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ORGANIZATION
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Y LA ALIMENTACION

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Your Ref.:

20 January 2003

Dear Mr Dossal,

Re: Final Report, UN Atlas of the Oceans

I have the pleasure to submit to UNFIP the final report, herewith attached, for the UN Foundation funded project, "UN Atlas of the Oceans - A Digital Web-Based, Interactive Atlas on the Sustainable Use of Oceans".

The United Nations and leading international scientific agencies launched a pioneering Internet based atlas in early June 2002. The atlas provides users with continuously updated strategic data on the state of the world's oceans, maps, development trends and threats to human health from the deteriorating marine environment. After a decade of planning and more than three years in development, the UN Oceans Atlas represents the most ambitious global scientific information collaboration ever online and an international consensus building tool expected to assist negotiations of future marine related agreements. The atlas is online at <http://www.oceansatlas.org>.

This Report marks the end of the development phase of the Project. Even though a lot has been accomplished in arriving successfully at this juncture, much more needs to be done to institutionalize the Atlas in both the day to day operations and the long-term work of the UN Agencies. Nevertheless the future of the Atlas is secure through long-term commitments already made among all the Agencies and interim measures being taken to ensure transition to a secure financial future.

The true success of the Project is best evidenced by touring the home of the Atlas and witnessing the power of its content and the machine that moves it. It has achieved more than was foreseen in terms of the information already included and the ease of its use. The software that operates the site and that is owned by the UN System, was not even envisioned when the Project began.

Mr Amir Dossal
Executive Director
United Nations Fund for International
Partnerships (UNFIP)
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cc : Ms Bilg . Bassani
Mr William Kennedy