**This seminar, organized by the Chile-California Council, was attended by authorities and specialists for the purpose of addressing different issues in the design of seaboard legislation that will forge a sustainable development of the natural processes of the coastline. We invite you to read more about this seminar.**

The “Seaboard Seminar,” an activity organized by the Chile-California Council, was held in the Honor Room of the central headquarters of the Catholic University of Chile, attended by the Ministers of Defense, Public Property, Science, Environment and Foreign Relations, in addition to representatives from social and scientific organizations. The main aspects to develop an integrated management in seaboard legislation were addressed from all public and private viewpoints. All existing instruments were correlated as well as the different multi-sectorial and interdisciplinary visions that they cross. The seminar was sponsored by COP25, the Ministries of the Environment and Foreign Relations, the Resources Legacy Fund, and the Center for Applied Ecology and Sustainability of the Catholic University (CAPES). Ladera Sur was the main media partner.

This seminar was held in the aim of emphasizing the importance of knowing how the coast is managed and what occurs there, as well as what uses are of interest and which places have a high biological value. One of the attendees was Kaitilin Gaffney, Director of Oceans, Coasts and Fisheries at the Resources Legacy Fund in Sacramento, California. The Resources Legacy Fund was key to the creation of the Marine Management Areas and Marine Protected Areas along the entire coast of California under the Marine Life Protection Act (MLPA).

In commenting on experience with the California coast, Kaitilin Gaffney said “The process in California was in no way easy and took quite some time. The coast was divided into segments, and progress was made in each by stage, bringing together all stakeholders in the seaboard, such as fishermen, industry, tourism, real estate, and local governments. Agreements were gradually reached on the basis of all the scientific information provided for the discussion. The final application resulted in a positive biological, social and environmental balance but in many cases, not everybody was happy. However, after nearly 10 years of information compiled since implementation, the results have been amazing in terms of marine biodiversity and the fishing economy, given the great recovery in the protected zones.”

Different authorities and scientists attended the seminar, who spoke about the different matters surrounding the seaboard, **emphasizing the importance of regulations for the sustainable development** of all natural processes and economic and social activities on Chile’s unique coastline that stretches for more than 83 thousand kilometers.

The seaboard has been defined by law in our country since 1960, specifically in Statutory Decree 340 that is the current regulation on maritime concessions. That decree assigns responsibility for control, oversight and supervision of the entire coast and territorial waters, as well as rivers and lakes, to the Ministry of National Defense.

30 years later, in 1994, is when the National Policy on Use of the Seaboard (PNUBC) was set down in Statutory Decree 475. This decree recognizes the integrated and systematic nature of inland and marine coastal zones with a view towards achieving a harmonic development of the seaboard. Among its objectives, the PNUBC proposed preferential uses of the seaboard through macro- zoning and micro-zoning that established land-use instruments, all through the Regional Commission on Use of the Seaboard (CRUBC) and the National Commission on Use of the Seaboard (CNUBC).

In the words of one of the first speakers, Cristian García-Huidobro, Head of the Legal Division of the Ministry of National Defense: “Nowadays, at least through 2017, we have around 3,400 maritime concessions along our seaboard. They are concentrated particularly in the far north and in the central and south zones, where there is more interest in requesting permits in this area that is supposed to be accessible to all Chileans.”

The Seaboard Bill of Law was submitted in 2012 and was found to be constitutional. Its goal is for the administration and coordination of the use of the seaboard to be transferred to the Ministry of Social Assets and for a New Maritime Concession System to be established. However, the debate on this bill has been postponed indefinitely.

According to this bill of law, the seaboard has a complex legal nature that is comprised both of public property and government property currently subject to control, oversight and supervision. Therefore, a maritime concession regulation system is needed to speed up concession processing and better guarantee legal certainty for concession holders, while taking into account the environmental, social and economic aspects that converge on the seaboard.

**In this case, the bill says that the best alternative for management and responsibility is the Ministry of Public Property, which has a territorial vocation.** It should be given the authority to coordinate the other government entities that have purview over the seaboard in order to encourage a sustainable and harmonic development of this area.

According to Sebastian Seisdedos, Head of the Heritage Unit of the Ministry of Public Property: “In this context of our diverse territory, where the State plays a material managerial role, the Ministry of Public Property has the mission, in its service to the country, of managing the territory of all for a sustainable use and as an engine for the economic, social, cultural and environmental development of the country.” He added that need for the law lies in having a more modern, integral and articulated vision of the interior coastal territory in national policies, planning and management.

Mr. Seisdedos remarked: “The opportunity provided by the bill of law is interesting because it allows these three components to be put in order: the components of planning, management and integration of the territory, beyond administrative limits ... In addition, because if we think about it, we are talking about regulations that are more than 60 years old and obviously, in 60 years we have changed the way in which we understand things and the procedure according to which a more modern State addresses managerial issues.”

According to Seisdedos, the bill of law has three goals: the first is to **regulate the process to set and amend the national policy on use of the seaboard and assign that process to the Ministry of Public Property.**

**The second is the zoning of the seaboard** everywhere in the nation, in areas that are not regulated by a land-use instrument. Preferential uses will be established that will align the rights of individuals with the needs of the community and the country.

Lastly, it establishes a **new maritime concession** system that would improve, with a greater legal certainty, the efficiency and timeframe for the issuance, renewal, modification and transfer of maritime concessions.

After introducing the political framework of the seaboard, the keynote speakers began. Diego Urrejola, of the Cosmos Foundation, spoke on behalf of the new coalition of Chilean NGOs working on the coast, called Costa Chile. It was created to accompany the government in the seaboard law enactment to ensure that the right technical elements are taken into account for an integrated management of the seaboard and that the design can weather the effects of climate change. This includes the protection of zones of high biological value and a comprehensive land-use plan that encompasses all uses and pressures now existing on the seaboard so as to guarantee a prosperous development of the coast in Chile, which is entirely dependent upon its coast.

Diego Urrejola provided some concrete facts about experiences that the NGOs comprising Costa Chile have had--Fundación Mar Adentro, Punta de Lobos, Rompientes, Cosmos, Global Nomad and Geute Conservación. He then compared the before and after of different buildings and projects throughout the country that have been built on the coast and on dunes, and the repercussions on infrastructure and the people living there because of the rising level of the sea and climate change. He asked the audience: “How many additional ecosystem services are we willing to lose before we understand that we must protect them because they protect us? Everyone is familiar with the case of Avenida Peru in Viña del Mar, yet we continue to build in zones that were–recently–flooded by the 2010 tsunami, just to mention a few examples.”

He said “What is worrisome in the new law are the objectives. It is worrisome when we have a policy and regulations that are mainly oriented towards concessions and not towards the management of all qualities and characteristics of the territory–whatever the reason may be. Zoning is not the same as taking action and taking action is not the same as managing. The intentions are different.” Felipe Paredes and Claudia Silva also spoke about the Global Environmental Fund Project (GEF) of the Ministry of the Environment, in particular the Governance of Marine Ecosystems and Coastal Wetlands. They talked about several matters currently constituting the main threats to marine ecosystems and how the GEF programs can improve ecological conditions and coastal conservation. Claudia Silva highlighted, using concrete examples of work in the different wetlands of Chile, how additional sites of high biological value can be added by the GEF to create a network, for example, of protected coastal areas like in California.

Laura Farías, moderator of the COP25 Oceans panel and Senior Researcher of the Coastal Zone at the Center for Science, Climate and Resilience CR2 of the University of Chile, also spoke and provided a vision of how Chile has been preparing for COP25, especially the relevance that it has given to the scientific sector in the coordination of subject matters. She stressed that this has allowed COP to move Chile substantially towards scientific validation in science-based decision- making and processes.

Along the same lines, Carolina Torrealba, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Science, discussed the work of the Chile-California Council in organizing this seminar that united the view of multiple ministries and disciplines.

She emphasized: “The creation of the Ministry of Science is a gigantic structural advancement for Chile and over time, it will create the space necessary for academicians and scientists to have a much greater influence in the legislation and governance where science is used as a basis for support and context that can be transferred to the social and environmental feasibility of implementation. The example we have in Las Cruces, a no-extraction protected zone, promoted by Professor Juan Carlos Castillas, has yielded great results after 20 years, proven by his study of the zone that was left undisturbed. Examples like this can be easily replicated throughout Chile, and the Ministry of Science will form a part of the discussion on the work on the seaboard of Chile, which is very challenging, is very complex and long term. Having the example of a similar success, like in California, is a great opportunity to apply the lessons learned.”

Finally, the seminar concluded with a conversation panel comprised of Diego Flores, Head of the Protected Area Department of the Ministry of the Environment; Cristián Pérez, Executive Director of Global Nomad; Flavia Liberona, Executive Director of Fundación Terram; Carolina Maertinez, a geographer specializing in coastal evolution and an associate researcher at CIGIDEN; and Juan Ibañez, Founder and Director of Corporate Sustainability of the Catholic University Law School.

Matias Alcalde, representative of the Chile-California Council, opened this panel with the question: What’s next? He highlighted all the presentations in the day on the challenges the country is facing in this area, which explained a large part of the political, legal and technical setting, added to the vision of California. He also spoke of the opportunity Chile has, based on everything that is happening, to give the debate on the seaboard priority in its agenda.

“The COP25 in December, the creation of the Ministry of Science of Chile required for this type of management, the possibility of connecting the entire biological–coastal corridor of the Pacific Ocean from north to south if Chile progresses like California did, the fact that Chile is presiding the Pacific Alliance, the Seaboard Law being debated by Congress, the GEF programs of the Ministry of the Environment, etc. All these opportunities help Chile bring forward a necessary conversation that in other contexts, would be difficult to promote, and create the willingness to steam ahead in this issue key for Chile, a country dependent on its coast. This conversation has many sides, depending on the target audience, and in the long run it would undoubtedly create benefits for all parties.”

That was the logic behind the conversation panel which brought out the broadness of views thanks to the diversity and representativeness of its members. The panel analyzed existing government instruments, technical considerations involved in climate change and in the protection of biodiversity, social wellbeing and the process required for implementation, economic considerations in understanding the uses, pressures and benefits of land-use planning and coastal zoning.

According to Flavia Liberona: “The issue of the seaboard is an issue that is being put on the environmental agenda of the country, and I believe that we must be optimistic. However, we are facing many challenges. The first one starts with understanding that Chile is a country highly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change and, therefore, viewing it from that perspective imposes upon us an integrated understanding of how we are preparing for those impacts. If we do not do this in time, it will be much more costly to fix bad decisions, many of which will be irreparable. Chile has the time, but we must make urgent progress in this area. The population will only increase along the coast in the coming years and will do so considerably. Chile is a company that depends on its coast.”