



Address to the OceanObs'09 Final Session on behalf of the Partnership for Observation of the Global Oceans

The ocean plays a major role in the heat budget of planet Earth; in the weather over both land and sea; in the chemical composition of the atmosphere; and therefore in our climate. We rely on the ocean for transport, extraction of raw materials, as a source of energy and for recreation. Moreover, its ecosystems are a vital resource for hundreds of millions of people.

We hold the ocean in trust for future generations: it is an enormous responsibility, especially during a period of rapid climate change, allied to increased usage and exploitation. To discharge this responsibility we need information. Specifically, we need sustained and comprehensive observations of the state of the ocean, so that we can develop the capability to predict future ocean conditions, physical, chemical and biological. This is what Society expects us, as oceanographers, to do. Therefore, the observing system must be designed for, and at the service of, Society. It is by its success in this regard that the system will be judged.

The Partnership for Observation of the Global Oceans (POGO), a consortium of some thirty-five major oceanographic laboratories around the world, is committed to work towards the goal of a sustained and globally-complete observing system of the oceans. It is a task beyond the scope of any single nation, and can therefore be achieved only by collaboration and coordination between governments and between institutions. Neither can the task be achieved in its entirety overnight: it will be necessary to identify the highest priority elements and proceed incrementally with their implementation. POGO provides a mechanism for the required collaboration and consensus building.

The observing task is also one for which the number of trained people is insufficient on a world scale: two-thirds of the world ocean lies in the Southern Hemisphere, but most of the oceanographic capacity is in the Northern Hemisphere. For these reasons, POGO has launched various capacity-building programmes, including a Fellowship scheme (in collaboration with SCOR), a Visiting-Professor scheme, and, with the help of the Nippon Foundation, a Centre of Excellence in Ocean Observations, housed at the Bermuda Institute of Ocean Sciences. The high demand for these successful programmes, which are oversubscribed, demonstrates that there is a vital need to be met.

In the coming decade, POGO hopes to continue and expand its capacity-building activities. It is part of our vision that all coastal states maybe involved in gathering the information required to manage our collective marine patrimony, and that they may take their rightful

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places as informed discussants of the global issues. POGO also expects to contribute to an integrated observing system for the ocean, whose detailed structure is still being developed, with significant inputs from OceanObs'09 and related follow-up actions. POGO will seek to ensure that biological and biogeochemical observations, alongside physical measurements, are given the emphasis they deserve.

Stewardship of the oceans requires knowledge, which implies sustained observations. The sustainability of a global ocean observing system depends on securing the involvement of government departments with responsibilities related to stewardship of the oceans. The value of the observations to societal priorities should be better articulated. POGO will use its influence with governments to provide advocacy for global observations.

It will be essential that the private and charitable sectors join with governments in supporting the ocean observing system. POGO has been the beneficiary of support from the Nippon Foundation and from the Sloan Foundation: we admire their vision and we appreciate the confidence they have placed in us. In the future, we hope to welcome other sponsors including those from marine-related industries: there is much that remains to be done.

POGO comprises most of the world's capability for observing the deep sea and represents an enormous pool of oceanographic expertise, both theoretical and practical: science and operations must work hand in hand to ensure the success of the observing system. Moreover, POGO members lead the way in technological developments for observing the ocean. A global observing system for the ocean cannot be built without the participation of POGO member institutions. Thus, POGO intends to take a leadership role, along with other concerned international agencies and organisations, in shaping the scope of the observing system and the approaches to be followed for its realization, including optimisation of resources use through sharing of facilities, such as research vessels. POGO will continue to work with GEO on the development of GEOSS. Finally, POGO will contribute to the interpretation of the results emerging from these observing programmes, to their synthesis and to their delivery in an accessible form to policy makers and to Society at large.

The ocean community came together to make OceanObs'09 a tremendous success. POGO thanks the organizers, committee members, participants and authors for all their various and important contributions to the event.