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Fisheries to be hit hardest by climate change

Manado, North Sulawesi, Indonesia, 16 May, 2009 (IUCN) – The World Ocean Conference was a significant step towards protecting our oceans, but human pressures on fisheries need to be addressed urgently, says IUCN.

The main highlights of the World Ocean Conference (WOC) hosted by the Government of Indonesia were the adoption of the Manado Ocean Declaration (MOD), a joint statement to work together in safeguarding the function of the oceans in climate change mitigation and adaptation to be put forward in Copenhagen (COP15); and the Coral Triangle Summit where the Heads of states from the six countries involved in the Coral Triangle Initiative signed the first inter-state agreement in the coral triangle towards conservation efforts, supported by an NGO Consortium, as well as a concurrent three-day *International Symposium on Ocean Science, Technology and Policy*.

90 % of pollutions in Oceans comes from land, and 25 % of the CO₂ from human activities ends up in the ocean. Fisheries are on the frontline of climate change impacts and the coastal communities will be the ones hit the hardest. Coral bleaching as a result of sea temperature rise, increased run-off from land due to increase in precipitation coupled with human induced activities such as overfishing, destruction of mangrove forests and seagrass beds which are important fish spawning grounds will further jeopardise fish stocks.

“1.5 billion people depend on fish world wide... Killing the Environment is as serious as killing your neighbour”, says **Rolph Payet**, Special Advisor to the President, Seychelles and Chair and CEO, Sea Level Rise Foundation.

As fish stocks decline, fishers move out of their economic exclusive zones (EEZ). Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) fishing is a serious threat to the sustainability of fisheries globally. According to a *Study of Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) fishing in the Arafura Sea* by the Indonesian Ministry of Marine Affairs and Fisheries launched at the conference, the overall loss from IUU fishing in the World Ocean Conference's host country is USD 2 billion per year. In Indonesia the region most at risk from IUU fishing is the waters around North Sulawesi where the World Ocean Conference took place.

Traditional fishermen from North Sulawesi gathered in the Manado harbour during the conference, to protest against IUU and to urge the ministers and official delegates at the conference to touch on the important issues such as how to protect small scale traditional fisheries from IUU fishing and bigger companies.

The Global Ocean Policy Day provided an ample opportunity for a multistakeholder policy dialogue on oceans, climate and security among high-level government officials together with NGOs, industry and scientists to not only discuss the impacts of climate change but the adaptation and mitigation strategies as well as financing issues.

Bernard Giraud, Director for Sustainable Development and Social Responsibility, DANONE Group and IUCN Councillor, said *“We need more private/public partnerships in order to mitigate climate change”* in his speech at the Global Ocean Policy day.

“The message coming from Manado is clear- the state of our oceans is a reality and it is only going to get worse in the face of climate change, but if we take consertive acion now we may have a better chance of being able to cope with the effects of climate change. The Manado Ocean Declaration is proof of the willingness and commitment to do just that” says, **Don Macintosh**, Coordinator for the Mangroves for the Future (MFF) Initiative.

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Photos/Audio/Video material are available at/from: www.iucn.org/asia

About IUCN

IUCN, the International Union for Conservation of Nature, helps the world find pragmatic solutions to our most pressing environment and development challenges by supporting scientific research; managing field projects all over the world; and bringing governments, NGOs, the UN, international conventions and companies together to develop policy, laws and best practice.

The world's oldest and largest global environmental network, IUCN is a democratic membership union with more than 1,000 government and NGO member organizations, and almost 11,000 volunteer scientists and experts in some 160 countries. IUCN's work is supported by over 1,000 professional staff in 60 offices and hundreds of partners in public, NGO and private sectors around the world. IUCN's headquarters are located in Gland, near Geneva, in Switzerland.

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