

## The Ocean University Initiative for a UNU Ocean institute in France

Speech of Denis Bailly, coordinator of Ocean University Initiative

at EurOCEAN conference, UNESCO headquarters, Paris, 11-12 June 2017

“ Ocean University Initiative has been launched by the University of Brest with the support of local authorities and many of our local and national science partners. Brest/Western part of Brittany hosts the largest concentration of marine research in France and France has put a large investment into concentrating research capacities in this area. As we have discussed yesterday and for many years now, there is an urgent need for more policy and science integration if we want to deliver what we call for, if we want to deliver sustainability in the area of ocean and coasts, but not only. We really need to rethink and reorganize science. One of the lines is science and policy; the other one is sustainability science as an integrated, inclusive field of science grounded in transdisciplinary, grounded in good disciplinary science, grounded in close integration/relationship to policy and industry. To build that, we really need to have our governments to invest in new instruments and mechanisms. This has to be designed at all scales, from the local to the global.

We think that the ocean is a major issue for international cooperation within the context of multilateralism. Whatever can be argued about the efficiency of the UN system, it is one of the major instruments we have today to deliver sustainability at the global scale through the international cooperation momentum it sets, particularly for the ocean. We need to get the science, the knowledge we develop, the work we do at the core of the UN system. Having the second largest EEZ and being a big player in ocean science, France has a responsibility in that endeavor. To strengthen science-policy linkage at global scale, the University of Brest is calling on the French government to invest in the creation of an institute of the UN University dedicated to the governance and science for the ocean and the coasts to support the achievement of SDG 14.

What is the UN University?

The UN University may not be known from all of you but it was created almost fifty years ago within the UN system as a UN agency, enjoying full academic independence within the UN system. The UNU is a network of thematic institutes. Surprisingly there has never been a country to offer the creation of an institute dedicated to ocean science. So, what the University of Brest as decided is to propose the creation of such an institute in France, in Brest, to create a mechanism for the global oceanographic community self-organize to voice at the highest level at the UN system in cooperation with other UN bodies. This should engage all sciences. I'm an economist and I come from social science. I voice the for integration of more social science involved in our area, more social science and transdisciplinary research, for more cooperation North, South, East, West, in all areas for all the basins of the global ocean. So what I am asking you today is to help us, to support our initiative, so that France decides to make this investment. Support us to get the decision very soon as a commitment by France to the UN Decade of Oceanographic Sciences.

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