

## FOREWORD

In the realm of international relations defined by national interests of political and economic nature, when diplomats take up transnational issues like environmental protection, a visual reminder could be most instrumental to demonstrate what actually is at stake and thus to provide a better guidance to their hearts and minds. It would be even more convincing, yet unusual, if this reminder could come from a diplomat itself, through a photo exhibition such as this one. Hence, I could not think of a better place for such a display of artistic, yet conspicuous reminders than the United Nations where diplomats from all corners of the world strive to protect our environment.

Indeed, the photographs at display illustrate in a most convincing manner the biological diversity of our oceans, particularly those existing in the world's coral reefs, where there is an explosion of life in every color and form. Yet, they also serve as a wake-up call to all of us in showing the vulnerability of those marine treasures. In fact, coral reefs are home to one fourth of all marine life and are essential not only to survivability of our oceans, but also to human well-being and prosperity, particularly for those living in small island states. However, they are under increasing threat due to the negative impacts of over-fishing, destructive fishing practices, coastal development, pollution and rising global temperatures.

In this regard, I hope and believe that the vividly colorful and vibrant photos taken by Mr. Erciyes, whom I have the pleasure of knowing and working with since he has joined the foreign service, will contribute to develop our understanding of and affection to the marine biodiversity which we all have to protect and preserve. This is indeed our collective responsibility towards future generations if we genuinely want to leave behind a world that can not only sustain itself but its inhabitants too. After all, as one wise man once said "We do not inherit the oceans from our ancestors; we borrow it from our children".

**Baki İlkin**  
**Permanent Representative**  
**of Turkey to the UN**

## INTRODUCTION

Oceans have a vital importance to the survival of all life forms on our planet. Yet we still know very little about them. Given the recent changes and degradation of marine habitats, we are just starting to realize that we can no longer take oceans for granted and that more needs to be done to protect them from natural and man-made threats. Coral reefs, for instance, are among the most biologically diverse, yet highly fragile splendors of our oceans. Unfortunately, threats such as over-fishing, coastal development and rising sea temperatures, caused by global warming, are increasingly decimating sensitive corals and shredding the web of life they support.

As opposed to this rather dramatic introduction, I am just an amateur underwater photographer, albeit an enthusiastic one. I also consider myself as a keen conservationist of the marine environment. Indeed, starting with my childhood, I have developed a great passion for oceans and their silent but tempting world. Yet, I became a diplomat rather than an ocean scientist. Having studied international relations at the Ankara University, I joined the Turkish Foreign Ministry in 1988. And currently, I work at the Turkish Permanent Mission to the United Nations in New York. However, thanks to my profession, I had the opportunity to come across many oceans of the world and since 2003 have started capturing the inexplicably amazing moments beneath the surface with compact digital cameras. Later on, encouraged by my friends and colleagues, I launched a website in 2005 and named it "Colors of Oceans". This is where I share my underwater images and travel notes. In the meantime, I participated in two joint photo exhibitions and became a frequent contributor to the underwater magazines in Turkey. I am also a member of the New York Underwater Photographic Society.

"Colors of Oceans through a Diplomat's Lens" is my first individual underwater photo exhibition. The images displayed in the exhibition are merely little drops from the world oceans, but I hope that their rich colors can give you a better understanding of the diversity of life and the sheer beauty of our Oceans. One of the main motivations leading me to underwater photography is that "the more we know about our oceans, the more we care and protect them."

Hope you enjoy the images.

**Çağatay Erciyes**

## Colors of Oceans from **Concept to Creation**

For over 45 years, I have been creatively inspired by new or experienced artists' visions and passions. I find great enjoyment when I work closely with an artist to create something that truly captures the essence of the subject. I had the chance to meet with diplomat and hobbyist photographer Mr. Çagatay Erciyes at the United Nations to discuss ideas for his exhibition. Mr. Erciyes's work includes spectacular views of the world below the oceans and I felt that a traditional way of printing and gallery production wasn't going to be enough for his awe-inspiring underwater images.

Mr. Erciyes and myself collaboratively chose to use a more conceptual way of dealing with his photography. We decided that the prints should illuminate from the back giving the viewer the feeling of actually being under the water. This makes the blue tones of the water even more vibrant, setting the aquatic marine life apart by emphasizing their distinct beauty.

We decided that the best and most eco-conscious way for these images to be represented was to create custom stretched fabric displays that allow the photography to be backlit with the newest energy efficient LED technology. By using fabric rather than the traditional heavy, non degrading PVC vinyl, we designed a high efficiency high impact exhibit that can be easily installed and shipped. This heightened awareness of our ecological footprint is the cornerstone of Duggal's Ecolmaging.

**Baldev Duggal**

*Duggal Ecolmaging is a division of Duggal Visual Solutions, a New York City based photographic lab and graphic display company. With cutting edge technology, creative teams, and professional craftsmanship Duggal produces unparalleled images and designs for an expansive range of applications.*

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