



PACEM IN MARIBUS XXXIII
International Ocean Institute
&
Celebration of the 50th Anniversary of the
UNESCO/IOC

Oceans, Climate Change & Sustainable Development: Challenges to Oceans & Coastal Cities

2nd – 4th September 2010
Beijing, People's Republic of China

CONFERENCE PROCEEDINGS

The State Oceanic Administration of China
International Ocean Institute
Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of UNESCO

Editors in Chief : Dr. Zhang Zhanhai Dr. Cherdsak Virapat



China Ocean Press



OPENING CEREMONY

Friday, September 3rd, 2010
09.10 - 10.20 hrs

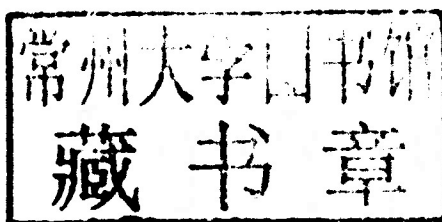
Beijing Hotel
Beijing, People's Republic of China

Co-hosted by:

The State Oceanic Administration of China (SOA)
International Ocean Institute (IOI)
Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC) of UNESCO

Chaired by:

Mr. Chen Lianzeng, Deputy Administrator
The State Oceanic Administration of China (SOA)





OPENING REMARKS

Mr. Sang Guowei
Vice Chairman of the Standing Committee of the
National People's Congress of China

Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

Good morning,

I am so pleased to be able to attend the conference of the 33rd *Pacem in Maribus* (PIM) and Celebration of the 50th Anniversary of the UNESCO/Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission. First of all, please allow me on behalf of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress of China to express my heartfelt congratulations on the successful convening of the conference and to extend a warm welcome to all participants from both home and abroad.

It is known to all of us that about two-thirds of the area of our planet is covered by the ocean. The ocean, the cradle of life, the treasure-house of resources, the arteries of transportation, and the source of winds and rains, is an important part of the human life support system and a valuable space for sustainable development. The promotion of peaceful development of the ocean is the common aspiration of people around the world, and is also the consistent aim of the PIM conference, and is intimately tied up with the concept of the "harmonious world" and "harmonious ocean" put forth by the Chinese government. The ocean not only gave birth to human civilization, but also plays an irreplaceable important role in promoting the world's scientific and technological progress, economic development, exchange and integration of international cultures. In today's world of global integration economy, the importance of the ocean has become increasingly prominent and common concern of all mankind.

With the progress of science and technology, the fast growth of the world economies, significant increases in resource and energy demands, the development of the world economy is becoming increasingly dependent on the ocean. The ocean with its broad inclusiveness is bearing the brunt of all the negative effects brought about by the development of human society, but man often ignores the vulnerability of the marine environment and ecosystems. In recent years, frequent occurrences of a variety of marine natural disasters sounded a warning again and again; just recently the Gulf oil spill, as the representative of man-made catastrophes, once again reminded us that mankind's unscientific development activities could bring about serious damage to marine environments. More and more people are thus deeply aware of how important it is to maintain a healthy marine environment and to create conditions fostering the development of a "harmonious ocean". Advocating the building of a "peaceful ocean" and a "harmonious ocean" is a manifestation of the wisdom of humanity in line with current common and basic human values, aligned with a sustainable future world vision, and also drawing from humankind's social civilization heritage.

As we all know, global warming and climate change are enormous challenges facing the world today. They have a profound impact on the development and progress of human society. The ocean as climate regulator is the most significant bearer of the adverse impacts caused by climate change. And thus the ocean is the key place for adaptation of and responding to climate change.

The Chinese government attaches great importance to marine development and to responding to climate change. The Party and State leaders have always stressed that scientific and rational development and utilization of the ocean and the cherishing and protecting of the marine ecological environment are of equal importance. The previous plans for national economic and social development have always regarded marine development and protection as an important element,



placing them in an equally important position as others. As China's highest legislative body, the National People's Congress has always attached great importance to the development of marine cause in China. In recent years it has approved and promulgated a series of marine laws and regulations such as the *Law of the People's Republic of China on Marine Environmental Protection*, the *Law of the People's Republic of China on Sea Area Use Management* and the *Law of the People's Republic of China on Island Protection*. In 2007, the Chinese government promulgated the "*National Programme for Responding to Climate Change*", setting out the specific objectives and policy measures, calling for vigorous development of circular and low-carbon economy, and adhering to clean and green production, which fully demonstrated that China has determined to respond to climate change. Meanwhile, China vigorously promotes cooperation with countries in the world, and actively participates in climate change negotiations and international marine environmental protection exchanges, and earnestly fulfills relevant international obligations, and thus has made a positive contribution to the response to climate change, sustainable development and protection of the ocean.

Ladies and gentlemen,

The 21st century is the century of the ocean. The world has entered into a new era of ocean exploration and development with great breadth and depth. The rich marine resources, the fragility of the marine environment, and the complicated implication of the ocean in climate change requires us to scientifically and rationally understand, develop, utilize and protect the ocean, making the ocean a rich benefit to all mankind. Thousands of years of experience teach us that human beings should not pose as rulers and conquerors of the ocean, rather that they should actively promote a harmonious coexistence with the ocean.

Today, the international community attaches great importance to sustainable marine development and to addressing climate change issues. In this context, that the State Oceanic Administration of China, the International Ocean Institute, and the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission jointly convene this conference is a timely act. China has always advocated the principle of "*mutual trust, mutual benefit, equality and coordination for cooperation*". We sincerely hope that through this conference, we will further deepen our understanding of the role of the ocean in responding to climate change and achieving sustainable development, get together to explore the ways to meet the challenges facing the ocean and jointly promote the building of lasting peace, the common prosperity of a harmonious world and a harmonious ocean. Let us join hands to form a new consensus through dialogue, to enhance mutual understanding through exchanges, and to achieve mutual benefit through cooperation.

Finally, I sincerely wish this conference a complete success!

Thank you!



Mr. Sun Zhihui
Administrator of State Oceanic Administration (SOA)

Honorable Mr. Sang Guowei, Vice Chairman of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress;
Honorable Ms. Patricia O'Brien, Under Secretary-General of the United Nations;
Honorable Dr. Awni Behnam, President of International Ocean Institute (IOI);
Honorable Dr. Wendy Watson-Wright, Executive Secretary of the UNESCO Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC);
Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen, friends,

Good morning!

Today we are gathered here together to hold the *Pacem in Maribus* (PIM) XXXIII and Celebration of the 50th Anniversary of the UNESCO/Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission.

On behalf of the State Oceanic Administration of the People's Republic of China, I would like to express my sincere congratulations to the conference and extend my warm welcome to the guests and friends both from home and abroad!

The *Pacem in Maribus* is a high-level international forum initiated by the International Ocean Institute (IOI) to explore the global ocean issues, with the aim of deepening the understanding that the ocean is the common heritage of mankind, emphasizing the protection of the ocean, advocating reasonably and orderly the sustainable development of the ocean, and discussing ocean issues which people are most concerned about. Over the years, the *Pacem in Maribus* has attracted the active participation of many politicians, ocean scientists, lawyers on the law of the sea and personages of ocean economic circles, and has produced an extremely wide range of international influence.

Since 1994 when the IOI China Operational Centre was set up, China has established close contacts and cooperation with the IOI operational centres in various regions to jointly promote the convention of the *Pacem in Maribus*, and in 1996 it hosted the *Pacem in Maribus* XXIV with "Ocean Management in the 21st Century" as the theme. At the same time, China has been active in carrying out related training in the ocean field, and conducted extensive exchanges and research on the major issues of EEZ management, deep-sea mining, development and protection of island resources, port management, prevention and control of marine pollution, marine scientific and technological innovation and the legislation on national ocean affairs, and has made its due contribution to the *Pacem in Maribus* and development of IOI operations.

In the backdrop of "peace and development" of the current world, today we ushered in the celebration of the 50th anniversary of the UNESCO/IOC, which is a major event in various Member States of the organization. For half a century, adhering to the aim provided in its charter, IOC has organized its Member States to carry out fruitful work in the field of ocean science, co-sponsored a series of major ocean science programmes, established the global operational ocean observing system, and has proposed an important concept to use obtained knowledge of the ocean to improve and strengthen ocean management of the Member States and put it into practice.

Since entering the new century, IOC has taken more clearly the ocean disaster mitigation, response to climate change and protection of the health of the ocean ecosystem as the goals of its work, developed projects on this basis to promote the advancement of ocean science, and has provided strong support to the Member States to implement the sustainable ocean and coastal development strategy. Today, IOC has become a competent United Nations agency guiding ocean management, providing ocean services and organizing scientific activities, and has made an important contribution



to the international ocean development and has won universal praise from the international community.

China has become a member of IOC since 1977 and has been elected as a member of the Executive Council of IOC since 1979. For more than three decades, China has participated in a number of tasks and activities of IOC, and has actively played its due role. In 1989, China established the World Data Center-D (Oceanography) and became a member of the IOC International Oceanographic Data Exchange Working Committee (IODE); with the joint efforts of the other Member States, in 1989 China contributed to the establishment of IOC/WESTPAC and a representative of China was successively elected Vice-Chairman or Chairman of IOC/WESTPAC; and a representative of China, Prof. Dr. Su Jilan, Academician of Sciences, was elected Chairman of the 20th Session of the IOC Assembly in 1999 and has made a positive effort in promoting the work of IOC in full swing.

In order to strengthen the coordination of China's participation in the activities of IOC, the State Oceanic Administration established the IOC China Committee in 2005 to organize the country's ocean science and technology forces to participate in the IOC-initiated and organized important action plans for the Global Ocean Observation System, Ocean and Climate Change, Global Ocean Assessment of the State of the Marine Environment and discussions on the future development. In the Western Pacific region, it initiated and organized the implementation of such cooperative programmes as a Response of the Ocean Disasters in the Western Pacific to Climate Change, Monitoring of Monsoon Outbreak and Its Socio-ecological Impact and so on, established the IOC Training and Research Center for Ocean Dynamics and Climate Change, and actively promoted to carry out regional maritime cooperation and capacity-building. In recent years, China has carried out a series of research and practices in the conduct of marine scientific investigation and research, prevention and mitigation of the effects of natural disasters, adaptation to the climate variability and mitigation of its impact, the protection of the health of the ocean ecosystem, and realization of the legislation and policy for sustainable development of coastal and ocean management, which not only effectively promotes the realization of the goals of the IOC, but also plays a tremendous role in promoting the development of China's ocean cause.

Ladies and gentlemen,

The Chinese government has consistently advocated the concept of "building a harmonious ocean and realize the scientific development" and takes the development of ocean cause and ocean economy as an important part of the implementation of sustainable development in China. For more than 30 years since its reform and opening up, China's coastal provinces have become the fastest growing areas in China feeding 40% of the population with 13% of land area, and have created more than 65% of the gross domestic product (GDP) with the ocean GDP accounting for 10% of the GDP. With great concern and strong support of the Chinese government, China's ocean cause is booming and has entered the best period of development: the scale of the ocean economy continues to grow, the ocean planning system has been formed basically, a major breakthrough has been obtained in the aspect of ocean legal construction, the strength in management of the use of sea areas and islands continues to intensify, the efforts in the protection of the ocean ecosystem and environment continues to increase, the ability of marine science and technology innovation and support have been raised significantly, remarkable achievements have been made in the ocean public service, research and investigation, and significant progress has been made in the cooperation with foreign countries in the ocean field. In the coming period, China will support and accelerate the development of its ocean cause by the implementation of the strategy for marine science and technology innovation, strive to enhance the quality and efficiency of the ocean economy, change the mode of development, and make efforts to achieve the harmonious development of economic construction and environmental protection.

With the increasing dependence of human development on the ocean, it has become a major issue faced by all mankind to scientifically understand the ocean, to rationally use the ocean, and to protect and cherish the ocean so as to achieve the sustainable development of the ocean. Currently, although the world economy has come out of the most difficult period of international financial crisis positive signs of recovery have appeared, the follow-up impact of the financial crisis still exists; at the same time, it is also important to deal with the issue of climate change in the economic and social development. In this context, it is even of great strategic significance to give full play to the status and



role of the ocean in fostering a new economic growth point and to respond to climate change scientifically.

The State Oceanic Administration of China highly appreciates the work of IOI and IOC, and attaches great importance to developing mutually beneficial cooperative relations. The conference co-organized by tripartite this time is designed to give wide publicity to the concept of "Science and Peace", to explore the major and hotspot issues of the ocean, climate change and sustainable development , and to seek ways to solve the many challenges facing the ocean. We are willing to make joint efforts with other countries in the world, as always, and support the activities of world's oceans peace, promote the development of marine science, to advocate the spirit of international cooperation in rational development of the common heritage of mankind, earnestly fulfill our international obligations, take the initiative to assume corresponding responsibilities, strengthen cooperation and exchanges with various countries and international organizations, maintain harmony and prosperity of the world's oceans, and protect the ocean ecological environment, so as to make due contributions to the sustainable development of the world.

Finally, I wish the conference a complete success and all the guests and participants successful work and good health in Beijing!

Thank you!



Dr. Awni Behnam
President of International Ocean Institute (IOI)

Honorable Sun Zhihui, Administrator of the State Oceanic Administration;
Honorable Liu Zhenmin, Assistant Minister of Foreign Affairs China;
Ms. Patricia O'Brien, Legal Counsel of United Nations under Secretary General;
Dr. Wendy Watson-Wright, Executive Secretary of IOC;
Excellency Ambassador Patnick Van Klaveren;
Excellency Ambassador Piamsak Milinlajuda;

Distinguished participants,

It is a great honour for the International Ocean Institute to hold the 33rd *Pacem in Maribus* (PIM) and the 2nd one in China. IOI is furthermore privileged to have one of its 22 operational centres in Tianjin. We cherish our cooperation with the State Oceanic Administrations of China (SOA) and we are proud of the presence of 160 IOI Alumni in China through SOA. SOA is a shining example of how countries and nations can effectively manage their ocean resources by providing an integrated, comprehensive and overarching governance, policy, and operational framework.

Today we are also celebrating the IOC 50th anniversary ever since its inception. IOC has been the very foundation of the marine scientific research and management of ocean and coastal resources. One only to recall is the recent work of IOC on Tsunami, warning and mitigation systems that are in place to comprehend the importance and the value of the contribution of IOC to ocean governance. We at IOI, share a common history with IOC, not only in the field of cooperation, and especially in capacity building, but in the fact that the first Executive Director of IOI was Dr. Sydney Holt, who came from the leadership of IOC as did other IOI executive directors as Dr. Kullenberg and Dr. Oliouline. We look forward beyond this conference to stronger cooperation and collaboration in advancing our common objectives in ocean governance and in assisting developing countries in this endeavour.

I take this opportunity to wish the new Executive Secretary of IOC, Dr. Wendy Watson-Wright a great success. Forty one years ago, under the leadership and initiative of a most remarkable woman, Elisabeth Mann Borgese whose devotion to the ocean gave birth to the first *Pacem in Maribus* (PIM) in 1972. Our founder, mother of the ocean, brought together a small group of remarkable men and women who drove the process of what came to be UNCLOS and structured that constitution on the ethical and moral foundation of the common heritage of human kind, thus forever changing our perception of common goods and their protection.

Elisabeth Mann Borgese thought and fought all her life for peace in the ocean. Peace not only where nations can avoid armed conflicts over the rich resources of the ocean, but a piece of humanity living in sustainable relations from the ocean and with the ocean. She called that first PIM "a leap in the dark", much has happened since those early days in managing our oceans that we can somewhat regard as encouraging. However, unfortunately, the human impact on the ocean is anything but satisfactory. It is, in short, disastrous. Humans have failed drastically to live with the ocean and from the ocean in a sustainable relationship. To continue this neglect is at the peril of the survival of our species.

At this conference, we have a unique opportunity to address the most critical challenges to the future of our planet. We also have an opportunity to make a contribution to the world Shanghai Expo as it addresses "Better city, Better life". It will be inconceivable in striving for Better cities and Better life that the nexus of ocean, climate change and coastal cities are not comprehensively addressed.

I sincerely hope and expect that the debate by the experts, scientists and policy makers that have gathered here today will make a critical contribution to our understanding of the cause and effect of



climate change and ocean interaction and their interdependent relationship so that we can better address the impact on coastal cities and lives of 75 percent of our humanity which dwell by or near the coast.

I am also convinced that this conference will contribute to the next session of the IPC at the United Nations under the able leadership of UN DOALAS. We can also look forward to the Cancun (Mexico) meeting on climate change. It is my hope we can place on the development agenda on the value of the "blue economy" and the stake in a better future for developing countries.

The importance of this conference is underlined by the presence of the under Secretary General, Ms. O'Brien and the message she is carrying for Mr. Ban Ki-Moon, the United Nations Secretary General. We are truly honoured by the kind attention of the Secretary General.

I close by expressing our deep gratitude and appreciation for the generous hospitality of the People and Government of China and to the Administrator and the staff of SOA who diligently and efficiently prepared for and organized this 33rd *Pacem in Maribus* Conference under difficult circumstances, we are greatly indebted.

Thank you.



HIGH LEVEL SEGMENT

**Friday, 3rd September, 2010
09:20 - 10:20 hrs**

**Beijing Raffles Hotel
Beijing, People's Republic of China**

Messages to the Conference



Mr. Ban Ki-moon

The Secretary-General of The United Nations



I am pleased to send greetings to the Pacem in Maribus XXXIII conference, which is celebrating the fiftieth anniversary of Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of UNESCO. I also wish to convey my appreciation to the Government of the People's Republic of China for the various important world events it has hosted this year.

The theme of this year's Conference, "Oceans, Climate Change and Sustainable Development", highlights the centrality of the marine environment to human well-being. Perhaps most significant is the role that oceans play in regulating the global climate — generating oxygen and absorbing carbon dioxide from the atmosphere.

Among those on the front lines of climate change are coastal communities — in particular people living in Small Island Developing States. Halting the decline of coastal ecosystems such as mangroves, salt marshes and sea grasses, can help to mitigate the adverse impacts of climate change while providing numerous social and economic benefits to hundreds of millions of people.

This Conference is an occasion to take stock of the many benefits that we derive from the oceans. As we are becoming increasingly aware, these benefits are not limitless. Indeed, in many cases, they are in peril.

Last year, I drew attention to the plight of the oceans, and our collective responsibility to protect them, in the inaugural message for World Oceans Day. With so many people depending on the oceans, it is vital that we pursue universal participation in the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, the world's "constitution for the oceans". We need to preserve the productivity and essential ecosystem functions of the oceans as a basis for a prosperous and sustainable future for all.

I wish you a successful conference.



His Serene Highness, the Sovereign Prince Albert II of Monaco



*Discours prononcé par S.E. M. Patrick Van Klaveren
Au nom de S.A.S. le Prince
Conférence "Pacem in Maribus"
Pékin, 2-4 septembre 2010*

Let me first express my sincere regrets for not being able to participate at this 33rd session of Pacem in Maribus and work with you on our oceans and coastal cities challenges. Let me also express my thanks to the Chinese State Oceanic Administration for convening such an important meeting of the International Ocean Institute and having invited me to share with you some of my concerns and hopes.

For many centuries the oceans were, in the mind of human beings, the place of all dangers and fears. Decade after decade humankind learnt how to run it in a way that we now call sustainable. In every important step of its destiny, Mankind has progressed thanks to the sea and the oceans. They helped in developing trading, politics and modern organization of our societies. By sailing the oceans, human beings became aware of the human race's unity and of the limits of the earth. Then, came the time of abuse, overexploitation of its resource and damage to its functions. Little by little, without any knowledge, mankind pollutes its water and despoils its resources: invisible damages that scar our ocean.

Now, we know. Now, we have science and technology. Now nobody can ignore any further what is happening on, in and around our seas. Now we know enough about the damages caused, we know that instead of using the interests of the goods provided by mother earth, we consume the capital itself. Now, we understand that nothing is free and that tomorrow our children and grand children will have to pay the price.

Human mentality is more to complain than to react. The current challenge is not to look back on what has been done or wasn't done, but to look ahead, keeping the momentum and orient decision. Action is already on many agendas, and I am glad to underline, in particular, the Chinese concerns and decisions related to energy efficiency and Climate Change. But speed is needed; threads and destructions are faster than current actions.

New concepts are on the table, economical value of biodiversity on ecosystem services, strong science for decision, green economy, new scale of values, and better integration of all economical and political sectors. Time, when nature conservation was costly, is over. Equitable sustainable development is development and prosperity for everyone.

A new worldwide social link around common challenges is on the trail for action. Good governance, including effective multi-lateral action could be addressed and reconcile divergent interests.

All international tools are in our hands, in particular the multiple and innovative tools belonging to the UN Law of the Sea family, and especially the new Mediterranean Integrated Coastal Zone Management Protocol of the Barcelona Convention. But we need to raise the institutional walls inside this excellent corpus of international treaties. Reinforcing the role of the UN bodies, like UNEP, in order to enhance synergies, harmonize efforts and facilitate national governance is also a challenge. At national or regional levels, all around the world, initiatives are ongoing which will enhance the protection of our maritime resources. Each of us, on our own scale, can contribute to progress and blaze a trail for new actions.



My Foundation, which campaigns for biodiversity, preservation of water resources and the prevention of global warming, is also involved in initiatives designed to protect maritime areas and marine species. This year in particular focus was made on the status of a fish symbol of an overexploited ocean. My Foundation, supporting scientific research on bluefin Tuna, joins its efforts with my Government to launch wide awareness on the collapse of these fish stocks. From the few solutions available we decided to ask for a ban of its international trade, using the CITES tools. The international community decided not to agree to our solution but to rely again on effective management of the fisheries, solutions that unfortunately failed in the last decades. Never have fish received such media coverage, never has the involvement of countries, expressing their concerns and decided to act were registered at such a worldwide level. Together, with all the countries including those that choose another way to succeed, we will act in the coming months.

Ocean's health is vital not only for the riparian countries but for the whole earth population. Vital for today and for tomorrow. In this respect, cities around the seas have a huge responsibility. In China today, Beijing PIM 33, focusing on the coastal Cities, will join the Shanghai world exposition to make obvious that Better cities will bring Better life.

I thank you very much and wish you a successful and constructive meeting.



Her Royal Highness Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn of Thailand



It is a great pleasure for me to have the opportunity to give a message concerning the environment which has become a principle problem worldwide.

First and foremost, I would like to congratulate IOI for organizing the PIM XXIII Conference to discuss and provide good understanding about threats to the world's environment we are facing today. I have learnt about IOI's missions with admiration and appreciation for its dedication to sustaining all humankind, from which inspiration and aspiration may significantly be derived and expanded throughout the world community.

The planet earth is home to all beings so it is our common heritage. This beautiful planet deserves our care and respect. Yet, it is a pity that, at present, our planet is severely injured. Its dignity and beauty are being immensely damaged. Consciously and unconsciously, we human-beings are burning this planet, our home, with our own hand, and we never realize it. If we look back and think, we will see. Deforestation, air and water pollution, indiscretion in natural resources consumption, emission of poisonous gases are examples. These, in consequence, have caused a chain of major problems: global warming followed by climate change. The seriousness of the phenomena is increasing day by day. The intensity of their impact on all beings living on the planet is apparently unthinkable. The principle factors indispensable for survival such as food, water, and air will be badly affected. If we do not try to find the way to stop them, or let them spread beyond control, they will certainly lead this planet on the way to destruction. We must bear in mind that all beings will not be able to survive with the environment being destroyed. We destroy the environment, we destroy ourselves. Thus, something must be done to save our planet, and it must be started now or it is possible that we will have nothing left for our future generations.

It is undeniable that it is quite hard to solve these problems. Nevertheless they are not the insoluble problems at all. To solve the problems is not the burden of any individual, but of us all. To put our abstract intention into concrete action, factors we need most, in my view, are courage, perseverance, and sincerity. We must have the courage to accept that the problems are really in existence and try to find the way to at least alleviate the problems, if not able to solve in the first place. I believe that alleviation will consequently lead to solution. Perseverance is that, we must be strong in mind and focus on our work without stopping. We must not let our ideal be shaken although interfered by some undesirable impediments. In the light of sincerity, we must exert ourselves to the utmost to perform our duty for the benefits of all beings, and not personal benefits. With these three factors combined, we will gain strength to face great challenge ahead of us. I still have faith in the old saying, "Where there is a will there is a way".

It is time for all of us to look at ourselves and consider what we can contribute to our planet. We must have the courage to change our role from the takers into the givers, and join our hands in restoring our beloved home to its original beauty. Human-beings and the environment rely on each other. We protect the environment and the environment will protect us.

With this message, I would like to offer IOI my very best wishes and sincerely hope for the progress and achievement of IOI's missions.



Hon Dr. Tonio Borg

Acting Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs, Valletta, Malta



MALTA

**MINISTRY
OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS**

On the occasion of the holding in Beijing of the *Pacem in Maribus* Conference, organised by the State Oceanic Administration of China for the International Ocean Institute, which we are proud to host in Malta, I wish to confirm my country's abiding dedication to its vocation to develop ocean resources for all humankind in peace and solidarity with all men, re-asserting our conviction that such resources form part of the common heritage of humanity.

To that end, we welcome the theme you have chosen for this year's convocation of *Pacem in Maribus*, believing as we do that the evolution of coastal areas and their communities merits the close attention of all who hold sacred our present responsibility in conserving the sea, its environs and its resources for future generations.

On behalf of the Government of Malta, I thank the Chinese authorities for so splendidly organizing this conference, and the International Ocean Institute for being assiduous in its pursuit of implementing the dream of my countryman Arvid Pardo and in fulfilling it through the legacy of Elisabeth Mann Borgese.

May your Conference enjoy every success!



Ms. Margareta Wahlström

*United Nations Assistant Secretary-General and Special Representative of the Secretary-General for
Disaster Risk Reduction*



Distinguished participants and organizers of this important Conference, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Disasters and Natural Hazards

From the second half of 2009 to the first half of 2010, 285 disasters linked to natural hazards affected more than 158 million people, claimed 232,481 lives and caused US\$ 51.3 billion of economic damage¹. Compared to the previous year, this represents a sixteen-fold rise in disaster fatalities -- most of which were associated with the 12 January 2010 earthquake in Haiti that killed 222,570 people. The nearly 300 percent increase in the number of people affected, despite no rise in disaster frequency, underscores the fact that disaster risk is geographically concentrated, driven by increasing exposure of people and property to natural hazards².

The facts are these:

- Disasters caused by vulnerability to natural hazards kill more people in developing than in developed countries, and disaster-related economic losses, measured against a country's wealth are much larger in poor countries³.
- Developing countries are less resilient to large, or recurring, shocks. Additionally, disaster impacts undermine vulnerable livelihoods, as well as countries' economic growth and progress towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals.
- Disaster risk has become, and will continue to be, an increasingly urban problem. Poorly planned urban environments, weak urban governance, a lack of infrastructure and basic services⁴, and rapid population growth have increased exposure and transformed poverty into disaster risk.

The grim reality is that, without proper risk reduction awareness or policies and measures in place by national and local governments, and with more population settling in risk areas and climate change expected to make things worse, we are poised for disasters — large, medium and small — that will increasingly affect development gains around the world in the coming years.

The earthquake in Haiti, recent floods in Pakistan, fires in Russia and landslides in this country are but the most recent examples of this phenomenon. Although these particular disasters have happened in in-land regions, we know from tsunami, cyclones and oil spill experiences that coastal areas and islands can be equally heavily affected.

¹ International Disaster Database, Centre for Research on the Epidemiology of Disasters (CRED, 2010).

² 2009 Global Assessment Report on Disaster Risk Reduction: Risk and Poverty in a Changing Climate, United Nations, 2009.

³ United Nations 2009

⁴ Ibid.



Commitment to Climate Change Adaptation and Disaster Risk Reduction

When coupled with rapid urbanization, ecosystem degradation increases communities' vulnerability to floods, landslides, storm surges and seismic hazards. Due to climate change, the frequency and intensity of extreme weather events is expected to increase⁵, magnifying the risk even further. In addition, there are new major risks, including population displacement posed by sea level rise and melting of glaciers, which are being caused by the global warming effect of climate change.

What is encouraging is that policymakers, scientists and civil society have recognized the urgent need for mitigation and climate change adaptation. This has brought about a positive shift in tackling risks posed by climate change worldwide. Disaster risk reduction approaches to building resilience offer concrete opportunities for climate change adaptation measures. Investing in reducing the impact of climate-related disasters preserves lives and economic assets, and assures that development gains are sustained in the long run.

Other positive developments are:

- The growing number of national platforms, or nationally-owned and nationally-led fora or committees for advocacy, coordination, analysis and advice on disaster risk reduction; and
- Increasing numbers of local governments that have signed up for the 2010-2011 World Disaster Reduction: "Making Cities Resilient" Campaign, which addresses issues of local governance and urban risk while drawing upon previous International Strategy for Disaster Reduction campaigns on safer schools and hospitals.

This commitment by national governments and local authorities the world over is reflective of the spirit of partnership that we at the Secretariat are trying to build and nurture -- for it is only through such steadfast commitment that we can effectively address the myriad challenges facing our world today.

Beijing and Disaster Risk Reduction

I cannot finalize without recognizing the relevance of the venue of this Conference. Beijing has been the venue of very important international discussions on disaster risk reduction. In 2005, just a few months after the tragic Indian Ocean Tsunami, it hosted the First Asian Ministerial Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction. In the following years, a series of international conferences in Beijing attracted disaster risk reduction experts and officials to identify gaps and develop policy guidance on risk reduction.

I trust this XXXIII Pacem in Maribus Conference will also be inspired and motivated by this auspicious city, and I wish this Conference a very productive outcome. Thank you very much.

⁵ Climate Change 2007: The Physical Science Basis: Contribution of Working Group I to the Fourth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, United Kingdom and New York, NY, USA.