

21 December 2010

Dear colleagues, fellow seagrassers, friends,

It is with great pleasure and honour that I write to you on behalf of the new Management and Steering Committees of the World Seagrass Association (WSA Inc.). The WSA Annual General Meeting was held on November 15, 2010 and new Committees were elected by our members.

First and foremost, I would like to acknowledge the previous Committees for their efforts in reaching out to the global community of seagrass scientists, managers and educators. Their efforts have created a stronger, better connected network that includes a variety of members, from biologists to community volunteers. We will build from their accomplishment, bringing the WSA and its vision to new countries, new fields while continuing to support our existing members.

The World Seagrass Conference and bi-annual International Seagrass Biology Workshop recently closed in Phuket, Thailand, and I am pleased to hear of several positive outcomes. Particularly, I am pleased to see ISBW9 being held in a region where science and management is progressing rapidly and that has a large and committed community of seagrass scientists and managers. I regret not attending the meeting due to personal commitments, but I look forward to hearing feedback from as many of you as possible.

In her final President's letter, Michelle Waycott addressed the issue of the role and direction of the WSA. I believe we all have concerns about what we can accomplish in the years to come and what the Association can offer to its members. I don't deny I share those concerns, I am aware of how challenging it can be to move along Associations such as the WSA. As much as the global seagrass community expressed interest at ISBW8 to continue to have an Association that can represent its members, we continue to have little or no participation from our members.

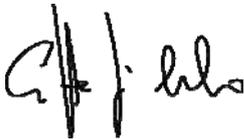
However, keeping these concerns in mind, we have now a renewed opportunity to work together to create an active community of seagrass practitioners (from scientists to managers), to renew our commitment to the Association, which can and should be the voice of the members, and that can act as a platform and vehicle to bring attention to this important, yet still neglected, ecosystem.

The new Management and Steering Committees include a team of diverse and eclectic people. We do have challenges ahead of us, but also incredible opportunities to raise the profile of seagrasses worldwide, to engage young professionals, scientists and NGOs and to create a platform for seagrassers to refer to when looking for resources, from science, to management to educational tools.

As the first step, the Committees will work towards defining a work-plan for 2011 which we will share with our members. To achieve a solid and feasible work-plan, we seek your input, ideas and comments. Finally, let me say that it is critical that all of our members commit to the objectives of the Association, without a team effort, we will not be able to accomplish any of the ambitious tasks we have set for us. Feel free to approach any members of the Management Committee and to express interest in taking the lead on any proposed action. The strength of the association lays in the expertise and creativity of its members.

On behalf of the new Committee I look forward to working with you in the next two years.

All the best,



Dr. Giuseppe Di Carlo
President
World Seagrass Association Inc.

