INTERNATIONAL CORAL REEF INITIATIVE (ICRI)
32nd General Meeting
7-9 December 2017 – Nairobi, Kenya

Member's report on activities related to ICRI

The Nature Conservancy

Reporting period November 2016 – November 2017

1. **Contribution to the ICRI Plan of Action 2016-2018.** *Your responses to the following questions will assist the Secretariat in assessing contributions towards the major themes of the current ICRI Plan of Action (http://www.icriforum.org/icri-secretariat/current)*

Theme 1 – "Help raise awareness of how coral reefs and related ecosystems help to fight climate change"

- *Goal 1-1: highlight the contribution of coral reefs, mangroves and seagrasses to mitigate and adapt to climate change and its impacts*

Question: Do you have examples of solutions provided by coral reefs and coastal systems to mitigate and adapt to climate change?

1) To help improve decisions about coastal development in coral reef regions and to reduce risk to vulnerable communities and economies, the Conservancy has partnered with Swiss Re, one of the world's largest reinsurance companies. Leveraging our science on nature-based defences and Swiss Re's expertise in risk modelling, the project has found that a healthy coral reef can lessen the impact of storms and prevent erosion by 97%. These and other coastal ecosystems are the first line of defences for many cities around the world, from Miami to Manila. Along Mexico's Yucatan Peninsula, the Conservancy and partners in the hotel industry are collaborating to develop new insurance programs designed to sustain the protection benefits reefs provide in the face of hurricanes and tropical storms.
2) The Conservancy has partnered with SECORE International and California Academy of Sciences to help maintain corals' genetic diversity and maximize their ability to adapt to future conditions. Coral nurseries have been established off the coasts of several countries and in Florida and the US Virgin Islands, where we are growing corals that will be transplanted to depleted reefs across the region. The Conservancy has provided expertise and guidance to similar coral nursery projects in the Cayman Islands, Bahamas, British Virgin Islands, Dominican Republic, Grenada, Jamaica and Cuba.
3) Provided a training on Integrating Ecosystem Services into Coral Reef Policy and Management for managers from Hawai'i, American Samoa, Micronesia, and the US Virgin Islands. Participants practiced communicating the benefits coral reefs and associated habitats provide to people to support decision making and management efforts within their jurisdiction.
4) Developed and launched the Corals & Climate Adaptation Planning: Adaptation Design Tool online course- developed for coral reef managers and practitioners as a collaborative project of the Climate Change Working Group of the interagency U.S. Coral Reef Task Force and The Nature Conservancy. It is based on the user guide, Adaptation Design Tool: Corals & Climate Adaptation Planning.
5) Continued maintenance of our online hub (reefresilience.org) of case studies, article summaries and webinars for coral reef managers to easily find resources based on the

location, management challenges, and topics of interest. In 2016, 100,000 individuals visited the RR Toolkit and had access to more than 128 resilience science article summaries and 56 case studies and our webinars have received over 4,500 views.

6) We released the Atlas of Ocean Wealth, the planet's largest collection of spatial information tracking the natural resources provided by oceans. The database quantifies what the oceans provide to people, how much they provide and where those benefits accrue. Accessible to anyone, the online Atlas allows decision-makers to answer such questions as:

    - How much money are coral reefs saving our city by reducing the force of incoming waves?
    - Where are the most valuable reefs for supporting tourism?
    - Which reefs produce the most fish for supporting local fisheries?

Question: Are you planning to add in your NDC the importance of coral reefs / mangroves?

Theme 3: "Help to reduce human threats to coral reefs and associated mangroves and seagrasses, by making greater use of regulatory tools"

- *Goal 3-1: promote legal frameworks for the protection of coral reefs and associated mangroves and seagrasses, with quantified targets and effective enforcement to protect these ecosystems*

Question: What are the legal frameworks for the protection of coral reefs and associated mangroves and seagrasses in place in your countries? If you already replied to the pervious request, you don't need reply

1) Facilitation of the Seychelles Marine Spatial Plan (MSP) Initiative- a output of the government-led Debt-for-Climate-Change-Adaptation Swap in which the Government committed to expanding marine biodiversity protection to 30% of the EEZ and Territorial Sea by 2020. The Seychelles Conservation and Climate Adaptation Trust (SeyCCAT) was created from the debt swap, and is an independent public-private trust mandated to support the implementation of the MSP and other marine conservation and climate adaptation activities in Seychelles. Seychelles is the first country to have implementation funding in place before it has completed its marine spatial plan.
2) In Manus Province in Papua New Guinea and Choiseul Province in Solomon Islands, we are assisting communities and government partners with establishing ridges to reefs protected area networks. These protected area networks are helping to conserve biodiversity, enhance food security and build community resilience to climate change.
3) Implementation of the 4th year of the Caribbean Marine Biodiversity, a five-year project (2014-2019), funded by the U.S. Agency for International Development and The Nature Conservancy, operating in five target countries- Dominican Republic, Grenada, Haiti, Jamaica and St. Vincent & the Grenadines. The program focuses on creating and effectively managing marine conserved areas and establishing and promoting sustainable fisheries.

Question: Did you to set quantified targets to protect their coral reefs, mangroves and seagrasses? And are you able to provide a % of what is currently protected in your country? Please define what you mean by protection?

- *Goal 3-2: encourage a ban on plastic microbeads in cosmetic products*

Question: How did you implement the recommendation to reduce plastic microbeads pollution in marine environment?

- *Goal 3-3: improve regulation and enforcement to reduce direct anthropogenic damage due to dredging and physical alteration of reef structures*

Question: are you working on this topic? If yes, could you please share with us your work. Please note that the information provided will help us to develop a recommendation for the next ICRI General Meeting. Please send us information as soon as possible,

- *Goal 3-4: promote the deployment of mooring devices limiting the mechanical destruction of coral reefs and seagrasses*

Question: are you working on this topic? If yes, could you please share with us your work. Please note that the information provided will help us to develop a recommendation for the next ICRI General Meeting. Please send us information as soon as possible,

- *Goal 3-5: review issues related to the impact of sunscreens and other endocrine disruptors on coral reefs, and encourage the production of sunscreens that are proven not to damage coral reefs*

Question: are you working on this topic? If yes, could you please share with us your work. Please note that the information provided will help us to develop a recommendation for the next ICRI General Meeting. Please send us information as soon as possible.

Theme 4: "Monitor the state of reefs in order to better manage them"

- *Goal 4-2: better monitor the phenomena of coral bleaching*

Question: How did you implement the recommendation on addressing the decline in coral reef health due to global bleaching events?

1) Completed more than 230 coral reef surveys to monitor and assess bleaching as part of the the Florida Reef Tract Coral Bleaching Response Plan.
2) Conducted coral bleaching monitoring on Maui island, Hawaii. This data collection has helped to monitor the health of corals at Polanui, Maui. In order to better understand the changes in coral health at Polanui, we set up comparable sites across leeward Maui to determine which other contributing factors might lead to changes in coral health. The results of these surveys will assist in determining which interventions can be made to reduce other stresses. The products of this project include a Coral Bleaching Monitoring Protocol, guidance for future training sessions, guidelines for adding sites in the future, and a preliminary ArcGIS interface for photo accessibility. These products will serve as tools and offer a step-by-step process to add other sites and their associated interested community participants.
3) Continued coordination of the BleachWatch Virgin Islands program, developed as a part of the US Virgin Islands Reef Resilience Plan to assess the impacts to corals from mass bleaching events and support effective management responses. The program approaches the problem with a two tier strategy. Tier 1, the BleachWatch Virgin Islands community monitoring network is an early warning system to provide a rapid report of the distribution and intensity of coral bleaching at the onset of a bleaching event. Tier 2 is a network of USVI scientific divers from TNC, the University of the Virgin Islands, the National Park Service, and the US Geological Survey mobilized during mass bleaching events to conduct bleaching and post-bleaching monitoring. In 2017 40 new volunteers were trained.

Theme 5: "Progress via education"

- *Goal 5-1: prepare for the 2018 International Year of the Reef (IYOR)*

Question: How did you implement the Recommendation designating 2018 as the third International Year of the Reef? Please let us also know what are you planning to celebrate IYOR2018.

1) We are still developing our strategy for 2018 IYOR of the Reef and will be able to report more by the end of the year. We will be supporting targeted communications efforts to raise awareness and support action to conserve reefs during 2018. This month Dr. Luis Solórzano was selected as TNC's Global Lead for Reef Systems. We will be working with him this month to further determine our 2018 IYOR activities.

Please also list the educational material that you've developed in the past, so we can share it on the IYOR website.

Question: Would you like to report on one of your activities during the ICRI GM meeting?
Answer: Presentation being done by Erin McCreless, TNC partner.

2. **Publications.** Please list relevant publications/reports (related to the ICRI plan of action) you have released during this reporting period.

3. **General Information.** (Note that this information will be posted on the ICRI website on your member page: http://www.icriforum.org/about-icri/members-networks.)

Member type (Country / Organization):	NGO
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