

**Press Release****On the occasion of the****EU – U.S. Conference Series****Sustainable Oceans: Reconciling Economic Use and Protection****“Tobin Tax for Marine Protection!”****Leading marine scientists make an urgent plea for sustainable protection of the oceans: marine protection is ten to one hundred times cheaper than unregulated exploitation**

Hamburg, July 12, 2011. “We are giving away the treasures of our oceans before we have had a chance to get to know them properly,” says **Professor Karin Lochte**, director of the Alfred Wegener Institute for Polar and Marine Research in Bremerhaven, summing up the results of the first Ocean Conference in Hamburg, Germany. According to the conference delegates, misusing the oceans rather than taking preventive measures to protect them will cost society ten to one hundred times as much. In the Arctic, climate change is happening twice as fast as in the rest of the world, opening up possibilities for new shipping routes and new ways of exploiting raw materials. Because questions of land ownership in the Arctic often remain unresolved, international tension appears inevitable. At the invitation of the Dräger Foundation from Lübeck, Germany, more than 70 leading marine scientists from the U.S. and Europe met at the Bucerius Law School in Hamburg from June 29 until July 1, 2011 to discuss essential political, scientific, and social measures for the protection of the oceans.

“We only know about a tiny fraction of marine life and there is far too little information about technologies for sustainable use of the seas. This makes it difficult to establish the sensible international rules we so urgently need,” points out **Professor Doris König** from the Bucerius Law School. “And even where painstakingly compiled international marine agreements do exist, they are often not implemented by states because their own interests conflict with such agreements or simply because they lack the necessary capacities.” Furthermore, the political assessment and legislative protection of the oceans are highly complex processes because it is hard to define the actual worth of the oceans in concrete figures. According to United Nations estimates from 2008, the energy, medication, and raw materials derived from the oceans, plus the recreational activities which the oceans make possible, are worth some 21 trillion U.S. dollars annually – not even counting the role the oceans play in stabilizing the world’s climate.

All efforts to promote an intense interdisciplinary dialogue need to be redoubled immediately in order to tackle the upcoming challenges together with everyone involved, says **Professor Martin Visbeck**, speaker of the Cluster of Excellence “The Future Ocean” in Kiel, Germany. Climate scientist **Professor Mojib Latif**, also a researcher at the Cluster of Excellence, criticizes the ongoing failure of politicians and business leaders to take action regarding marine protection and climate protection. According to **Dr. Quenton R. Dokken**, director of the Gulf of Mexico Foundation, none of the parties involved has learned their lessons from the devastating catastrophe following the “Deepwater Horizon” oil spill. The precise consequences of the oil spill for the ocean still largely remain unidentified by science.

The conference delegates call for rapid international agreements and concrete measures to be put in place for the protection of the oceans, urging that these need to be given priority over national interests. Experts claim that all measures necessary to protect the oceans could be financed with the introduction of an internationally valid “Sea Tax” which would be payable by anyone making use of the oceans.

The goal of the conference series “Sustainable Oceans: Reconciling Economic Use and Protection” hosted by the Dräger Foundation is to quickly incorporate current scientific discoveries into political action. During the conference, the foundation of a European Ocean Commission based in Hamburg was also encouraged. The foundation is to translate scientific results more quickly and thoroughly into political measures. The goal is to work closely together with the existing U.S. Ocean Commission on

Ocean Policy so that international cooperation will help solutions to be found to global issues such as marine pollution and fast-paced climate change. Against the backdrop of the success at the Ocean Conference in Hamburg, its first venue, the conference series is to be continued in New York in 2012 and in Lisbon in 2013.

The conference series is realized in close cooperation with the Columbia University and the Kiel Cluster of Excellence "The Future Ocean". The series is supported by the European Commission, the Alfred Wegener Institute for Polar and Marine Research in Bremerhaven, Germany, the German Marine Research Consortium, the World Ocean Council, the team of the Hamburg media and research vessel ALDEBARAN, and many others.

For further questions please contact us at:

ALDEBARAN Marine Research & Broadcast  
Grimm 12  
20457 Hamburg  
Germany  
Phone: +49 40 3257210  
Fax: +49 40 32572121  
e-mail: buero@aldebaran.org