

## **A Tribute to Patricia Wills-Vélez: Celebrating 30 Years of Dedication and Excellence at IOCARIBE**

**Cartagena, Colombia — Today marks a momentous occasion as we celebrate the distinguished career and unwavering dedication of Ms. Patricia Wills-Vélez, who is retiring after an incredible 30 years of service as Secretary at IOCARIBE. Her legacy, built on a foundation of professionalism, commitment, and passion, has significantly advanced the mission of UNESCO and left an indelible mark on our organization.**



30 January 2025

**In a heartfelt ceremony, Patricia was honored with the prestigious UNESCO Medal for 30 Years of Service. This accolade is a testament to her enduring commitment to excellence and her steadfast support of IOCARIBE's initiatives. The event was attended by colleagues, partners, and friends who gathered to express their profound gratitude and share anecdotes that highlight Patricia's invaluable contributions and personal warmth.**

**Patricia Wills-Vélez's journey with IOCARIBE has been one of inspiration and dedication. From her early days in the organization, she demonstrated an unwavering commitment to the advancement of marine science and the sustainable use of ocean resources. Her tireless efforts have been instrumental in fostering international cooperation and promoting the importance of our oceans in global environmental sustainability.**

**Throughout her career, Patricia has been a beacon of excellence, guiding IOCARIBE through numerous milestones and challenges. Her leadership has been characterized by a deep understanding of the complexities of marine science, an ability to bring people together, and a relentless pursuit of knowledge and progress. Under her guidance, IOCARIBE has flourished, making significant strides in marine research, education, and policy development.**

**The celebration was filled with heartfelt speeches, touching anecdotes, and moments of reflection. Colleagues shared stories that encapsulated Patricia's dedication, from late-night work sessions to her unwavering support for young scientists and researchers. Her impact on the careers of many within the organization is a testament to her nurturing spirit and commitment to mentorship.**

**As Patricia embarks on this new chapter of her life, she leaves behind a legacy of excellence that will continue to inspire future generations. Her work has laid a strong foundation for the continued growth and success of IOCARIBE, and her influence will be felt for years to come.**

**Thank you, Patricia, for your unwavering dedication, your invaluable contributions, and for being a pillar of strength and inspiration. We wish you all the best in your retirement and look forward to seeing the new heights you will undoubtedly reach in this next phase of your journey.**