

Ref: OO/2009/5D/AF

29 July 2009

José Achache
Director, GEO Secretariat

**Subject: Invitation to address the OceanObs'09 conference,
21-25 September 2009, Venice, Italy**

Dear Dr Achache,

It is our pleasure to invite you to attend the OceanObs'09 conference, in your capacity as Director of the GEO Secretariat, and in particular:

- to invite you to briefly address the conference on its last day Friday 25 September,
- to invite GEO to comment on the draft conference statement,
- to invite you to send a written statement to the conference for publication;

the details of each follow.

We invite you to speak in a session designed to highlight your organization's role in building an integrated ocean observing system in the coming decade, in partnership with other international research and coordination efforts.

The vision of the OceanObs'09 conference is to celebrate a decade of progress and make a major contribution to chart the way forward for the ocean observing system in the coming decade. The OceanObs'99 conference played a major role in consolidating the plans for a comprehensive ocean observing system able to deliver systematic global information about the physical environment of the oceans. Now, for the first time in history, the world's oceans are being observed routinely and systematically by means of satellite and in situ techniques. The availability of these observations has led to rapid progress in ocean analysis and forecasting as well as new scientific understanding of oceanic variability and the role of the oceans in weather and climate. This information and knowledge supports a wide range of societal benefits.

It is now critically important to ensure sustainability and further development of the present system and to realize the full extent of the benefits across all stakeholders and for all participating nations. It is equally important to plan for extending and integrating the present system to include comprehensive observation, analysis and forecasting of the biogeochemical state of the ocean and the status of marine ecosystems, to provide a new generation of societal and scientific benefits.

The daily plenary sessions and roundtables of the conference will build on daily themes in: celebrating the progress of the last decade in the ocean observing system, addressing major scientific challenges through observations, deriving societal benefit from ocean observations, developing technology and infrastructure, and finally, the way forward for the coming decade. The full conference agenda can be found at www.oceanobs09.net/agenda/ along with further details on the strong level of community preparation and input to the conference.

Your address on behalf of GEO will contribute to conference's Day 5 theme 'The Way Forward' in Session 5D 'Viewpoints from International Programs'. The co-chairs of the Organizing Committee will subsequently close the conference.

We ask that you speak briefly from your organization's perspective on your vision of the coming decade of ocean observations as a part of the GEOSS, commenting on the Conference Statement (a draft of which is attached), and on how you hope GEO and GEOSS will contribute in the coming decade.

We look forward to receiving your response to this invitation by **15 August 2009**, enabling us to finalize the agenda for the Conference. Please respond directly to Albert Fischer (a.fischer@unesco.org) who is coordinating the program on behalf of the IOC and other sponsors.

A draft Conference Declaration, attached, starts with a vision for sustained provision of ocean information in the coming decade. We very much **solicit your views and input** on this draft Conference Declaration. You can leave your comments publicly at www.oceanobs09.net/declaration/ or provide them directly to Albert Fischer.

Finally, we are also soliciting a **written statement** from your organization that we will publish in the conference volume, and can expand on your spoken remarks. It should cover the same points: your organization's vision of the coming 10 years of ocean observations in support of your objectives, views on outcomes embodied in the Conference Statement, and your organization's planned role in supporting national actors in building an integrated ocean observing system. If you are willing to provide such a statement, please send it to Albert Fischer by **1 September 2009**.

Please do not hesitate to contact one of us if you have any questions about the conference or this invitation.

We sincerely hope you will be able to accept this invitation and join us in Venice as we look forward to a new decade of ocean observations and information for the benefit of science and of society.

Yours sincerely,



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co-chairs, OceanObs'09 Organizing Committee

cc: Michael Tanner
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