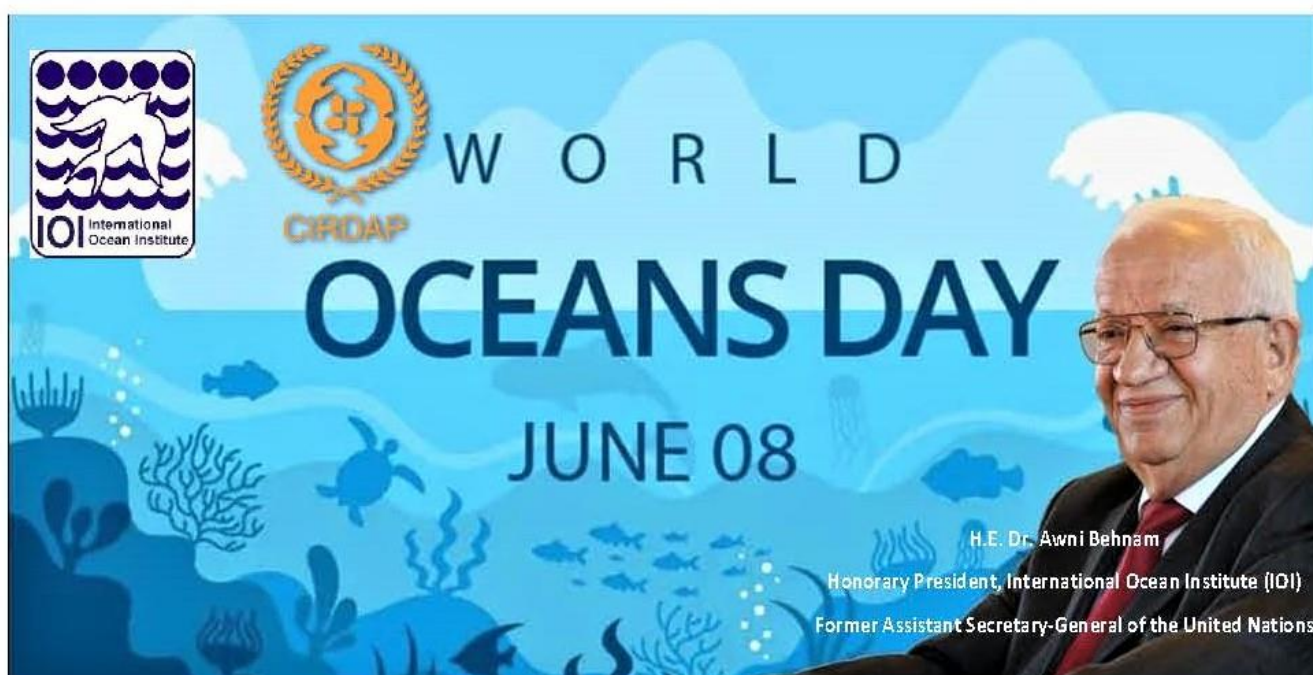


**World Oceans Day Message  
of the Honorary President of the International Ocean Institute  
(IOI)**

Celebrating Ocean Day 8 June 2023

Remarks by Dr. Cherdsak Virapat, Director General, Centre on Integrated Rural Development for Asia and the Pacific (CIRDAP)



UNDOALOS choice of the theme ***Planet Ocean; Tides are Changing*** for Ocean Day provides us with a reflection on how humans manage a Common Good for a good reason and in the knowledge that the ocean is not only the source of life and prime modulator and regulator of climate, but also a primary provider of economic and social services to humankind.

This gigantic body of salt water, which wraps around the planet like an insulating blanket, literally makes life on Earth possible. The ocean seas are the engines that drive the world's climate, defining weather and storing huge quantities of solar energy in the process. The ocean absorbs and stores carbon dioxide from the atmosphere.

Humans however failed to live with the ocean and from the ocean in a sustainable relationship. The economic and social welfare of humankind depends to a large degree on the oceans' productive sectors and services. The manner in which humans exploited those resources and services, have been anything but humane.

With over exploitation and depletion of living resources compounded by land based and seaborne pollution an existential threat to humanity became eminent, the international

community became alarmed as to the future and the issue was first raised by Elisabeth Mann Borgese in the early nineties as the ocean fell from the international development agenda.

Hence the creation of the informal consultative process currently known as ICP placed the ocean on the agenda of the UN with the participation of civil society,

With over exploitation and depletion of living resources compounded by land based and seaborne pollution has resulted in the current scarcity of affordable protein making a mockery of attempts to achieve goals relating to health and poverty reduction.

Regrettably, however, the human impact on the ocean through use and exploitation has been destructive and unconscionable because humans have taken for granted the sustainability of the ocean. In so doing, and despite decades of efforts to evolve a global and comprehensive governance regime, the ocean's fragile ecosystem was being systematically destroyed.

The impact and understanding of the nexus of climate change and ocean brought back the ocean with the engagement of UNCLOS member states and civil society to the agree with an increasing concern on the interdependence of ocean and climate change coupled with an increasing engagement of civil society.

Hence in the last decade both the impact of civil society and the contribution of the UN system and regional and national commitment was prominent as there was a changing *tide* in the form of a renewal of collaborative efforts to adjust the course of engagement in ocean sustainability. It's evident that ocean literacy training and education played a part in the new reckoning the oceans must come back on the multilateral cooperation agenda.

In my opinion that the age of ocean neglect, ignorance and denial of an existential threat to humanity may be coming to an end, as the changing tides indicate given all be it a late return to multilateral cooperation in favour of a sustainable ocean on basis of a global commitment and scientifically based ocean literacy.

Today in multiple processes as in the adoption and commitment to SDGs especially SDG14, BBNJ, Climate Change and ocean nexus, UN Decade for Ocean Science for Sustainability, UN Decade for Ecosystem Restorations, the UN IPC consultations process, Ocean global and regional alliances, WTO fisheries subsidies agreement, IMO advances for resolution of emissions from shipping. Ocean Foundations and an outstanding effective emergence of citizens sciences, global monitoring systems, a digitisation of ocean literacy and other indicators as the IOI Academy and an engaged civil societies placed the ocean and seas at centre of the sustainable development agenda and even on the political agenda.

Only this year the UN Security Council exceptionally addressed the challenge of Sea level rise which makes that theme chosen for Ocean Day *Blue Planet: tides are changing* very appropriate. Yes, the tides are changing as evidenced in the UN Secretary General call for ***Ocean Champions*** to contribute to sustainable blue economy development and governance.

Hence the changing tide is that of governance science-based ocean governance inclusive of all stakeholders accepting fundamental change and adjustment for the benefits of all humankind – and particularly to link all those processes in an ocean climate nexus of change for an ocean whose resources and services are sustainable for future of for generations to come. That will be part of the redemption we all seek to compensate the unconscionable damage and neglect inflicted by us humans on the health of the ocean in the past.

The ocean needs all stakeholders contribution by reaching out to build a broader community of human interests, intensifying efforts to promote a culture of cooperation and responsibility, as well as ocean policies based on ethics, science, and reason in the protection of a

sustainable Blue Planet for peaceful and sustainable exploitation of ocean services and resources. The road to end the culture of procrastination and the pursuit solely of private gains and greed at the expense of the future of our planet's very survival is to be mainstreamed in the changing tides.

In turn, this requires all stakeholders voice and commitment as ocean champions to induce a change of the current narratives, of shareholder value of the resources and excess in market efficiency to one of global benefit sharing that is both equitable and sustainable. This implies on all of us necessary initiatives to changing attitudes in the education systems and to reach out to the hearts and minds of future generations.

There is no question the prioritizing efforts in ocean literacy is necessary to create a vocal and critical mass of advocates and to create a vocal mass so as we do not lose the momentum.

The question is can we make the required change and accept new tides.

The answer **is YES, WE CAN**

