



Message from Dr Awni Behnam, President, International Ocean Institute

Ocean Day - 8th June 2008



Elisabeth Mann Borgese

As we celebrate Ocean Day on 8th June, we recall the memory of our founder Elisabeth Mann Borgese (left), the *mother of the ocean*, and celebrate her day and her struggle to make the ocean humankind's last frontier for peace and harmony.

When, in 1992, during the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro, the Canadian Government proposed June 8th as World Ocean Day, the inspirational spirit of Elisabeth was always moving hearts and minds to protect the ocean, our very source of life.

She would have been very pleased with this year's theme, "*helping our climate / helping our ocean*" with a special focus on coral reefs. At a time of global food scarcity and insecurity it pains all of us to continue witnessing the destruction of ocean life, ecosystems and breeding habitat.

After decades of abuse of the generosity and abundance of the ocean and of inflicting irreversible damage on it with the serious ramifications for coastal communities, the time has come to take a stand at IOI to remain at the vanguard of the struggle to save our ocean from wanton and unconscionable destruction and to advocate the interdependent relationship of climate change and the health of the ocean.

As each one of us celebrates Ocean Day, individually or collectively, we also recall with deep sympathy all those who have suffered the impact of natural marine hazards and recommit ourselves in support of IOI mission and Elisabeth's legacy.

Dr. Awni Behnam
President IOI

