

**Member's report on activities to ICRI**

Presented by Ruben Torres

Reporting period May 2009 – December 2010

Please note that the purpose of this report is to help you share information about your activities within the ICRI community to allow discussion at the next ICRI General Meeting. The reports will be made available on the ICRIForum prior to the meeting. The ICRI secretariat is well aware of your busy schedule, thus don't hesitate to submit an incomplete report.

1. General Information

Are you an ICRI Member?	Yes
Representation to ICRI (Country / Organization):	Dominican Republic
Focal Point 1:	
<i>Name:</i>	Rubén E. Torres
<i>Organization:</i>	Reef Check Dominican Republic
<i>Email:</i>	ruben@reefcheck.org
Focal point 2:	
<i>Name:</i>	Jeannette Mateo
<i>Organization:</i>	Consejo Dominicano de Pesca y Acuicultura(CODOPESCA)
<i>Email:</i>	
Last meeting attended:	Phuket, Thailand, 20-24 April 2009
How do you circulate ICRI information within your country and/or organization?	E-mail
Budget allocated for coral reef related activities (please mention for year/period):	T.B.D.

For countries only:

National Action Plan / Initiative	
Do you have a National Coral Reef action plan?	There is no official coral reef action plan. The Sub ministry of Coastal Marine Resources is currently implementing several coral reef related programs, as well as other NGOs like Reef Check DR (RCDR), The Nature Conservancy (TNC), Grupo Jaragua, CEBSE, Counterpart International (CI). These include: nation-wide monitoring program (RCDR); collaboration for the management of La Caleta MPA (RCDR); Mooring buoys for La Caleta MPA (RCDR, SEMARENA), Catalina Island MPA (RCDR, SEMARENA), Punta Rucia MPA (RCDR, SEMARENA), Creation of a new MPA, Snorkeling camps for kids (RCDR); Workshops on

	marine conservation (RCDR, TNC, CI SEMARENA).
Is this plan publicly available? If so please provide location:	<p>Contact info for Sub ministry of Coastal Marine Resources: Edificio Agricultura, Km 6.5 Autopista Duarte, Jardines del Norte Ph 809-732-3303, fax 809-547-3057, fax 566 6042 costeromarinos@medioambiente.gov.do</p> <p>Contact info for The Nature Conservancy: Central Caribbean Program Cuba-Dominican Republic-Haiti-Puerto Rico Mesoamerica & Caribbean Region The Nature Conservancy □ Jacinto Manon esq. Federico Gerardino D' Roca Plaza, Suite 401, Ensanche Paraíso, Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic Elianny Dominguez (edominguez@tnc.org) □ (809) 541-7666 (Phone) □ (809) 541-4165 (Fax)</p> <p>Contact info for Counterpart International DR: Counterpart International-Dominican Republic Calle Presidente Vasquez # 21, Monte Cristi, Republica Dominicana. Tel.: (809) 809-765-9095 / 809-710-1542 Kguerrero@counterpart.org</p> <p>Contact info for Grupo Jaragua: Grupo Jaragua Inc. □ Calle El Vergel # 36 □ Ensanche. El Vergel □ Santo Domingo, República Dominicana □ □ Tel (809) 472-1036 □ Fax (809) 412-1667 □ E-Mail jaragua@tricom.net</p> <p>Contact info for Reef Check Dominican Republic: Prol. Fantino Falco #5, Piantini Santo Domingo, R.D. ph/fax 809-227-4409 info@reefcheckdr.org www.reefcheckdr.org</p>
Do you have a National Coral Reef Initiative or Task Force?	NO
Are you engaged in any regional programs / initiatives relating to coral reefs:	YES
If yes, please indicate which programmes/initiatives:	Sub ministry of Coastal Marine Resources: GCFI, ICRI, Remote

	<p>Sensing Specialists Network</p> <p>Reef Check Dominican Republic: Reef Check Eco Action, CSI Coral Reef, ICRI, Dominican Sustainable Tourism Alliance</p>
--	--

2. Updates on your activities (new initiatives/programs/projects of your government /organization which will be of interest to the ICRI Members)

Creation of new marine protected areas:

The president of the Dominican Republic, Dr. Leonel Fernandez created by decree (571-09), and with the ministry of the environment of the Dominican government 37 new protected areas, among which, there are two large marine protected areas: Southwestern Coral Reef Sanctuary and Southeastern Coral Reef Sanctuary.

Coral Reef Cleanup and Awareness campaign:

The sub ministry of coastal marine resources, under the direction of Daneris Santana, led several initiatives to:

- Conduct coastal and coral reef cleanups
- Raise awareness about pollution problems
- Involve community members in conservation
- Conserve and restore coral reef resources

Illegal fishing enforcement:

The sub ministry of coastal marine resources, under the direction of Daneris Santana, led several initiatives to confiscate illegal fishing gear around the Dominican Republic. These illegal fishing gear included trawl nets, and well as arts and craft built from banned species like sea turtle, black coral etc.

Coastal vegetation restauration:

The sub ministry of coastal marine resources, under the direction of Daneris Santana, led several initiatives to restore coastal plants in several beach areas of the Dominican Republic to stabilize and control erosion.

Community-based management of La Caleta National Submarine Park: Reef Check Dominican Republic is collaborating with the ministry of environment in the management of this MPA. Both institutions are working in restoring Park infrastructure and landscape, and a few projects have already started being implemented to initiate a full ecotourism enterprise in the Park to create conservation and social funds to manage the Park and support community-based social projects thru:

- Sustainable fishing Program using lobster casitas, funded by the UNDP small grants programme.
- Development of ecotourism enterprises, including restaurant, gift shop and aquatic center, funded by the Dominican Sustainable Tourism Alliance (DSTA).
- Community-based management: Education, research and management actions are being taken for a more adequate management, funded by the Interamerican Foundation.

3. Contribution to the ICRI GM: Your responses to the following questions will assist the Secretariat in assessing contributions towards the major themes of the current ICRI action plan and objectives of the general meeting. Due to the heavy schedules of ICRI members, we have tried to keep the questions to a minimum and value any response you can provide.

NOTE: The Secretariat will compile Members' responses to the below questions into a general presentation to be given during the GM. The Secretariat will also request specific Members to highlight certain initiatives, should additional information be of interest to the full ICRI membership.

a. **Fisheries session:** Please provide any lessons you have learned from your experiences in managing fisheries and any projects/programs you are involved in.

- What was The Problem or the Challenge? – Including information on the location, the perceived problem and the effects on the coastal resources

Main problems or challenges related to fisheries resources are the lack of resources to undertake a national plan on fisheries management. Also, a lack of education and awareness by the general public.

- What was done? Both ecological and sociological interventions

A general communication program has been implemented on a national scale to bring information on coastal marine issues, from basic and general topics, to detailed information related to specific issues that come up.

- How successful was it? E.g. has fisheries improved; positive effects on coral reefs; better reef resources exportation?

Also, in La Caleta MPA, the fisherment cooperative was structured, and its members have been educated in several aspects of coastal marine management. They are self-implementing a no take zone, which has resulted in an increase in fish populations in a relative short time (ie. A year).

- Lessons learned and recommendations; Key messages to convey to other people

Focus funding and efforts in a small area to create clear and fast results, this will help others to understand the benefits of management actions.

Involve the private sector, specially in areas of fundraising, marketing and communication.

- References

- Author/s Contact

Ruben E. Torres, Ph.D.
Reef Check Dominican Republic
Prol. Fantino Falco #5, Piantini
Santo Domingo, R.D.
ph/fax 809-227-4409
cel. 809-902-6565
ruben@reefcheck.org
www.reefcheckdr.org

b. The ICRI secretariat is planning on revisiting/updating the ICRI “call to action” (http://www.icriforum.org/library/call_action.pdf) and ICRI “framework to action” (http://www.icriforum.org/library/framework_action.pdf). Please provide any guidelines you think would be useful.

FYI, The link to the call of action is not working properly

- c. During the meeting, a full day will focus on the Caribbean region. If you have any question about the region, ongoing projects in the region,... please let us know.

There is a strong need to better linking successful MPAs in the Caribbean, and fill in potential gaps. A regional coral reef initiative could be develop to form a "Caribbean Coral Reef Initiative (CCRI). Threats to coral reefs are strongly similar region-wide, as well as potential alternatives to solve them.

- d. During the meeting, we are planning on having a presentation on the "Man and the Biosphere Programme (MAB)". Could you please list your coral reef sites listed under the MAB programme.

Jaragua-Bahoruco-Enriquillo

- e. What other new initiatives/programs/projects/progress, in particular since April 2009, has been made by your government/organization relative to Marine Protected Areas, Ramsar site designations containing coral reefs, policy changes, economic valuation of coral reef ecosystem services, etc., which you believe would be of general interest to other ICRI Members?

WRI has been working on economic valuation of coral reefs for several years. We have completed two pilot studies of the economic contribution of coral reefs in St. Lucia and Tobago, and are currently applying the methodology in Belize. We have also developed a simple, Excel-based Economic Valuation Tool that guides users through a stepwise process of gathering data and conducting an economic valuation analysis. Working with Reef Check and other partners in the Dominican Republic, we seek to achieve the following objectives:

Make the economic case for better coastal and land management, and for greater investment in Marine Protected Areas (MPAs). This includes viewing MPAs and intact coastal habitats as key investments in the future economic and social well-being of the country.

Identify the geographic areas currently providing important services that are most threatened by current human activities and vulnerable to future development;

Identify policies, management plans, or investment strategies that can be refined or developed to safeguard the services provided by these areas;

Increase the capacity of public and civil society decision-makers to apply valuation estimates to improve coastal management.

With development pressures mounting rapidly in the Dominican Republic, now is a critical time to generate the incentives to protect these valuable coastal resources. By assigning quantitative values to the goods and services provided by coral reefs, this project will provide an important tool to aid and improve coastal policy and management.