EMBARGO tot uitspreken 18:40 – CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

Welcome Speech by Mr. Roger van Boxtel, Chair of IUCN National Committee of the Netherlands

At the Ocean Experience SAIL Amsterdam 2010

High Level IUCN NL's Leaders for Nature meeting

[wethouder Carolien Gehrels EZ heeft net zaal welkom in Amsterdam geheten en moet snel weg naar haar volgende afspraken]

Thank you Alderman (Carolien) Gehrels for finding the time in your schedule to welcome us.

Professor Carl Gustav Lundin (Head of the Marine Program of IUCN), chairman Onno Hoes of the Dutch Coalition Biodiversity 2010,

Ladies and gentlemen, colleagues and friends,

Whilst we are celebrating the ships that travel across the seas here at SAIL 2010, I ask that we do not forget the world beneath their boughs - a vast yet fragile ocean ecosystem that contains our last important source of wild food; regulates our global climate; and holds a major part of the worlds biodiversity secrets and treasures yet to be discovered.

Oceans cover 70% of the Earth's surface and support an extraordinary diversity of life. Later this year the Census of Marine Life will be published, concluding that there are more than 230,000 species known to science in our oceans.

But with only 5% of our oceans explored, a fraction of the actual species has been discovered so far and much of ocean life remains a mystery.

And, with less than 1% of our oceans protected (compared with nearly 14% of our land); ocean ecosystems have not only been

neglected in scientific exploration, but also in the race to conserve and sustainably manage biodiversity and ecosystems.

But in this day and age of financial crisis, downturn, and ‘austerity packages’, why should we care about oceans?

Ladies and gentlemen,

The truth is that oceans make a substantial contribution to our economy. Coastal and marine ecosystem goods and services have been valued at 9.7 trillion euro annually. More than a billion people rely on fisheries as their main or sole source of animal protein, especially in developing countries. In 2008 the global capture fisheries production had an estimated first-sale value of 71.5 billion euro.

Oceans are subsidizing the world’s economy. Yet our ocean ecosystem ‘accounts and finances’ you could say are not in a healthy state.

[CO2 opslag]

We know now that since the beginning of the Industrial Revolution 250 years ago, atmospheric concentrations of carbon dioxide have increased exponentially, having a significant effect on our global climate.

Oceans are the most important carbon sink, absorbing almost a third of our world wide carbon dioxide emissions, representing a hidden annual ‘ocean service’ subsidy of 46 - 308 billion euro per year.

Coastal ecosystems such as mangroves and sea grass meadows are well known to mitigate erosion and storm action, and provide essential nurseries and fishing grounds, but they also act as natural carbon sinks. Mangroves alone are estimated to bury around 18.4 megaton CO2 per year. Yet mangroves have been reduced to 50% or their original cover, severely affecting their ability to protect coasts,

provide coastal communities with a variety of resources, as well as store carbon.

Still, these oceans and ecosystems are not widely recognized as vital global carbon sinks and there are few concrete plans to account for and utilize this service.

[energie]

Oceans are full of energy. We have been extracting oil and gas from beneath the ocean floor since the mid-40s. With oil and gas production said to have peaked, activities will spread into more vulnerable areas such as the Arctic.

However, the recent oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico has focused the world's attention once more on the economic and ecological risks associated with energy exploration.

Energy demand is expected to double by 2050. We need to find ways to reduce the impact of our energy production while maintaining the environment's ability to provide sustainable energy.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Our activities on land are affecting the oceans. Over 46.000 pieces of plastic litter are floating on every square mile of ocean today, suffocating life in the ocean. Mercury from coal plants end up in tuna fish. The Mississippi River carries an astounding 1.6 million metric tons of nitrogen into the Gulf of Mexico each year, of which about 650.000 metric tons is from agricultural sources, causing low oxygen dead zones.

The International Union for Conservation of Nature and it's members want to fight this ocean ecological crises with you, your economists and accountants. Markets are beginning to recognize, measure and

account for the varied values of natural ecosystems such as our oceans.

The Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity (TEEB) for Business study, a global study initiated by the G8 and five major developing economies, shows us we can put a price on the services nature pays us.

It reports the financial sector is exploring new opportunities in investing in biodiversity offset mechanisms, and finding new ways to assess and manage potential risks like those posed by deep sea energy exploration.

Consumer preference changes in 2008 – 2009 saw a 50 percent rise in the global market for eco-labeled fish products (those sourced from responsibly managed fisheries), reaching a retail value of 1.2 billion euro.

IUCN NL has the knowledge and expertise and a track record of over 15 years with projects that can help you to reach a net positive impact by decreasing and compensating the ecological footprint of your company.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Tonight I call upon you to consider your organization's dependence on these 'ocean subsidies'. Why are healthy oceans important to the long term health and survival of your organization? And what is the impact of your production process or investment policy on oceans? How can you mitigate or offset these impacts?

We need to find answers to these questions, because it is about time, we pick up the bill. And let's go Dutch.