

United Nations Ocean Conference 2025 (UNOC3) Off-Site Side Event

## **Understanding the Ocean below the seafloor - Scientific ocean drilling: a global infrastructure linking the past and future of Planet Earth**

Villefranche-Sur-Mer, 3 June 2025

### **Declaration of Commitment to Scientific Ocean Drilling**

#### **Adopted at the Off-Site Side Event of the United Nations Ocean Conference 2025**

We, the national funding agencies and research institutions supporting environmental research through scientific drilling of the seafloor of the world oceans, represented by the participants in the Off-Site Side Event of the United Nations Ocean Conference 2025, *Understanding the Ocean Below the Seafloor – Scientific Ocean Drilling: A Global Infrastructure Linking the Past and Future of Planet Earth*, held in Villefranche-sur-Mer on June 3rd, 2025,

**Consider** that the Mohole Project (1958–1966), the Deep Sea Drilling Project (DSDP, 1968–1983), the Ocean Drilling Program (ODP, 1985–2003), the Integrated Ocean Drilling Program (IODP, 2003–2013), and the International Ocean Discovery Program (IODP, 2013–2024) represent the largest and longest-running international scientific cooperation programs in the field of Earth and Ocean Sciences;

**Recognize** that the more than 2,000 scientific boreholes drilled into the seafloor of the Earth's seas and oceans have recovered over 480 kilometres of sediment and rock cores, now stored in three repositories located in the USA, Europe, and Japan, and made openly accessible to the global scientific community—whose study has generated over 14,000 peer-reviewed scientific publications and involved more than 5,000 researchers worldwide, significantly advancing knowledge of Planet Earth, its climate system, submarine geohazards, the deep biosphere hosted within sediments and rocks below the seafloor, geodynamics, the life cycle of tectonic plates, and processes leading to abiotic resources;

**Acknowledge** the decision by the main actors in scientific ocean drilling to undergo a major organizational shift in 2025, with the United States and the People's Republic of China establishing their respective scientific ocean drilling programs, and the European

Consortium for Ocean Research Drilling (ECORD) and JAMSTEC forming a joint venture as core members of the new International Ocean Drilling Programme (IODP<sup>3</sup>), to be joined by Australia and New Zealand as Associate Members, and which remains open to other international associate or temporary members;

**Are aware** of the challenges involved in implementing scientific cooperation among the three new scientific ocean drilling programs, and in coordination with the International Continental Scientific Drilling Program (ICDP),

DECLARE  
as follows

- Scientific ocean drilling with its synergies with scientific continental drilling, shall remain a priority in the development of future policies and strategies aimed at:
  - understanding the Earth, its oceans and cryosphere, and the microbial life they host;
  - supporting informed decision-making for a sustainable and safe blue economy;
  - contributing to the achievement of the UN Sustainable Development Goals;
  - promoting ocean literacy.
- The implementation of future scientific ocean drilling programs shall be guided by the enduring principles that inspired previous programs, as outlined in the 2050 Science Framework<sup>1</sup>, including:
  - Open access to samples and data
  - Standardized measurements
  - Bottom-up proposal submission and peer review
  - Transparent regional planning
  - Promoting safety, environmental protection and operational success through site characterization
  - Regular assessments of goals and priorities
  - Collaborative and inclusive international programs
  - Promotion of diversity and inclusion.
- Based on the enduring principles listed above, all necessary actions shall be undertaken to promote international cooperation in the context of scientific ocean drilling, implement new expeditions, enhance the scientific value of legacy data and samples, engage new generations of scientists, expand stakeholder engagement, and ensure continued national participation and support.

*Villefranche-Sur-Mer, June 3, 2025*

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<sup>1</sup> <https://iodp3.org/about/our-science/>