the discussion that followed, some delegates commented on the importance of: addressing illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing and marine pollution. Kiribati expressed concern over the impacts of climate change, such as sea level rise and sea surges to small island states.



President Yudhoyono inaugurated the World Ocean Conference

THEME 2: OCEAN'S ROLE IN ADDRESSING CLIMATE CHANGE

Mary Glackin, Deputy Under Secretary, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), presented on the challenges of climate change. She emphasized the important role of observation systems and cited the Research Moored Array for African-Asian-Australian Monsoon Analysis as an example of advancing monsoon research and forecasting. Glackin cited the partnership between NOAA and the government of Indonesia signed during the WOC2009 on data and information gathering to facilitate decision-making on climate-related risks. She stressed that climate change consequences will be felt rapidly in the coming years, and noted the important role of adaptive management, empowerment of communities through capacity building, and partnerships with universities. A video message from Hillary Clinton, Secretary of State, US, was shown to participants, in which she acknowledged the role of WOC2009 in clarifying the interaction of oceans and climate change, identified the important humanitarian concerns related to climate change and supported the Manado Ocean Declaration.

Laurent Stefanini, Ambassador for the Environment, France, promoted the ocean as a source of alternative energies including offshore windmill technologies, waves and currents, and thermal sources. He described France's interest in taking a leading role in these efforts based on its marine resources, technological experience, and institutional support.



He outlined their goals to: implement a national plan for renewable energy; develop the technology and infrastructure required to harness alternative energy sources; and reduce the dependency of tropical developing islands on France for energy. Heherson Alvarez, Presidential Adviser on Global Warming and Climate Change, the Philippines, presented on improving coastal community preparedness and resilience to climate change impacts. He summarized the high vulnerability to climate change of countries within the Association of Southeast Asian Nations and detailed the resulting human, ecological and financial costs experienced by the Philippines. He emphasized adaptation as essential, and held up the Sagay Marine Reserve and Visayan Sea as models for community-based management of coral reefs, coastal resources and coastal communities. The Philippines maintained the need to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and pursue renewable energies for local adaptation purposes. In closing, Alvarez echoed a plenary statement by the Philippines that WOC2009 should be used to bring solutions to UNFCCC COP15 and more funding for countries to act now, rather than as a platform for articulating statements that merely identify the problems. In the discussion, Thailand and the Maldives called for further research and development to assist countries in improving their conservation and management practices.

THEME 3: THE FUTURE OF OUR OCEANS AND COASTS

Rachmat Witoelar, Minister of Environment, Indonesia, expressed his optimism for positive preparations for UNFCCC COP15. Witoelar recognized ocean and coastal zones as among the ecosystems most impacted by climate change. He called for assistance for developing countries to respond to the oceanic and coastal impacts of climate change, but noted that this response must not only be multilateral, but also bilateral and unilateral. Witoelar also suggested numerous clean development mechanism activities that could be

considered by UNFCCC, including: mangrove management, tidal energy for power generation, oceanic carbon capture and storage.

Alfadil Ali Adam, Under Secretary for the Ministry of Environment, Sudan, highlighted various ways that ocean communities can contribute toward preparations and outcomes of the 2014 UN Commission on Sustainable Development review on the oceans 2014-2015. Adam recalled that the goal of WSSD2014 is to conduct a review of implementation of the original WSSD objectives established in 2002, and identify new areas to make progress. He identified priority areas, including:



Rolph Payet, Special Advisor to the President of Seychelles, warned delegates that the consequences of fisheries over-exploitation may be further exacerbated by the implications of climate change

water and sanitation; energy; health and environment; agriculture; and biodiversity. Adam agreed with Witoelar that collaborative governance at all levels is required to respond to the impacts of climate change on ocean and coastal environments, but

added that further efforts are required to facilitate community involvement in formal deliberations. He noted that communities can assist by: engaging in monitoring and conservation activities; contributing to early warning programmes including contingency planning; and increasing disaster reduction capacity. Patricio Bernal, Executive Secretary, IOC/UNESCO, spoke on improving synergy to reduce climate change impacts on the oceans, focusing on the UN System. He underscored the central role of the UN Secretary-General and Chief Executives Board in: normative leadership and public awareness raising; convening the world's leaders; and assisting negotiations, implementation of agreements and operational activities. He noted the UN system initiatives on: adaptation; technology transfer; reducing emissions from deforestation and

degradation; financing mitigation and adaptation action; and capacity building. Bernal also stressed further actions to be taken by states, the UN and other international institutions, private sector and individuals to reduce the impacts of climate change, emphasizing the need to “seal the deal” at UNFCCC COP15 in Copenhagen. In the discussion that followed, Fiji explained that despite its early support for UNCLOS, the Convention does not address the relationship between oceans and climate change, and announced Fiji's eagerness to adopt the Manado Ocean Declaration in order to conserve marine resources and promote food security. The UK anticipated that the WOC and Manado Ocean Declaration will inform UNFCCC COP15, and the US encouraged those gathered to learn about and implement successful existing programmes. Mozambique stated its support for the proceedings. In the afternoon, following closed negotiations held throughout the week, delegates adopted the Manado Ocean Declaration by acclamation. Several country delegations, including Angola, the Philippines and Namibia, expressed their appreciation to Indonesia for hosting WOC2009. The Philippines stressed that countries brought together in Manado must continue to promote enhanced cooperation to achieve the intended common goals outlined in the Declaration.

ADOPTION OF THE MANADO OCEAN DECLARATION

Freddy Numberi, Minister for Marine Affairs and Fisheries, Indonesia, called for international solidarity in ensuring that UNFCCC negotiations consider coastal and oceanic dimensions of climate change, and show commitment to building ocean resilience in response to this threat. Numberi was encouraged by the demonstrated cooperation in Manado, and urged countries not to end their partnership with the closing of this conference.

IISD SUMMARY: The summary report of the WOC2009 will be available on Monday, 18 May 2009 online at <http://www.iisd.ca/oceans/woc2009/>