

Bienvenidos a todos al Dia de los Oceanos 2 durante las negociaciones de Cambio Climatico a Cancun.

Welcome to all to Oceans Day during COP16 at Cancun. I am Biliانا Cicin-Sain and it is my pleasure to welcome you to Oceans Day. On behalf of the Global Forum on Oceans, Coasts, and Islands, I would like to extend our sincere thanks and appreciation to the Global Environment Facility, the Secretaries of Environment and Natural Resources of the Mexican States of Campeche, Quintana Roo, and Yucatan, and to the Secretariat of Environment and Natural Resources of Mexico for their valued contributions in the organization of Oceans Day at Cancun.

Why are we here?

--Continue to emphasize that if there are not sufficient cuts in greenhouse emissions within a short time frame, that we will face disastrous consequences on oceans and compromise their role in absorbing carbon dioxide and in regulating climate, and that coastal and island communities around the world will suffer disproportionate impacts from ocean warming, sea level rise, storm frequency and intensity, and from ocean acidification.

--Continue to argue that the UNFCCC process should be cognizant of these issues and not treat oceans as a “sectoral nuisance.” Oceans are central to life and central to climate.

As you know, this is an uphill battle. Some, including our some of our lead sponsors, have questioned the efficacy of having a presence at the UNFCCC, since “not much will get done anyway.” Our attitude is that we must persist—Climate change is the defining issue of our time, and we who deal with oceans, know that the need for action is both great and immediate. Thus we are here working together to advance this issue.

Over the last couple of years, together with many partners, we have developed consensus over a comprehensive strategy on oceans and climate, including mitigation aspects, adaptation, financing, capacity building, and education, including at:

--the World Ocean Conference May 2009, Manado, Indonesia

--the Oceans Day in Copenhagen December 2009

--the 5th Global Oceans Conference May 2010, UNESCO, Paris
(high level)

--the Oceans Day at Nagoya, at the Convention on Biological Diversity, COP 10, October 2010, in Nagoya, Japan. Climate change can have significant impacts on marine and coastal biodiversity. It will likely result in species migrations, further exacerbating the impacts of dangerous invasive species that cause disease and broad scale environmental destruction

At Oceans Day in Cancun, we have some of the leading advocates and proponents of each of the “building blocks” of a comprehensive strategy on oceans and climate.

Oceans Day agenda

- To review each major “building block” of a comprehensive strategy on oceans and climate and discuss how it may be advanced in the next phase
- Discuss how the building blocks fit together and jointly enhance the resilience of ocean ecosystems and coastal communities, or alternatively,

how pursuing one building block could thwart the other approaches or threaten the functioning of ocean ecosystems

- Discuss how we can collaborate further and more effectively to have an impact in the UNFCCC process
- Discuss how can we collaborate effectively in the Rio+20 process, which will examine progress achieved (or lack thereof) since the Earth Summit in 1992 and point the way toward a new vision of a low carbon economic order.

Building Blocks of a Comprehensive Strategy on Oceans and Climate

(Go to Powerpoint)

In closing, we must do our work with a great sense of urgency. Climate change effects in coastal areas and oceans are already with us, and we must rapidly develop and enhance our collective capabilities for addressing the negative consequences, as well as to mobilize toward transforming our societies to carbon free economies. We need to do this to ensure our planetary survival and our societal well-being. The time to act is now, not tomorrow.

Thank you for being with us and we look forward to very productive discussions.