



**United Nations
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Sustainable coral reefs management*

Submitted by Monaco, Indonesia and the Republic of Korea

The United Nations Environment Assembly,

Recalling General Assembly resolution 65/150, “Protection of coral reefs for sustainable livelihoods and development”, in which the Assembly urged States, within their national jurisdictions, and the competent international organizations, within their mandates, given the imperative for action, to take all practical steps at all levels to protect coral reefs and related ecosystems for sustainable livelihoods and development, including immediate and concerted global, regional and local action to respond to the challenges and to address the adverse impact of climate change, including through mitigation and adaptation, as well as of ocean acidification, on coral reefs and related ecosystems,

Recalling also United Nations Environment Assembly of the United Nations Environment Programme resolution 2/12 on sustainable coral reefs management noting the importance of and underlying it still needs strengthening in its implementation at the national and regional level,

Recalling further the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, entitled “The future we want”, which states “We also recognize the significant economic, social and environmental contributions of coral reefs, in particular to islands and other coastal States, as well as the significant vulnerability of coral reefs and mangroves to impacts, including from climate change, ocean acidification, overfishing, destructive fishing practices, and pollution. We support international cooperation with a view to conserving coral reef and mangrove ecosystems and realizing their social, economic and environmental benefits as well as facilitating technical collaboration and voluntary information-sharing”,

Considering Aichi Biodiversity Target 10, which aims to minimize the multiple anthropogenic pressures on coral reefs and other vulnerable ecosystems impacted by climate change or ocean acidification so as to maintain their integrity and functioning, and deeply concerned that the 2015 deadline has not been met,

Bis. Stressing, therefore, the importance of fully implementing the priority actions to achieve the Aichi Biodiversity Targets for coral reefs, adopted on the occasion on the Conference of Parties 12 of the Convention on Biological Diversity,

* The present document is being issued without formal editing.

Bearing in mind the outcome document of the 2015 United Nations Sustainable Development Summit, entitled “Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”,

Recognizing that degradation and loss of coral reefs hinders achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals,

Recognizing also the benefits and potential negative impacts from reef fisheries in particular Live Reef Food Fish Trade (LRFFT) that require integration, implementation and enforcement of fisheries and coral reefs protection policies,

Noting the Coral Reef Life Declaration, currently signed by 18 countries and territories covering more than 50% of the world’s coral reefs,¹

Acknowledging the worldwide participation to the International Year of the Reef² by the International Coral Reef Initiative with a tremendous outcome in terms of materials produced, and events organized from international organizations to village children,

Acknowledging also member countries that have made efforts to conserve coral reefs through the establishment of protected areas, other effective area-based conservation measures, marine spatial planning and other approaches,

Recalling commitments delivered by the States, private sector, NGOs, and multilateral organizations for the protection of coral reefs and marine ecosystems at Our Ocean Conference 2018 in Bali, which are in line with Resolution 2/12 on sustainable coral reefs management that calls for national, regional and international initiatives, cooperation and commitments to conserve and sustainably manage coral reefs,

Noting the new ICRI plan of action 2018-2020 adopted during the thirty-third General Meeting General Meeting in December 2018,³ comprising four themes: promoting effective and adaptable solutions to improve the protection of coral reefs; understanding the trends of coral reefs; addressing the Live Reef Food Fish Trade (LRFFT); and helping to reduce anthropogenic threats to coral reefs,

Noting also the conclusions and recommendations from the analysis of global and regional policy instruments and governance mechanisms related to the protection and sustainable management of coral reefs, prepared pursuant to resolution 2/12, noting the identified policy pathways towards sustainable coral reef management, and acknowledging that business as usual is not a viable option for sustainable coral reef management,

Bis. Recognizing the potential but also the delicate nature of coral restoration, as well as the efforts and the rapid progress being made,

Noting the deep concern of the International Society for Reef Studies (ISRS) Consensus Statement on Climate Change and Coral Bleaching that over recent decades, worldwide, over 50% of known living coral has been lost on coral reefs due to a combination of local factors and global climate change,⁴

Recognizing that coral reefs provide goods and services worth at least US\$11.9 trillion per year and support (through such activities as fisheries and tourism) at least 500 million people worldwide,⁵ and that improvement of coral reef health can provide significant economic returns in both the private and public sectors,⁶

¹ <https://www.icriforum.org/sites/default/files/CORAL%20REEF%20LIFE%20Declaration.pdf>

² http://www.icriforum.org/sites/default/files/ICRIGM31_Reco_IYOR2018_0.pdf

³ <https://www.icriforum.org/sites/default/files/ICRIGM33-Summary-Record.pdf>

⁴ ISRS Consensus Statement on Coral Bleaching Climate Change:

https://www.icriforum.org/sites/default/files/2018%20ISRS%20Consensus%20Statement%20on%20Coral%20Bleaching%20Climate%20Change%20final_0.pdf

⁵ ISRS Consensus Statement on Coral Bleaching Climate Change:

https://www.icriforum.org/sites/default/files/2018%20ISRS%20Consensus%20Statement%20on%20Coral%20Bleaching%20Climate%20Change%20final_0.pdf

⁶ https://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/26694/Coral_Reef_Economy.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y

Recognizing that healthy coral reefs ecosystems reduce 97% of wave energy, act as barriers to storms and are the first line defence for millions of people globally, preventing catastrophic erosion, flooding and destruction,⁷

Recognizing that coral reefs are often considered the medicine cabinets of the 21st century and that in the future, coral reef ecosystems could represent an increasingly important source of medical treatments for various diseases including cancer, nutritional supplements, and other commercial products,⁸

Recognizing that there are many international coral reef related policies, there are benefits to promoting integrated conservation policies and practices to sustainably manage coral reef ecosystems

1. *Calls* for enhanced streamlining and coordination of the numerous international policy instruments supporting the conservation and sustainable management of coral reef ecosystems, building where possible on existing regional mechanisms, such as the Regional Seas, and the International Coral Reef Initiative (ICRI);

1 *bis*. *Requests* the Executive Director of United Nations Environment Programme, within existing resources, in collaboration with ICRI, and building where possible on existing regional mechanisms, such as the Regional Seas Programme and the coral restoration consortium, assist with the compilation of best practices for coral restoration, as appropriate for maintenance of ecosystem services, including for coastal defense and/or restoration of fish nursery areas;

2. *Takes note* of UNEP/EA.4/23 and recognizes that member states may consider the findings in their efforts to sustainably manage coral reef ecosystems and further notes that member states and related coral reefs organisations may wish to also review the findings of report UNEP/EA.4/INF.6;

3. *Encourages* member states and other entities to engage in ICRI's Global Coral Reef Monitoring Network (GCRMN), including through participation in regional networks and application of indicators and best practices identified through GCRMN, in order to produce the global report on the status of coral reefs in 2020;

4. *Requests* the Executive Director of UN Environment Programme in particular through the Coral Reef Unit and in collaboration with ICRI, to continue to develop and strengthen the GCRMN, including integrated monitoring and new technologies, in line with the GCRMN Implementation and Governance Plan to understand and communicate the status and trends of coral reefs globally;

5. *Encourages* member states in collaboration with UN Environment Programme, ICRI and other partners to build on the success of the International Year of the Reefs 2018 and continue their efforts in strengthening awareness about the ecological, economic, social and cultural value of, and critical threats to, coral reefs and associated ecosystems.

⁷ Ferrario et al. 2014. The effectiveness of coral reefs for coastal hazard risk reduction and adaptation. Nature Comm 5:3794

⁸ What does coral have to do with medicine? NOAA. National Ocean Service website, https://oceanservice.noaa.gov/facts_06/25/18.