

ethic in the relationship between humanity and the seas, reflected in the rational and sustainable use of the oceans and its resources, and in the creation of the necessary conditions for a more equitable sharing between North and South of the benefits derived from the seas. Finally, he asserted that the Commission supported the creation of a World Forum on Ocean Issues, which would debate fundamental questions regarding the oceans. Similarly, the creation of a World Ocean Observatory structured around a network, which would provide periodic analyses regarding the state of the oceans to the Forum, would be very timely.

19. Congressman Curt Weldon, Chairman of the Sub-Committee on Research and Development of the Committee on National Security, House of Representatives, Congress of the USA, Chairman of the GLOBE International Working Group on Oceans, and ACOPS' Vice-President from the USA, affirmed that the Washington Potomac Declaration was a blueprint for the sustainable use of the oceans into the next millennium. The goal of the Washington Conference, that of raising the level of awareness about ocean issues, was fully accomplished as reflected in unprecedented media attention and polls that indicated the high priority the American public today ascribed to ocean research and issues. Similarly, a document signed by over 16,000 marine conservation biologists from over 65 nations that summarised the threats to the ocean's well-being, recognised that the living sea was in trouble and that there was need for decisive action. Mankind could help fulfil this objective by taking concrete actions to implement the Potomac Declaration. Congressman Weldon went on to enumerate many illustrative examples of concrete actions undertaken in the United States. He said that the budgets for the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and for other marine research institutions had been increased, as well as for Arctic research. At the end of 1997, Congress had passed a coral reef conservation act, which foresaw the provision of financial assistance for projects aimed at promoting research and conservation of coral reef resources. He added that other US agencies were also making significant contributions to further the focus of the Washington Conference. He described the activities undertaken by the US Geological Survey (USGS), as well as by the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). In addition, the military sector was making more data available to the scientific community and many efforts had been carried out to better coordinate oceanographic research, at all levels and among all sectors of society. He warmly referred to cooperative initiatives undertaken with Russia, including, among other issues, the declassification of defence assets. The Russian Duma had proposed a new initiative for addressing Arctic issues, and new initiatives for dealing with nuclear wastes were also appearing. He thus affirmed that success in the implementation of the Potomac Declaration could be measured in concrete actions. He concluded by saying that the oceans were a catalyst that would foster relationships and partnerships among nations in the twenty-first century, in order to solve the most complex problems that confronted mankind as a world community.