

Final Press Release

The **Inaugural Asian Academy for Heritage Management Asia-Pacific Regional Conference on Underwater Cultural Heritage** (www.apconf.org) was held from 8-12 November 2011 in Manila, Philippines. The conference was hosted by the National Museum of Philippines, who organized catering and graciously allowed free access to museum theatres and galleries.

The conference aimed to:

- Exchange and disseminate information about underwater cultural heritage in Asia and the countries of the Indian and Pacific Oceans

- Facilitate professional development for underwater archaeologists and underwater cultural heritage managers in the Asia-Pacific region

- Provide a forum for discussion and exchange of ideas about and approaches to underwater cultural heritage and underwater archaeology

- Publish the proceedings both online and in print and disseminate to a wide audience

First on the agenda were presentations by keynote speakers Dr Tim Curtis (UNESCO Bangkok, Thailand), Dr Lucy Blue (University of Southampton, UK) and Professor Roberto Junco (SAS/INAH, Mexico), followed by a Public Forum on the 2001 UNESCO *Convention on the Protection of the Underwater Cultural Heritage*. Over the following three days, conference participants viewed over 20 posters and attended over 80 presentations in the Ayala and Object Theatres at the National Museum of the Filipino People.

Chair of the Conference Scientific Committee, Dr Mark Staniforth, was very pleased with the turnout of 128 delegates from 35 nations stating, "Free exchange of information is our message to the world". He pointed out that nearly 20 graduate students as well as a number of early-career researchers and practitioners who represent the next generation of maritime archaeologists and underwater cultural heritage managers, attended the conference, with some presenting their first ever paper. Ricardo Favis (UNESCO Bangkok office) applauded this "first of its kind" conference, stating that we [UNESCO Bangkok] support the idea of follow up conferences and hope that it can only grow from here."

Presented papers were published in a hard copy of the conference proceedings (Staniforth et al, eds. 2011). Hard copies of the proceedings were distributed to all conference attendees and *gratis* to selected national and regional libraries, universities and museums. The conference proceedings are also available at the Museum of Underwater Archaeology Online (MUA): <http://www.themua.org/collections/items/browse?collection=2>

Inaugural Asian Academy for Heritage Management Asia-Pacific Regional Conference on Underwater Cultural Heritage 2011 Delegates



Image courtesy M. Staniforth

Financial assistance to allow 30 of the delegates from the Asia-Pacific region and Africa to attend the conference was provided by sponsors including the Werner-Gren Foundation, the Australian Government and UNESCO. The Conference Organising Committee would like to thank the following sponsors:

