



CZC 2004 CONFERENCE STATEMENT

Preamble

The Coastal Zone Canada Association held its sixth biennial Coastal Zone Canada Conference (CZC 2004) in St. John's, Newfoundland, June 25-30, 2004. The theme of the CZC 2004 was “**All Within One Ocean: Co-operation in Sustainable Coastal and Ocean Management**”. The more than three hundred participants, representing some twenty countries, were asked to identify their three highest priorities for the Oceans Action Plan, which is currently being developed by the Federal Government of Canada. A summation of the contributions was compiled by an Executive Panel and discussed by the Conference. This Conference Statement is the result of that process.

In General

The Conference participants conveyed a strong, clear message that urgent action is required in order to progress Canada's Oceans Act as well as the Oceans Action Plan, which is currently being developed, towards successful implementation. Participants agreed with the guiding principles of ecosystem-based management, the precautionary approach, and sustainable development, which have been adopted by the federal government in the Oceans Act and the Oceans Strategy. Hence, the Conference was informed of, and welcomed, the development of an Oceans Action Plan, based upon the four pillars of international leadership, integrated management, ocean health, and ocean science and technology.

The participants noted the many Integrated Coastal and Ocean Management (ICOM) initiatives already well developed and underway in regional and community-based programs across the country and which need to be accepted, included, and supported as key components of the Oceans Action Plan as a matter of priority. The further development of the Oceans Action Plan should follow a consultative process that ensures that existing views and on-going programs are recognized and clearly reflected. The participants expressed their desire to see actions taken in the short term to implement the policy statements for the long-term benefit of Canada's coasts and oceans.

Specific Recommendations

Funding

Since its enactment, the Oceans Act has not been allocated new funds for implementation. The further development and implementation called for in the February 2004 Speech from the Throne, and reasserted in the October 2004 Speech from the Throne, cannot be realized without a strong commitment to provide adequate funding. To that end, conference participants made a resounding call for an ongoing commitment to an investment in integrated coastal and ocean management, and one mechanism identified by conference participants was the establishment of a Canada Oceans Fund. Such a fund would provide for



operating costs of the Oceans Action Plan, together with seed money for new initiatives in coastal and ocean management in Canada.

Governance

Federal responsibility for Canada's oceans is shared among many government departments and agencies; however the mandate to coordinate these responsibilities lies clearly with Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO). Despite the recent re-establishment of the Interdepartmental Committee on Oceans at the Deputy Minister level, the present structure and capacity of DFO to mobilize the total federal resources for oceans is seen to be inadequate and needs to be addressed.

In developing the Oceans Action Plan, DFO cannot carry out its Oceans Act responsibilities alone and needs the full support, cooperation, and collaboration of other federal agencies, and provincial and territorial governments as well. In turn, other federal departments and agencies with responsibilities in coastal and ocean areas, and Canada's coastal provinces and territories, must recognize the important role of DFO and play their part in ensuring the sustainability of Canada's coastal and ocean environments.

Furthermore, there are important regional differences between Canada's three oceans that must be taken into account within the national Oceans Action Plan. DFO should adopt a decentralized approach that shares control and responsibility with others, and reflects regional differences, without compromising its ultimate accountability to the people of Canada for the successful implementation of the Oceans Act.

It is also recognized that non-governmental organizations play a role and that DFO and other government agencies should more closely examine the roles that such stakeholders can play in assisting government with coastal and oceans responsibilities and overall governance.

The Oceans Act is enabling legislation. The Conference recognized that the federal government needs to establish the public consultation, infrastructure and management processes that will allow the empowerment and engagement of regional and local communities at appropriate levels of implementation.

The Conference participants felt strongly that there is a need for an independent voice to be an advocate for coastal and ocean management issues and concerns, and that the Oceans Action Plan should include the establishment of an arm's length Coastal and Ocean Management Council of Canada (COMCC) comprised of a representative group of knowledgeable citizens and government representatives who can act as a watch-dog on all matters affecting Canada's coasts and oceans. The Council would provide expert advice to the Government of Canada, the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, and other relevant federal, provincial, and territorial departments and agencies, on the development and implementation of the Oceans Action Plan and ICOM issues in general. This Council would build upon the existing Minister's Advisory Council on the Oceans (MACO) but would have a broader mandate and should have the ability to make recommendations to all levels of government.



First Nations and Aboriginal Involvement

The involvement of Canada's First Nations and aboriginal communities is essential if the Oceans Action Plan is going to be an effective mechanism for protecting the environment and managing our coastal and ocean resources. The Government of Canada must work with First Nations governments and aboriginal communities to develop an appropriate mechanism for their active and meaningful involvement and participation in the Oceans Action Plan.

Federal-Provincial/Territorial-Municipal Collaboration

The Oceans Action Plan must address the critical issue of federal-provincial/territorial collaboration if it is to be a successful and broadly owned mechanism for ICOM in Canada. The provincial and territorial governments must also work to ensure that municipal governments are appropriately involved as true partners in the ICOM system for Canada. The CZC 2004 Conference calls on the federal government and the governments of the coastal provinces and territories to enter into formal ICOM agreements that will bring about effective co-operation and collaboration between federal, provincial, territorial, and municipal governments, and ensure clear lines of accountability.

Research, Knowledge and Information

Research, knowledge and information are essential elements of Integrated Coastal and Ocean Management and are derived from a wide variety of sources and levels reaching from the international community through to local and traditional knowledge. These data must be accessible to and shared among all stakeholders. The Oceans Action Plan must provide for an enhanced system of data and information management and exchange to support ICOM planning and decision-making, including the use of local and traditional knowledge.

Public Awareness and Education

The action undertaken by governments and its partners on the coasts and oceans needs to be accompanied by efforts directed towards the involvement of the general public, elected politicians and decision-makers; the education of youth, professionals and technicians; and sustained media attention. Public education and awareness are key to the ability to develop the capacity of Canadians to ensure the preservation and sustainability of coastal and ocean resources and environments for their use and that of future generations. The Oceans Action Plan must include support for promoting public education and awareness of ocean and coastal resource management issues.

Youth Involvement

As inheritors of the environmental legacy of previous generations, Canada's youth have a vital interest and stake in the sustainable development and management of our coastal and ocean environments. The Oceans Action Plan must ensure that the voice of Canada's youth is heard and that they have effective input into the development and implementation of ICOM. Youth must have an appropriate and effective role in the Oceans Action Plan and in ensuring a sustainable future for Canada's oceans and coasts.



Community Capacity Building

The Oceans Action Plan must include the provision of direct resources to allow coastal and ocean-dependent communities to enhance and build their capacity to manage their coastal and marine resources in a manner that reflects the goals and objectives of the Oceans Act. The Oceans Action Plan should work with federal departments and the provinces and territories to build upon the successes of existing ICOM initiatives (such as the Atlantic Coastal Action Program (ACAP) which incorporates watershed and coastal management strategies into the development of community-based ICOM programmes) and ensure that a national programme provides critical capacity-building support to Canada's coastal communities regardless of their geographic location.

Regulation and Enforcement

In the context of consultations with stakeholders and in the sustainable development of coastal and ocean areas, the implementation of the Oceans Act will require the development of adequate and workable guidelines and regulations for coastal and marine activities. Furthermore, the Action Plan must include strong regulatory measures to deal with serious and long-standing issues in the Canadian marine environment such as the illegal discharge of oily wastes from ships in transit off the east coast that kill over 300,000 seabirds each year.

Marine Environmental Quality and Environmental Conservation and Protection

The health of our oceans is critical and must be carefully monitored through regular "State of the Oceans" reporting at local, regional, national and international levels. There is an urgent need to reverse ecosystem degradation and the decline in biodiversity. The Oceans Action Plan must include the adoption of clear indicators of marine environmental quality that are nationally accepted and internationally recognized.

Conference participants felt strongly that conservation measures and management tools such as those represented by Marine Protected Areas (MPA), watershed and resource management conservation areas, sites of special scientific interest, and Marine Parks, represent valuable and tangible progress toward oceans conservation. While several tools must be employed for sustainable oceans management, such spatial approaches are considered key among the various environmental conservation management and protection measures currently available to Canadians. Such approaches however, must be underpinned by adequate resources for their designation, monitoring, and management in order for them to contribute to the overall health of our ocean ecosystems. The protection of coastal and ocean environments and resources for future generations, including the restoration of degraded environments and ecosystems, must be a key deliverable in the Oceans Action Plan.

Integrated Management

Integrated Management is a structured process that must involve all levels of government, non-governmental organizations, communities, stakeholders and other related interest groups. A national mechanism to implement this is urgently required. In ICOM, integrated management must include the freshwater watersheds that drain into the oceans and, hence, the Oceans Action Plan must include a mechanism for ensuring collaboration and



coordination between federal and provincial/territorial agencies responsible for watershed and coastal management.

ICOM must also include fisheries management. The Conference strongly agreed that fisheries management, beyond the positive steps taken to date in Integrated Fisheries Management, must become effectively integrated into coastal and ocean management if the Oceans Action Plan is to be successful.

Transboundary Resource and Ecosystems Management

Canada should immediately explore opportunities to establish and/or build on collaborative, transboundary ecosystem management initiatives in marine waters shared with the United States (*i.e.* Gulf of Maine, Georgia Basin, Alaska), Denmark, France, Russia and other countries that border on Canada's oceans. The Oceans Action Plan should incorporate the establishment of Regional Ocean Councils, as called for in the recently released report of the Presidential U.S. Commission on Ocean Policy, and provide for the development of formal agreements with other countries on the sustainable management of transboundary ocean areas.

The Oceans Action Plan must give special attention to the needs of the Arctic. It must provide for Canada to work with its circumpolar neighbours to ensure that the pollution and degradation of resources and ecosystems in the Arctic Ocean are reversed, and that Canada is prepared for and adapting to the dramatic impacts of global climate change.

International Leadership and Collaboration

The Oceans Act calls for Canada to assume a leadership role in international ocean affairs. It is recommended that through the Oceans Action Plan, Canada undertake an examination of possible initiatives or potential changes that could be pursued in international ocean law in areas such as fisheries management, biodiversity, capacity building in developing countries and bilateral and regional agreements.

There is a serious lack of resources to build and develop the capacity for science and management in the ocean areas of developing countries. In recognition of its international responsibilities, Canada should take the lead through the U.N. Informal Consultation Process on Oceans to establish an investment fund for building this capacity.

Canada should build its international capacity to discuss and deal with ocean matters. To this end, the Coastal Zone Canada conferences, the Ocean Management Research Network (OMRN) conferences, the Canadian Coastal Science and Engineering Association's Canadian Coastal Conferences, and other coastal and marine related conferences in Canada provide invaluable Canadian-based international information on ICOM, and (in concert with other ICOM conferences such as the biennial US Coastal Zone conferences and those of the US Coastal Society) advance global understanding and awareness about coastal and ocean issues.



Concluding “Call to Action” Statement

The CZC 2004 Conference congratulates the Government of Canada on initiating long overdue action on its broad ICOM responsibilities under the Oceans Act, and we welcome the opportunity to provide advice and recommendations on the development of the Oceans Action Plan. However, the conference participants strongly believe that action and progress are urgently required, and the time for action is now. Furthermore, the Oceans Action Plan must be developed within a tight timeline, must provide for real and demonstrable action, and must be matched with adequate resources to implement such action.

The CZC 2004 Conference calls on the federal government, through the leadership of DFO, to develop further the Oceans Action Plan to incorporate the recommendations identified in this Conference Statement and to provide an effective framework for the implementation of ICOM in Canada in accordance with the goals, objectives, and directions embodied in the Oceans Act and the Oceans Strategy. Furthermore, the CZC 2004 Conference calls for this Plan to be developed and implementation begun in time to allow the participants at the CZC 2006 Conference in Tuktoyaktuk, NWT the opportunity to review and evaluate progress.

Respectfully submitted by the Coastal Zone Canada Association

On behalf of the

Participants at the Coastal Zone Canada 2004 Conference¹

October, 2004



¹ This Statement was provisionally approved unanimously at the Final Plenary Session of the CZC2004 Conference, and subsequently revised and circulated to all conference participants prior to final revision and submission.