



ITMEMS 3 COZUMEL DECLARATION LOCAL GOVERNMENT LEADERS' STATEMENT

Local Governments hold the key to the future of coral reefs and other tropical marine ecosystems. Greenhouse gas emissions, land based sources of marine pollution, unsustainable coastal development, overfishing and destructive fishing are local problems that impact at the global level. Healthy coral reefs are a beautiful indicator of healthy coastal and marine ecosystems and an increasingly valuable natural resource. The economic, social and cultural futures of people of tropical coasts and islands are linked to the health of coral reefs.

Local Government is on the front line of the issues that directly affect the future of coral reefs and associated ecosystems. Many local governments face huge and constantly changing challenges in providing for sustainability – meeting the needs of the present without compromising the needs of the future.

We are grateful for the opportunity provided for us to engage with the expertise of the coral reef management and scientific community through participation in the program of the Third International Tropical Marine Ecosystems Management Symposium.

We have identified 6 major issues that should be addressed to develop the partnership between the global coral reef management community and local government

EMPOWERMENT

We call upon the management and scientific community to support the empowerment and resourcing of local governments to manage tropical marine ecosystems.

NETWORKS

We call upon the management community to work with local government and community networks to develop informed partnerships to address the management of tropical marine ecosystems.

CAPACITY BUILDING

We call upon the management community to work with local government to develop practical technical capacity at the local level to address marine ecosystem issues.

KNOWLEDGE AND COMMUNICATION

We call upon researchers to communicate current research information in a manner that addresses the needs of local government

POLITICAL WILL

We call upon the management community to work with local government to build the political will to meet the challenges of managing tropical marine ecosystems.

RECOGNITION OF ACHIEVEMENT

We encourage the management community to publicly recognize the achievements of local government in sustainable management of marine resources.

Gustavo Ortega Joaquin Mayor, Island of Cozumel, Mexico
Mahmoud Juma Issa Mayor, Zanzibar Municipal Council, Tanzania
Ann Bunnell Deputy Mayor, Townsville, Queensland, Australia
Lucilo Bayron Vice Mayor, Puerto Princesa City, Philippines
Teariki Matenga Mayor, Tukitumea, Rarotonga, Cook Islands
Hermani Braganza Mayor, City of Alaminos, Pangasinan, Philippines
Jeremy Harris Former Mayor, Honolulu, Hawaii, USA

Island of Cozumel, Mexico, October 19th, 2006

The International Tropical Marine Ecosystems Management Symposium (ITMEMS) is a major activity of the International Coral Reef Initiative (ICRI – www.icriforum.org). Convened previously in Australia (1998) and the Philippines (2003), ITMEMS facilitates productive discussion and information sharing by people involved in management of coral reefs and related ecosystems, and the implementation of the ICRI Framework for Action.