

It is with great honour that the International Ocean Institute responds again this year to the Secretary General's request for our input into the preparation of his comprehensive report on oceans and the Law of the Sea.

The International Ocean Institute continues to work closely with the United Nations System and its Member States, as it has for the last 31 years, to promote the development and implementation of the Law of the Sea Convention and all related Agreements and Programs, including those at the international, regional, national and local levels.

The International Ocean Institute pursues its mission with the firm conviction that the Law of the Sea Convention is the Ocean Charter and that its universal and unified character are fundamental elements for the maintenance and strengthening of international peace and security, as well as for the sustainable development of oceans and seas.

With this optic, the International Ocean Institute's mission is implemented through five main program areas:

1. Education and training, including distance learning;
2. Policy research and analysis;
3. Conferences;
4. Institution-building and Partnership; and
5. Advocacy and Publications.

Each of these five program areas correspond to the main substantive issues which continue to emerge in the Secretary General's annual Report on the Law of the Sea and Ocean Affairs, as well as the Reports of the ICP and those emanating from the Regions and Member States. Projects within each of the IOI Program Areas are developed in response to specific identified needs and, whenever possible, they are implemented in conjunction with the United Nations System.

With respect to Education and Training, the International Ocean Institute (IOI) continues to deliver its flagship annual Training Program on Ocean Governance. This year will mark the 25th anniversary of this Program. A new Training Programme on Ocean Governance is being developed for the experts from the Mediterranean Sea and Eastern Europe to be implemented annually in Malta starting from 2005. The IOI also continues to provide, on National and Regional scales, various thematic short-courses in response to assessed needs, and in partnership with its host institutions and other agencies.

Policy and Research Analysis continues to be a growing program area for the IOI as Nations begin to develop National and Regional ocean management regimes. The IOI has actively contributed to the development processes of Thailand's Ocean Policy and the Pacific Islands Regional Ocean Policy, as well as the work of the Arctic Council in developing an Arctic policy for the protection of this vulnerable and important marine environment. The Recommendations of the Leadership Seminar on Caspian Sea and

Deltas Regional Sustainable Development and Security helped in the formulation of the Frame Convention on the Protection of the Marine Environment of the Caspian Sea.

The International Ocean Institute also continues to convene its international *Pacem in Maribus* conference series in support of the further development and implementation of Ocean Governance. The year 2003 conference, the XXXth, under a title “A Year after Johannesburg – Ocean Governance and Sustainable Development: Ocean and Coasts – A glimpse into the future”, was hosted by the IOI-Ukraine Operational Centre with the generous support of the Academy of Sciences of Ukraine, EU and a few international, regional and national organizations. More than 200 participants from almost 40 countries took part in the Conference. The Conference adopted a message underlining the importance of developing tangible targets and timeframes for integrated coastal and oceans management at all levels and urging the UN to establish a transparent interagency coordination mechanism. This mechanism should allow for non-governmental participation and address the interrelated problems of ocean space in a holistic manner.

The IOI has also participated and contributed knowledge and expertise to a large number of international conferences and United Nation meetings in support of the further development and implementation of Ocean Governance at all levels.

As a global network, the IOI continues to contribute to Institution Building and forge strategic Partnerships through which it pursues its mandate. The IOI Network is presently composed of 24 Operational Centres which are geographically distributed in 22 Nations. It is through this global Network of Operational Centres that the IOI engages in Local, National and Regional programs and projects, drawing on local expertise, and developing further partnerships as appropriate.

The IOI Network also remains fully engaged in Ocean related activities of the United Nations System through various Strategic Partnerships with, *inter alia*, DOALOS, UNESCO, UNITAR and UNCTAD. As an ECOSOC and IMO accredited Observer, the IOI also directly contributes to all relevant meetings and conferences of these Bodies.

The IOI also disseminates the latest information on Ocean Governance through an Advocacy and Publications program. Apart from the IOI’s Annual Report, IOI and its Operational Centres published numerous peer-reviewed and technical reports in areas ranging from science to ocean policy. The 18 Volume of the Ocean Yearbook was published this year.

Throughout 2003, the IOI has continued to remain concerned, and to address, several substantive Ocean issues which include:

1. The lack of capacity for the implementation of the plethora of Ocean related convention regimes and programs, including the lack of clear donor Nation commitment to such activities;

2. The necessity to address in a unified and effective manner the intertwined issues of the “genuine link,” “flags of convenience” and “open registries,” all of which continue to contribute to global insecurity; and
3. The need for a transparent and inclusive United Nations inter-agency coordination mechanism for Ocean issues.

The IOI is however also very pleased to note that significant progress has been achieved in the areas of:

1. Building a common international understanding of the primacy of the Law of the Sea Convention and related convention regimes, resulting in significant efforts at the National and Regional levels in maritime policy development;
2. Small Island Developing States (SIDS) and the upcoming preparations for the Review of the Barbados Plan of Action (BPofA+10). The critical issue of the sustainable development, and indeed the very survival, of SIDS is of primary concern to the IOI as it becomes fully engaged in the BPofA+10 Process; and
3. Rising recognition of the critical importance of developing a regime to ensure the protection, preservation and proper management of the biological resources beyond areas of national jurisdiction, including those of the deep-sea. The IOI is very pleased to note the opportunity afforded by the 5th ICP in this regard, and assures the Secretary General that it will continue to contribute to this important and necessary process as a matter of priority.

In conclusion, the International Ocean Institute would like to thank the Secretary General for his comprehensive and most useful annual report, and for accepting our humble contribution. We further assure the Secretary General of our continued support and dedication to the United Nations System as we worked side by side in the pursuit of *Pacem in Maribus*.