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Items 18.2 and 26 of the provisional agenda*

THE INTERNATIONAL CORAL REEF INITIATIVE (ICRI) RESOLUTIONS ON SMALL ISLAND DEVELOPING STATES AND CORAL REEFS AND ON COLD-WATER CORAL REEFS, AND THEIR RELEVANCE TO THE CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY

Note by the Executive Secretary

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The purpose of the present note is to bring to the attention of the Conference of the Parties recent developments within the International Coral Reef Initiative (ICRI). As indicated in decision VI/3, ICRI is a major partner in the implementation of the Convention's work plan on coral reefs. The Secretariat has also been accepted as an official partner of ICRI. Therefore, developments within the two forums are closely interlinked, and the ICRI resolutions on small island developing States and coral reefs (annex I) and on cold-water coral reefs (annex II) are closely related to the discussions by the Conference of the Parties under agenda item 18.2, on the review, further elaboration and refinement of the programme of work on marine and coastal biological diversity, and agenda item 26, with regard to the development of outcome-oriented targets for the programme of work on marine and coastal biological diversity.

2. The uniqueness and extreme fragility of marine and coastal biological diversity of small island developing States has been recognized by the Conference of the Parties in decision IV/5. Decision VI/3 also emphasizes their special role in the context of the Convention's work plan on coral bleaching. The ICRI resolution on small island developing States and coral reefs endorses the implementation of decision VI/3, therefore making this resolution particularly relevant to the Convention on Biological Diversity. The resolution also has relevance in the context of the Convention's upcoming work on island biodiversity.

3. As indicated in decision VI/3, the Convention's work plan on physical degradation and destruction of coral reefs relates to both tropical and cold-water coral reefs. The threatened status of cold-water coral reefs was also highlighted in recommendation VIII/3 B paragraph 19, where SBSTTA recommended that the Conference of the Parties agree on the urgent need to establish marine protected areas in relation to a number of priority ecosystems, including cold-water coral reefs. Additional discussion on cold-water coral reefs will be undertaken in the context of the note by the Executive Secretary on outcome-oriented targets for the implementation of the programme of work on marine and

* UNEP/CBD/COP/7/1 and Corr.1.

coastal biological diversity (UNEP/CBD/COP/7/20/Add.5). The ICRI resolution on this issue considers widening the scope of ICRI to include cold-water corals, which highlights the importance given internationally to the need to conserve this valuable resource. Additional information on the biodiversity of, and threats to, cold-water coral reefs is provided in the note by the Executive Secretary on management of risks to the biodiversity of seamounts and cold-water coral communities beyond the limits of national jurisdiction (UNEP/CBD/COP/7/INF/25).

Annex I

ICRI RESOLUTION ON SMALL ISLAND DEVELOPING STATES AND CORAL REEFS

1. **Recognizing** the historic role of Small Island Developing States in ICRI and the particular sensitivity of the environment of Small Island Developing States and the link between sustainable development, poverty alleviation and coral reefs, ICRI calls upon the Small Island States:

- (i) to reaffirm their participation in the deliberations and activities of ICRI and its operational network and partners.
- (ii) to endorse and implement the ICRI *Call to Action*, the *Renewed Call to Action* and the *Framework for Action*.
- (iii) to endorse and implement relevant international agreements, in particular *Decision VI/3* of the Convention on Biological Diversity.

2. **Reaffirming** the need to reverse the decline in coral reefs in island regions, ICRI calls upon the Small Island Developing States to address as a priority:

- (i) The impacts of coastal development on coral reefs;
- (ii) The impacts of coastal tourism on coral reefs;
- (iii) The impacts of reef fisheries on the health of coral reefs;
- (iv) The impacts of land-based and marine-based sources of pollution on coral reefs;
- (v) The unreported and illegal trade in coral reef and associated species.

3. In cooperation with other States, international organisations, non-governmental organisations, and donors, ICRI calls upon the small island developing States:

- (i) to adopt at national level integrated policies and approaches for integrated watershed, coastal and marine ecosystem management, with increased involvement of the community and the private sector, drawing lessons from, e.g. the WW2BW Initiative;
- (ii) to develop national capacity to monitor, conserve and sustainably manage coral reefs and associated ecosystems
- (iii) to improve the knowledge on the present and future state of coral reefs and associated ecosystems;
- (iv) recognising the interconnectedness of coral reefs, to create representative networks of marine protected areas for the conservation and management of coral reef areas and in order to maintain healthy populations of reef associated organisms;
- (v) to address the recovery of damaged and bleached coral reef communities;
- (vi) to support and actively participate in regional efforts as useful mechanisms for addressing coral reef issues through regional cooperation, such as the regional seas conventions & programmes.

4. ICRI calls upon the international community, including the private sector to:

- (i) Support tangible national and regional efforts, e.g. regional seas programmes, regional monitoring efforts such as CARICOMP, CORDIO and SPREP Programmes, aimed at establishing and coordinating assessment, monitoring and research focused on coral reefs, associated ecosystems and the impacts of human activities.

- (ii) Support the work of ICRAN and replenishment of the Coral Reef Fund;
- (iii) Support the development and strengthening of regional and national marine protected area networks, including efforts by government and NGO partnerships;
- (iv) Promote and support current monitoring networks, which provide input into global networks such as GCRMN and Reefcheck.
- (v) Support the development of national and regional capacity for the research and monitoring of reef status and change, as well as data management, such as the ReefBase Programme.

Annex II

ICRI DECISION ON COLD WATER CORAL REEFS*

Original Request to ICRI submitted by Norway and UNEP

ICRI CPC is invited:

- (i) to note the background information given on cold-water coral reefs
- (ii) to note the political agreements and commitments made recently with respect to cold-water coral reefs
- (iii) to agree to widen the remit and scope of ICRI to include cold-water corals
- (iv) to ask the ICRI Secretariat:
 - (a) to post the agreement under (c) on the ICRI Forum for discussion and comment
 - (b) to make the necessary preparations and arrangements for the next ICRI CPC meeting, to formally include cold-water corals in ICRI's scope, remit and work programme, *inter alia*:
 - to prepare and submit a draft ICRI resolution to this effect for consideration and adoption at the next ICRI CPC meeting;
 - to review the *Renewed Call to Action*, the *Framework of Action* and any other relevant ICRI Decisions, Resolutions and agreements with a view to identifying which of these documents would have to be revised and/or complemented;
 - to issue a general invitation (using the ICRI Forum and any other suitable means) to countries, organizations and stakeholders interested in cold-water coral reefs to participate at the next ICRI CPC meeting with a view to becoming a member of ICRI. As part of this action, the ICRI Secretariat, on behalf of ICRI, should issue this invitation in writing to the governments of known cold-water coral reef ranges states which are currently not yet members of ICRI (e.g. Ireland, Norway, Canada);
 - to prepare, in consultation with the supporters of the cold-water reef initiative mentioned under § 3 above, a draft programme of work to be carried out under ICRI on cold-water coral. To the extent possible, this draft programme of work should identify which parts of the work could be carried out by lead countries;
- (v) to invite the operational networks of ICRI (ICRAN, GCRMN, ICRIN) and associated programmes to consider the inclusion of cold-water corals in their programme of work, and to report the outcome of these considerations to the next ICRI CPC.

ICRI draft decision

51. ICRI CPC decided to examine further the issue of the cold water coral reefs, and:

- (i) agreed to establish an ad hoc committee to assess ICRI's potential role in the international collaboration on cold water coral reefs;
- (ii) welcomed the offer of the UK for Robert Canning to act as convenor of this committee;
- (iii) invited the committee to identify ICRI's potential in the protection and sustainable management of cold water coral reefs, the implications for ICRI's current work and what implementation modalities, if any, might be needed;

* Extract from ICRI CPC Draft Report of Meeting, 17-19 November 2003.

- (iv) Requested that the report of the committee be submitted to the Executive Authority by 1 May 2004 for circulation to members no later than 15 May 2004;

52. Agreed to consider the report and decide what contribution ICRI might make at the next meeting of ICRI.

Actions arising

53. The Secretariat should consider ICRI's contribution to cold water coral reefs at the next ICRI CPC meeting in Okinawa.
