



WORLD OCEAN COUNCIL

*The International Cross-Sectoral Industry Leadership Alliance
for Ocean Sustainability*

News Release

GOVERNMENTS TO ACT ON OCEAN INDUSTRY IMPACTS THROUGH INTERNATIONAL TREATY

Shipping, Fisheries, Aquaculture, Tourism, Mineral Extraction, Other Marine Activities under Scrutiny at Biodiversity Convention's Inter-governmental Meeting

18 October 2010 –

Governments will decide on measures to minimize the impacts of human activities on the marine environment at the UN summit on biodiversity - the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) - which opens today in Nagoya, Japan.

The conference document describes the “urgent need to assess and monitor the impacts and risks of unsustainable human activities on marine and coastal biodiversity”. It requests governments to adopt measures to prevent significant adverse effects from unsustainable human activities in marine and coastal areas, including identifying and assessing threats to biodiversity in the high seas.

The CBD is one of the most widely supported international treaties, ratified by 193 countries. It addresses the conservation and sustainable use of species and ecosystems and has become the primary vehicle for high level marine conservation policy-making for both EEZs and in “areas beyond national jurisdiction”.

The CBD meeting in 2010 will especially be seeking to advance the use of environmental impact assessment (EIA) and strategic environmental assessment (SEA) for activities which may have significant impacts on biodiversity in national and international waters. These impact assessment tools would be coupled with actions to identify “Ecologically or Biologically Significant Areas”, using selection criteria for such areas that were adopted by governments at the previous CBD conference.

The CBD's actions to address impacts to marine and coastal biodiversity potentially affect all commercial ocean users. Unfortunately, the wide array of industries operating in the marine environment have been little involved in CBD discussions leading to major decisions, such as determining how marine protected areas will be selected.

The World Ocean Council (WOC), as the only international, cross-sectoral business leadership alliance on ocean sustainability, is now addressing this by engaging with the CBD on behalf of responsible ocean businesses. The WOC is monitoring CBD developments and provides detailed review and analysis for its membership, which includes shipping, oil/gas, seafood, tourism, mining, and other ocean industries.

Paul Holthus, WOC Executive Director, states, “It is critical that the diverse ocean business community is engaged in international policy developments that affect their access and use of ocean space and resources. The WOC will be at the CBD Conference of Parties as an official observer for this purpose.”

“The participation of ocean sustainability leaders from the private sector is vital to successfully developing reasonable, balanced, science-based marine conservation measures, especially in the high seas,” Holthus continued. “Responsible ocean industries must be engaged in the CBD process to understand the issues and concerns of other stakeholders and take a leadership role in ensuring the health of marine ecosystems. Input from the ocean industries and science-based information on marine activities and their effects is essential to meaningful decision-making on ocean use.”

The WOC is engaging with the governments and NGOs at the CBD in several ways to ensure they are aware of the Corporate Ocean Responsibility leadership efforts of WOC members. For example, the WOC will be convening an official side event at the CBD conference - "*Ocean Industry Leadership in Addressing Marine Biodiversity Challenges*" (October 25th, 18:15-19:45).

Engaging the business community is a major focus of the 2010 CBD. The Nagoya conference will highlight the recently released report, *The Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity*. This major review documents the annual economic impact of biodiversity loss to be \$2 to \$4.5 trillion and makes the business case for protection of natural habitats and ecosystem services.

Businesses should be scanning the horizon for material risks, notes PricewaterhouseCoopers, a large consulting firm, highlighting that biodiversity is now clearly identified as a material risk and companies need to know if they are resilient to that risk. Adding to the business case for tackling biodiversity loss, a recent report from Allianz, a major insurance company, indicated that the destruction of nature could be even more costly than greenhouse gas emissions.

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The World Ocean Council is the international, cross-sectoral industry alliance for private sector leadership and collaboration in ocean stewardship. Membership is open to ocean industries committed to addressing the challenges of Corporate Ocean Responsibility. Companies and associations worldwide are distinguishing themselves as sustainability leaders by joining the WOC as Founding Members in 2009/2010.

WOC members to date include almost 30 leading companies and associations from a wide range of ocean industries: oil and gas, shipping, marine science, ocean technology, seafood, tourism, maritime law, marine environmental services and others.

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