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Conference Communique

EDS conference endorses establishment of an Oceans Forum

In the concluding session of the annual EDS Conference, participants informally endorsed the idea of setting up an Oceans Forum.

“The idea is that we should start a conversation amongst key stakeholders on the way we can improve overall management of our precious Oceans resource,” said EDS Chairman Gary Taylor.

“New Zealand’s Oceans are 22 times larger than our land area and are rich in natural and physical resources. They are important to our fishing sector. We have the 5th largest Oceans in the world.

“New Zealand’s Oceans are renowned for their high biodiversity including seabirds and marine mammals. We clearly need better and more integrated management of it.

“We were greatly encouraged by the success of the Land and Water Forum and see that kind of collaborative process being rolled out on Oceans and also on biodiversity and other long-lived strategic problem areas.

“There was a sense at the conference that collaborative processes are a way for civil society to take charge of the environmental reform agenda. We can start the conversation amongst ourselves and invite Government to join the discussion when we are ready. And if we can nail a way forward we can then invite Government to implement the proposed changes.

“So just as we took the idea of a Land and Water Forum out of our 2008 conference and made it happen, with government support, we will now try to do the same thing on Oceans. We’ll be socialising this idea with all key stakeholders and will set up a discussion process over the next few months,” Mr Taylor concluded.