



## **The Most Beautiful Bays in the World presentation at the United Nations Conference on the Oceans in Lisbon.**

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great honor and a great moment for me as President of the Most Beautiful Bays in the World Association, and in the presence of some members of our organization, to be able to speak before you today.

Our organization was formed 25 years ago, in March 1997 in Berlin during the ITB World Tourism Fair. A few visionaries from the French tourism world of the Gulf of Morbihan in Brittany, France, had the idea of bringing together important coastal sites to share their thoughts on sustainable development along the coast and especially in the bays. Today, our organization brings together some 40 bays from several countries around the world.

Why bays? Because, they symbolize the relationship between maritime and terrestrial spaces. Fertile, protective and nourishing, the bays are conducive to rich biodiversity. Bays are the original cradle of terrestrial and marine life. In my bay, the Bay of Chaleurs, in Canada, is the Miguasha Park fossils from the Devonian period. These fossils evidence the existence of marine species that had emerged from the bottom of the bay to roam the land. If our bays are altered, what life will survive?

Bays are very attractive to people, and they are also fragile. If they are endangered, all terrestrial life is or will be jeopardized. The coasts and particularly bays are like "lighthouses", indicators of good or bad management of the oceans and also gauges for the state of the sea in general. Shellfish farming can demonstrate the state of the sea. It's an age-old fishing activity which can only function properly with good quality and unpolluted water.

We are experiencing significant human and tourism pressure that threatens bays: threats such as urban sprawl and unplanned development along the coastline. Such developments are to the detriment of local population. Often, because of these development, fishing villages and ways of life disappear with a loss for human kind.

Environmental protection and science help to avoid mistakes in local management. However, we, people of the bays, share our experiences, successes and failures to support sustainable development of our bays. We are coastal people who love our shores and bays, and it is only fair that our voice be heard, here, as well.

We were the only international organization to sign the "Sea T'ies" protection document for coastal cities and spaces threatened by climate change and rising oceans at the "**One Ocean Summit**" in Brest earlier this year. To consolidate our commitment and our action, we have decided, as part of our presentation during this United Nations conference, to propose to all our member bays to sign the following **Charter of Bays** during the next congress in Cambodia scheduled for December 2022.



### Charter of Bays

Member bays of the Most Beautiful Bays in the World Association agree on the following objectives:

- To raise awareness on a national and global level of the importance of bays and sustainable coastal management
- To work for the preservation of the marine environment
- Prevent and ensure the proper management of pollution challenges and various strandings, especially plastics
- To protect the natural heritage richness of the bays by promoting actions to maintain biodiversity in bays
- To raise the awareness of problems related to demographic and touristic pressures along the coastline and in the bays, in order to guarantee the best living conditions and well-being for inhabitants and visitors
- Strengthen the links between member bays as places for exchange and sharing of good practices through inclusive partnerships
- Encourage and share research and scientific innovations for the protection of coastal and marine areas
- Promote actions and initiatives that will allow bays to remain places where life thrive, and for memorable and enriching experiences
- Ensure that bays contribute to the UN-led global effort to revitalize the oceans in order to achieve Sustainable Development Goal 14 (SDG 14) on the conservation and sustainable use of marine and coastal ecosystems