



## THE CHARLOTTETOWN DECLARATION: CALLING ALL CANADIANS TO HEAL OUR COASTS AND OCEANS

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Our oceans, coasts and Great Lakes are in crisis. They need our help. Urgent action is required. The Coastal Zone Canada 2010 conference calls for bold political leadership at all levels. Success will require broad, collaborative action by all Canadians.

Over the past 16 years, each biennial Coastal Zone Canada Conference has issued recommendations to government presenting our collective expert view on steps that must be taken to achieve the health, resilience, safety and sustainability of Canada's coastal and ocean ecosystems, economies and communities. Our recommendations have been predicated on the view that coastal zones are part of a critical system that links the conservation and sustainable use of land and freshwater with the oceans. We are reminded that Canada is bounded on four sides by water – the Arctic, Atlantic and Pacific Oceans, and the Great Lakes/St. Lawrence River. We have also been acutely aware of the importance of provincial/territorial and community-level action in effective coastal stewardship.

*At the 2010 Coastal Zone Canada Conference in Charlottetown, we heard expert opinions from the full spectrum of Canada's coastal and ocean policy, science, engineering and management communities. There was a clear consensus that the pressures facing our coastal systems demand a broad-based, multi-disciplinary response – this must include increased awareness and scientific understanding of changing environmental and socio-economic conditions, trends and their causes.*

While many positive steps have been taken since our inaugural conference in 1994, the pace of improvement has been too slow. At the same time, the pace at which challenges to those environments has grown is increasing steadily. Further, countries that lagged behind Canada's lead in the 1990s are vigorously developing strategies and action plans for the stewardship of their coastal zones, and are matching those strategies with resources for their implementation. Our collective view is that to regain lost momentum, we must move beyond our focus on individual strategies, and address the governance framework within which priorities are set and actions initiated and sustained.

Hence, the participants at Coastal Zone Canada 2010 call in the strongest possible voice for Canada to take immediate action in accordance with the following resolution:

Whereas Canada's coastal zones - the Arctic, Atlantic, Pacific and the Great Lakes:

- are critical to the health of the oceans and the health and prosperity of all Canadians
- provide integral and essential socio-economic benefits provincially, regionally and nationally
- are already suffering from the cumulative effects of biodiversity loss and overexploitation of commercial species

- are at increasing risk from catastrophic events such as the oil blowout in the Gulf of Mexico, the increased frequency and magnitude of major hurricane events, and the recent EnBridge oil spill which threatened the Great Lakes, AND
- are being impacted today and increasingly by the catastrophic effects of global warming, including increasing ocean acidification, rising sea levels, and the recently identified long term decline in phytoplankton, the basis of oxygen, food production and all life in the ocean

And recognizing that:

- all levels of government, in cooperation with all Canadians, have a fundamental responsibility to conserve, protect and sustain a healthy, resilient, safe and productive coastal and ocean environment.
- 2013 is the deadline for Canada to submit its claim to the north as part of its ratification of the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea; Canada will assume the Chair of the Arctic Council in 2013 and this presents a unique opportunity to demonstrate international leadership on coastal and ocean health and sovereignty.

Therefore:

The 300 participants at Coastal Zone Canada 2010 – including experts, practitioners, youth and those dependent on coastal and ocean resources - call on our governments to convene in 2011, a **CANADIAN SUMMIT ON OCEANS, COASTS AND THE GREAT LAKES**.

To be successful, the Summit must be led by First Ministers, and include key Aboriginal and First Nations leaders, academics, and representatives of the private sector, NGOs, communities, and all sectors with vested interests in the health, resilience, safety and sustainability of our oceans, coasts and Great Lakes resources. It will build on the leadership shown by coastal provinces that have developed or are developing their own strategies for effective coastal management (e.g. Nova Scotia, Newfoundland and Labrador, Prince Edward Island), and be charged with developing a **Plan of Action** to ensure healthy, resilient, safe and productive coastal and ocean ecosystems for the benefit of present and future generations of Canadians.

Further, Coastal Zone Canada 2010 calls for the Summit to establish the **Canadian Council for Oceans, Coasts and the Great Lakes** (CCOCGL) to ensure that the plan of action is carried out. The Canadian Council would be analogous to the National Oceans Council endorsed by President Obama on July 19, 2010 in his acceptance of the recommendations of the US Interagency Ocean Policy Task Force.<sup>1</sup>

This Summit, the Plan of Action, and the Council would ensure that Canada reassumes its leadership role in the effective stewardship of the Arctic, Pacific and Atlantic Oceans and coasts, and the Great Lakes.

## A TIME FOR ACTION

Concern for the state of Canada's coastlines and coastal ecosystems is at an all-time high. Degrading water quality and ecosystem health, the effects of climate change, risks posed by resource extraction and boundary issues are all driving this groundswell of public awareness and concern.

We are at a unique point in time where Canada's leaders can capitalize on this awareness and take strong initiatives to develop a scientifically-based coherent approach to the stewardship of our coastal ecosystems, communities and economies.

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.whitehouse.gov/files/documents/2010stewardship-eo.pdf>.