

Okinawa Declaration

20th Feb. 1997

Okinawa Convention Center

International Coral Reef Initiative(ICRI)

2nd East Asian Seas Regional Workshop

Recalling and reaffirming the ICRI East Asian Seas Regional Strategy developed at the first East Asian Seas Regional Workshop for ICRI in Bali in 1996,

Welcoming the decision of the 19th session of the Governing Council of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) that the Regional Seas Programme should continue to play an active and leading role in the development, implementation and coordination of regional activities under the ICRI,

Noting the endorsement by the 12th meeting of COBSEA of the Report of the first ICRI Regional Workshop for the East Asian Seas, including the regional strategy wherein the UNEP Regional Coordination Unit for the East Asian Seas Action Plan (EAS/RCU) was identified as the appropriate coordination mechanism for the ICRI in the East Asian Seas,

Welcoming the initiative of the Government of Japan in the establishment of the Okinawa International Coral Reef Conservation, Management and Monitoring Center and looking forward to increasing contributions by the Center to the conservation and management of the coral reefs and related ecosystems of East Asian Seas,

Reaffirming that the region is recognized as the global center of diversity for the fauna and flora of coral reefs and related ecosystems and that the conservation of these ecosystems and the biodiversity they support is of indisputable social, economic and ecological importance;

1. The participants at the Second EAS Regional Workshop for ICRI consider and welcome reports of work in progress to implement the ICRI EAS Regional Strategy. The participants note however that the extent of actions in the field and amongst the human communities most directly involved is inadequate to remove the severe threats to coral reefs and related ecosystems throughout the region;

2. The workshop identifies for each country and for the region various priority projects whose implementation is necessary in order to give effect to the ICRI priority issues;

- Integrated Coastal Management
- Capacity Building
- Research and Monitoring
- Review and Evaluation

3. The workshop calls upon governments and the international community to implement those regional and country projects identified (in paragraph 2) as part of the ICRI EAS Regional Strategy and to achieve the actions which will give effect to their commitment to the ICRI Call to Action and Framework for Action;
4. The workshop notes that the broadening of membership of COBSEA within the region would enhance fuller involvement and the capacity of countries of the region in COBSEA's role in implementation of the ICRI Call to Action, Framework for Action and the EAS Regional Strategy;
5. As matters of regional priority, the workshop,
 - a) calls upon each country to nominate demonstration area or areas which will represent best national practice in Integrated Coastal Management in coral reef areas and form the basis of a network of management expertise and practical capacity building for the EAS region and for collaboration with other ICRI regions;
 - b) identifies as a matter of urgency the need to prepare and translate training and public education materials into languages and formats appropriate for resource managers, residents and reef users at the local level;
 - c) calls upon EAS/RCU to work with the countries of the region to establish and support the operation of a technical advisory group comprising resource managers and scientists who may be called upon by countries for management and technical advice and to review the design and implementation of projects to achieve ICRI objectives;
 - d) calls upon UNEP and its EAS/RCU to collaborate with COBSEA Member States to ensure that the GEF Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis and Strategic Action Plan to be developed for the South China Sea incorporates the management needs and priorities identified in the ICRI EAS Regional Strategy and as further elaborated at this Second ICRI EAS Workshop.
 - e) requests EAS/RCU to work with countries to facilitate the establishment and conduct of collaboration projects between 2 or more member countries to address the objectives of ICRI;
 - f) urges countries to keep ICRI informed, through EAS/RCU, of specific proposals for projects which may be recommended to ICRI partners of the donor and international communities as priorities for implementation of the ICRI Call to Action, Framework for Action and EAS Regional Strategy;
 - g) recommends to COBSEA national focal points that they arrange to inform national, regional and local agencies in their respective countries of the results of the 2nd ICRI EAS workshop and;
 - nominate a national demonstration area or areas;
 - confirm national priority projects presented at the 2nd ICRI EAS workshop;
 - identify projects or programs whose initiation, strengthening or continuation is necessary in order for the demonstration areas to present best practice in Integrated Coastal Management; and,
 - identify projects or programs to build capacity for Integrated Coastal Management to be extended to address the objectives of ICRI for coral reefs and related ecosystems throughout the country;
 - h) calls upon each country to participate in the Global Coral Reef Monitoring Network (GCRMN) to

- assess the status and trends in their coral reefs and their use and to act on this information;
- i) encourages all countries to facilitate national and regional partnerships between communities, resource managers and scientists to identify the critical management needs for data and information to enhance Integrated Coastal Management in coral reef areas and to take action to address these needs;

6. The workshop calls on COBSEA to include the proceeding regional priorities within the work programme of its EAS/RCU.