

## PREFACE

Building on a decade of progress in satellite and in situ observing of the global ocean and developing useful scientific and policy information from growing data sets, the OceanObs'09 conference was held in Venice, Italy, 21-25 September 2009, ten years after OceanObs'99 in Saint-Raphaël, France. The conference was sponsored and/or endorsed by many marine observing agencies and programs. More than 600 participants from 36 nations came together to build a common vision for the provision of routine and sustained global information on the marine environment sufficient to meet society's needs.

The conference was convened to bring together the communities undertaking these activities to share their experiences, interact with each other, and identify opportunities to work together in the coming decade. These communities coordinate their work through a wide range of national efforts, often coordinated via international and intergovernmental programs and technical commissions; the conference also sought to encourage improved links between these various organizations. Finally the conference sought to demonstrate the utility of a more fully integrated observing system that can address societal needs across the sweep of climate, marine carbon and ocean acidification, marine biogeochemistry, fisheries and ecosystem management issues and to make the case for expanded national investments in integrated ocean observing and marine information delivery.

OceanObs'09 was based on contributed community input. The organizers solicited Community White Papers describing aspirations for the coming decade from all interested communities of international collaboration and large-scale sustained ocean observing efforts. Other community efforts of smaller scope were accepted as Additional Contributions. The organizers developed the agenda to highlight observing system progress, research, information and services development, technology development, and to identify issues and opportunities for the coming decade. Each agenda item was represented by a single presentation and accompanying Plenary Paper that was asked to draw upon all relevant contributions. The conference process is described in the Conference Summary.

The Community White Papers and Plenary Papers underwent a peer-review process and an open comment period on the web, and were subsequently revised before being accepted. The few single-author Plenary Papers in this Proceedings volume represent the opinion of their authors and are not the result of a community process.

The conference provided many opportunities for interaction. The Conference Statement, the first

document in this volume, was developed and agreed during the conference. The Conference Summary, which follows it, expands on the Conference Statement and highlights some of the opportunities and challenges raised by the wealth of input to the conference.

At the conference there was a very high level of excitement about both the progress that has been made and the opportunities to do much more in the decade ahead. It was clear that we stand on the threshold of a decade of great possibility for marine and climate research, forecasting and management. It remains for the nations of the world and the national, international and intergovernmental organizations that sponsor marine observation activities to respond these opportunities.

We would like to recognize the contribution of many individuals without whom the conference would not have become real. The dedicated work of Albert Fischer from the IOC/UNESCO Secretariat was essential to all aspects of the Conference and its Proceedings. We especially thank ESA as the organizing sponsors, in particular Jérôme Benveniste and his ESA team for an excellent local organization of the conference and Jérôme for many months of post-Conference work to prepare the papers for the Proceedings. David Legler from US-CLIVAR was instrumental for the thorough and rigorous review of the Community White Papers, and Eric Lindstrom and NASA for critical support for rigorous review of the Plenary Papers. Many other individuals gave generously of their time and expertise in support of the conference; there is not room here to note every one. We also thank the agencies, programs, institutions and organizations that supported the conference, financially and intellectually. The endorsement and support of the international programs GEO, CEOS, POGO, SCOR GCOS, GOOS, JCOMM, PICES, ICES, CoML, IGBP, WCRP. Financial support through grants from CNES, EUMETSAT, NSF, WMO, NOAA, NASA, GEO, CLISAP, ONR, IGBP, CLS, Australian Bureau of Meteorology, BSH Germany, Mercator Océan, myOcean, Ifremer are much appreciated. Finally, we thank all of the participants who worked so hard to develop community agreements and plans to support the conference, as well as the rest of the Organizing Committee, the Programme Committee, the reviewers, plenary speakers, keynote speakers, session chairs, rapporteurs, forum organizers and poster presenters for making the conference a success.

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Chairs of the OceanObs '09 Conference Organizing Committee