

CHAIRMAN'S SUMMARY of ICRI GENERAL MEETING (TOKYO)

The third general meeting of the Japan/Palau secretariat was held on 23rd – 24th April 2007 in Ikebukuro, Tokyo, with a total of 65 participants including representatives from 15 countries, 22 organizations, NGOs, and Universities. The main points of the outcome of the meeting are as follows:

A New Member and Observers:

- SCRFA (The Society for the Conservation of Reef Fish Aggregations, the headquarters in U.S.) was welcomed as a new member.
- China, Tuvalu Japanese Coral Reef Society (JCRS), International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO, the headquarters in Yokohama, Japan) and International Society for Mangrove Ecosystem (ISME, the headquarters in Okinawa, Japan) attended as observers.

A Review of ICRI:

- The Meeting has unanimously adopted "A Review of ICRI" document as amended as a formal review and analysis of ICRI's activities over the past 12 years.
 - The Review covers achievements such as: The increasing uptake of coral reef issues at international conferences such as the Conference of the Contracting Parties to the Ramsar Convention, Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity and various other opportunities in the international arena, due to proactive promotion by ICRI;
 - The review also covers future challenges: e.g., Continued effort is required to invite more countries and organizations with relevance to coral reefs and associated ecosystem, as well as reinforcing cooperative relations with relevant organizations and relevant convention secretariats, in order to strengthen ICRI as an International framework specialized in coral reef conservation.

International Year of the Reef 2008:

- The Meeting discussed the draft action plans presented by member countries and organizations. France, Japan and U.S. presented progress reports on preparation which included activities such as designing of teaching materials, establishment of IYOR National Committees consisting of organizations and bodies on the national level and so forth. The meeting further discussed the needs for close cooperation with various international/national organizations and bodies including educational institutions, mass-media and private sector such as fishery and tourism industries.
- The terms of reference of the IYOR ad-hoc committee were adopted.
- The Meeting decided that ICRI will, where appropriate, actively promote coral reef issues to be taken up at International Conventions scheduled in 2008, such as G8 Environmental Ministers Meeting (in Japan), CBD COP9 (in Germany), and COP10 of Ramsar Convention on Wetlands (in Republic of Korea). The Meeting also decided to actively hold regional workshops and/or meetings in each region. The members also agreed that the International Coral Reef Symposium:ICRS (in Florida in July) should be used to spread the IYOR message and International Marine Protected Area Network Conference (in Japan) and to raise awareness of IYOR through side events.
- A logo for the IYOR was selected as the result of a voting process. ICRI members are encouraged to use this logo in publicizing the events/activities concerning to IYOR.

Marine Protected Area Network:

In order to respond to the WSSD target (2002) to "commit to the development of representative networks of marine protected areas by 2012,"

- A recommendation encouraging ICRI members to take urgent actions to establish and effectively manage representative regional and national networks of MPAs that include coral reefs and related ecosystems was adopted.
- In the recommendation, ICRI members are encouraged to,

- Apply ecological criteria for the identification of marine and coastal areas that include coral reefs and related ecosystems that would benefit from designation as a marine protected area network;
 - Contribute to existing global and regional spatial databases on existing and planned MPAs such as the World Database on Protected Areas, that include coral reefs and related ecosystems; and
 - Use information from these databases and additional analyses to identify gaps in current MPA coverage that need to be filled in order to meet the goal of creating representative networks.
- A progress report on a database for marine protected area in 14 East Asian and 5 Micronesia countries was presented by Japan. Approximately 400 designated MPAs that had not been recognized so far, were included in the dataset. The need for the integration of data between such newly introduced MPAs and existing MPAs was discussed.
 - ICRI members welcomed a proposal made by Japan to host an International Conference in 2008 in order to reinforce and improve the Marine Protected Area Network.

Climate change and coral reefs:

- A Resolution on coral reef & climate change was adopted, which calls on ICRI members to :
 - Support actions to improve coral reef resilience to climate change by maintaining or enhancing good water quality, healthy coral cover and the full range of biodiversity including herbivore (plant-eating) populations, and by working with local stakeholders to protect biological diversity and reduce direct stresses;
 - Support research to improve the understanding of factors that promote resilience in coral reefs and their application in management;
 - Support the development of sustainable livelihoods that may reduce vulnerability to climate change among coastal populations and strengthen ecosystem resilience; and
 - Enhance public awareness of the impacts of climate change on coral reefs.

Ocean Acidification

- The Meeting had active discussions in a breakout session on the potential impacts of ocean acidification due to increasing atmospheric carbon dioxide on coral reefs such as interference with reef building activities of corals and the countermeasures against them.
- The meeting recognized and agreed on the need for scientific researches in this field. It was decided that draft recommendation on this issue will be posted to the ICRI Forum for comments from ICRI members and adopted under the rules of organization to management of ICRI. Japan proposed to coordinate this issue, once the recommendation is adopted.

Mangrove

- The International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO) presented an activity report with detailed descriptions of the Work Plan (2002-2006) and suggested that the Coral and Mangrove world should work in collaboration with each other as conservation of mangroves should be undertaken in concert with conservation of coral reefs.
- International Society for Mangrove Ecosystem (ISME) also gave a presentation concerning its activities, such as training courses for mangrove conservation, the database of mangroves in the world, the support programs of mangrove afforestation programs after the 2004 Indonesian Tsunami.
- Japan expressed their intention to invite the mangrove related organizations to participate in the “International Marine Protected Area Network Conference” planned for 2008.
- Noting that it was the first time that the mangrove issues have been taken up and discussed substantially at ICRI General Meeting, the ICRI Members reiterated the need to continue discussion and information exchange between bodies and organizations relevant to mangrove conservation and other related ecosystems.
- The subject of how ICRI could take up mangrove issues was discussed at the breakout session and several useful suggestions were presented, which include, in the short term, mangrove messages be added in events concerning the IYOR 2008 and/or in ICRI Status

2008 report, and, in the longer term that ICRI could cooperate in developing Mangrove Monitoring Networks.

Economic Valuation:

- Economic valuation of coral reefs was discussed in a breakout session and suggestions were made as for how ICRI might take this forward.

Handover of Secretariat:

- Japan and Palau will have served out their term of office as co-secretariat as of 30th June 2007. The incoming hosts, U.S. and Mexico, will assume their responsibilities from the 1st July 2007.
- The ICRI members congratulated the Japan-Palau Sec. for a highly successful hosting of the secretariat and welcomed their continued engagement in ICRI. The new hosts were welcomed.
- The next ICRI general meeting will be hosted by the US/Mexico Secretariat in January 2008 in conjunction with the International Launching of IYOR 2008.