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World Ocean Conference, a fight to get oceans into the climate change debate

Manado, North Sulawesi, Indonesia, 11 May, 2009 (IUCN) – The Manado Ocean Declaration draft will be reviewed at the World Ocean Congress in Manado urging the UN to put marine issues at the top of the agenda at the climate talks in Copenhagen.

With two-thirds of our planet being Oceans, we need to protect our oceans to protect our future. Climate change will not only have an effect on natural resources and on coastal infrastructure but will displace a large number of people. Sea level rise will cause seawater intrusion which will severely affect aquaculture and agriculture, as well as access to fresh water.

“One meter sea rise could inundate 17% of Bangladesh, completely flood the Maldives and many of the Pacific Island states. Up to 30% loss of global coastal wetlands is expected if sea temperature increase by 3-4°C above pre-industrial levels. Increased concentrations of CO₂ in seawater will lead to ocean acidification reducing calcification functions of corals. Changes in precipitation will cause flooding, landslides and more run-off from land to the sea. Storm surges will contribute to beach erosion, loss of infrastructure and reduced water quality, thereby jeopardising health, food security, and livelihoods such as fisheries and tourism, making coastal communities even more vulnerable to extreme weather events”, says **Anne Walton**, NOAA.

The UN talks in Copenhagen (COP15) at the end of the year is expected to result in a new agreement on reducing carbon emissions by a set target for all developed nations by 2012, the year which the Kyoto Protocol expires.

“The Manado Ocean Declaration must ensure that impacts of climate change on oceans, particularly coral reefs, mangroves and seagrasses are recognised” says, **Bernard O’Callaghan**, IUCN Regional Coordinator for Oceania. *“The consequences of a failure to do so will be devastating, especially for the millions of people in developing countries that depend on these”.*

Policy-makers need to make sure that effective climate change adaptation measures are adopted and implemented now. *Helping to influence such changes is a part of IUCN’s Mandate”,* says **Bernard O’Callaghan**, IUCN Regional Coordinator for Oceania

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About IUCN

IUCN, the International Union for Conservation of Nature, helps the world find pragmatic solutions to our most pressing environment and development challenges by supporting scientific research; managing field projects all over the world; and bringing governments, NGOs, the UN, international conventions and companies together to develop policy, laws and best practice.

The world’s oldest and largest global environmental network, IUCN is a democratic membership union with more than 1,000 government and NGO member organizations, and almost 11,000 volunteer scientists and experts in some 160 countries. IUCN’s work is supported by over 1,000 professional staff in 60 offices and hundreds of partners in public, NGO and private sectors around the world. IUCN’s headquarters are located in Gland, near Geneva, in Switzerland.

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