



Report of the 3rd International Tropical Marine Ecosystems Management Symposium

The Third International Tropical Marine Ecosystems Symposium (known as ITMEMS3) was held during 16-20 October, on the Island of Cozumel in Mexico.

Convened previously in Australia 1998 and the Philippines in 2003, ITMEMS seeks to strengthen the capacities of coastal and marine managers and their partners to conserve and promote the sustainable use of coral reefs and related ecosystems.

ITMEMS is the core activity of the International Coral Reef Initiative. The organizing secretariat for ITMEMS3 the International Coral Reef Action Network (www.icran.org). 324 participants from 45 countries met in Mexico to:

- Share experiences and lessons learned;
- Identify effective local solutions to common management problems;
- Inform future action to manage tropical marine ecosystems;
- Evaluate progress since prior ITMEMS; and
- Strengthen and expand the network of tropical marine managers.

The diverse participation included 7 local government and traditional leaders from 5 countries, community representatives from Dominica, Panama, Belize and Mexico, coastal and marine managers from all tropical marine regions, scientists, donors and NGO representatives. Thirteen themes were discussed, and teams representing a wide range of locations, disciplines and institutions managed a program of short-format participatory workshops on key issues and questions. The list of themes is as follows:

1. Building resilience into coral reef management
2. Disaster management and restoration
3. Enforcement and investigation
4. Fisheries and aquaculture
5. Pollution and disease management
6. Information and knowledge management
7. Modelling and decision support
8. Integrated and participatory strategies
9. Communication, education and awareness
10. Economic valuation of marine natural resources
11. Sustainable tourism
12. Partnerships and strategic alliances
13. Sustainable financing

In addition, a new and important ITMEMS event was held - the "Local Government Leaders Forum" hosted by Mayor Gustavo Ortega of Cozumel. The Forum brought together local and traditional leaders from ICRI News 8 – December 2006 - 3/7 the Philippines, the Cook Islands, Australia, USA and Tanzania to discuss the importance of engaging effective local political, community and indigenous leadership to achieve sustainable management and conservation of tropical marine and coastal ecosystems and natural resources. The outcomes of the Forum have been included in the final ITMEMS3 Action Statement and recommendations made to ICRI on priorities for the next five years.

The ITMEMS3 Action Statement, including Regional Caucus Reports, the Local Government Leaders Statement and the recommendations emerging from thematic workshops, can be found with more details about ITMEMS3 at www.itmems.org. Work has begun to prepare the Proceedings of ITMEMS3, and more information about the contribution of papers relevant to the ITMEMS3 deliberations can be found on the web site.

For more information, please contact Penny Stock (pstock@icran.org) or visit www.itmems.org