

ICRI GENERAL MEETING  
12-13 July 2008, Ft Lauderdale, Florida, USA

Summary of Key Conclusions and Outcomes

1. Shark Conservation. The GM adopted a recommendation on shark conservation which highlights the alarming rate of shark depletion worldwide, stresses the importance of sharks to the health and resiliency of coral reef ecosystems. The recommendation calls upon ICRI members and other governments and relevant organizations to raise awareness of the importance of sharks, improve data collections, support increased research, and promote implementation of the UN General Assembly resolution on Sustainable Fisheries and the FAO International Plan of Action for the Conservation and Management of Sharks ([annex 1](#)).

2. Ad Hoc Committees. The GM adopted updated terms of reference for the continuation of the Ad Hoc Committee on Economic Valuation of Coral Reef Ecosystems ([annex 2](#)) and the Ad Hoc Committee on the East Asia Regional Workshop ([annex 3](#)). The ICRI secretariat will post on the ICRI Forum, for a six week comment period, proposed additional terms of reference for the Ad Hoc Committee on Enforcement & Investigation. The Secretariat will revise the proposal based on members' comments and post the revisions, with a view to having the terms of reference approved as soon as possible.

3. ICRI Statement. The GM agreed that ICRI will send a statement to the World Conservation Congress (5-14 October, 2008 - Barcelona, Spain) relaying the urgency for management actions expressed at the 11<sup>th</sup> International Coral Reef Symposium (11<sup>th</sup> ICRS) where over 3000 experts from 80 countries discussed the state of coral reef science and management and highlighted the urgent need for immediate actions to address threats to coral reefs, especially chronic stressors such as overfishing and decreasing water quality, in order to make reefs more resilient to climate change impacts. The ICRI statement will be useful to ICRI members in their own work. The USA (USAID Barbara Best) will coordinate preparation of a draft statement, drawing on the 11<sup>th</sup> ICRS outcomes as discussed by the GM ([annex 4](#)). The draft statement will be posted on the ICRIForum for inputs from ICRI members.

4. 11<sup>th</sup> ICRS Outcomes. The GM agreed on the need for a concise analysis of the coral reef management implications of the 11<sup>th</sup> ICRS outcomes, noting that Conservation International (CI) would be undertaking such an analysis regarding marine protected areas and connectivity issues in particular. USAID Barbara Best agreed to contact CI and World Bank Marea Hatziolos (ICRS Super Chair for coral reef management mini-symposia) to explore the possibility of combining efforts to produce a concise analysis of the ICRS management-related outcomes in select areas.

5. Letter to UN-DESA Secretariat. The GM agreed to the substance of a letter from the ICRI Co-Chairs to the UN-DESA Secretariat recommending peer review of the coral reef related chapters of the pending publication, "Innovative Technologies for Sustainable Development and Reversing Climate Change," in particular with respect to the use of artificial or engineered reefs.

6. Review of ICRI Procedures and Networks. The ICRI Secretariat will conduct a review of the "Organization and Management Procedures for the International Coral Reef Initiative (ICRI)," including Article 6 - ICRI Networks, with a view to streamlining and updating the procedures based on experiences gained since 2005 when the procedures were revised. The Secretariat will be assisted by a small working group including France, GBRMPA (Australia), GCRMN, ICRAN, IYOR Coordinator, ReefCheck, and UNEP. Proposed revised rules will be posted for comment on the ICRI Forum prior to the next General Meeting when they will be discussed and if possible finalized.

7. Future IYOR activities. Among the many activities planned by the IYOR Coordinator to raise awareness about coral reefs, the GM agreed to sponsor an ICRI-IYOR side event at the upcoming Conference of Parties to the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands of International Importance (29 October-5 November 2008, Changwon, Korea). The IYOR Coordinator will plan the side event with input from Members to highlight the coral reef-mangrove relationship.

8. Consultation with international organizations. The GM agreed that ICRI should work more closely with the secretariats of relevant international organizations and conventions, including the CBD and Ramsar secretariats, with a view to delivering shared messages on coral reefs to relevant governing and subsidiary bodies, sponsoring ICRI related side events, and identifying opportunities for shared activities.

9. Participation at General Meetings. The GM urged Members and the Secretariat to take steps to strengthen participation at General Meetings, including from under represented regions, the scientific community, relevant international organization secretariats (such as the World Heritage Convention and UNESCO's Man and the Biosphere Program), and coral reef countries that are not currently ICRI members, as well as to re-engage countries and organizations that have not recently attended ICRI meetings. It was noted that events sponsored by ICRI and ICRI members, such as the East Asia Regional Workshop planned for November 2008, might provide opportunities for engaging new partners.

10. Format of General Meetings. In preparing the draft organization of work for the next GM, the Secretariat will consider suggestions from Members to explore a thematic and/or regional focus with targeted reporting on case studies and lessons learned, inviting experts to make presentations on the status of coral reefs, and the use of break-out sessions and lunch time and evening side events to discuss specific issues. The Secretariat will also explore with Members the merits of revising the format for Member reporting.

11. Next General Meeting: The next GM will likely take place in the March-April 2009 timeframe, possibly in the Indian Ocean (where a GM has not been held since 2005). The Secretariat will inform Members when the schedule is firm.

12. Next Secretariat. The GM welcomed the offer by France to host the ICRI Secretariat for the 2009-2011 biennium.

## Annex 1: ICRI Recommendation on Improving Shark Conservation for Coral Reef Resiliency (Revised and final, 3 July 2008)

Sharks play a fundamental role as apex predators on coral reefs in maintaining the ecological balance that promotes ecosystem health and resiliency. The removal of sharks from coral reefs can have cascading effects on the structure and function of food webs, causing shifts in reef fish communities and negatively impacting the reef ecosystem. Scientific surveys have confirmed that shark populations, including coastal reef sharks, are being depleted at alarming rates, and the impact of their removal is being felt even in the most pristine and remote coral reef ecosystems.

Evidence presented during the 11<sup>th</sup> International Coral Reef Symposium held in Florida in July 2008 indicates shark populations across the globe are declining at alarming rates from the combined effects of IUU fishing, over-exploitation, incidental bycatch, and the increased demand for shark products. The lack of basic data on many reef and coastal shark populations is hindering efforts to improve shark conservation.

*Recalling* that the 2007-2009 ICRI Secretariat Action Plan seeks to ensure the long-term survival and productivity of coral reefs by discouraging unsustainable fisheries, extraction or trade;

The General Meeting of the International Coral Reef Initiative strongly encourages its members and networks, other governments, donor agencies, non-governmental organizations, the scientific community, and other relevant organizations to take the following actions to improve shark conservation:

- i) Promote the implementation of the 2007 United Nations General Assembly Sustainable Fisheries Resolution, which calls upon States and international organizations to take the necessary measures to protect, conserve and manage threatened and vulnerable shark populations;
- ii) Promote the implementation of the 1999 FAO International Plan of Action for the Conservation and Management of Sharks (IPOA-Sharks), including facilitating the development of Regional and National Plans of Action by coastal and small island States, the adoption of binding shark conservation and management measures by regional fisheries management organizations, and the monitoring of trade in sharks and shark products at appropriate multilateral or international fora as well as among states and fisheries management organizations concerned;
- iii) Raise awareness of the importance of sharks in promoting healthy, resilient coral reef ecosystems;
- iv) Improve data collection, monitoring and ecosystem-based shark management measures by regional fisheries management organizations and national fishery management authorities; and



v) Support increased research and capacity-building to improve our understanding of the role sharks play in coral reef ecosystems, invest in research on shark bycatch reduction methods and technologies, and promote best practices to decrease incidental shark mortalities in line fisheries or reduce damage to coral reefs.

Annex 2: ICRI Ad Hoc Committee on  
Economics Valuation of Coral Reef  
Ecosystems - Terms of Reference (16 July  
2008)

- (1) The Ad Hoc Committee is extended through the next two ICRI General Meetings under the chairmanship of the ICRI Secretariat and the World Resources Institute (WRI) and will continue to include but not be limited to the following ICRI Members: Australia (Great Barrier Reef Marine Protected Authority), Colombia, Conservation International, Crisp, IUCN, NOAA and UNEP-WCMC.
- (2) The Ad Hoc Committee will develop cost estimates and post them on the ICRI Forum for each of the following activities, building on the compilation of references and materials on economic valuation methodologies, manuals and examples of applications/case studies developed by the Committee based on a survey of ICRI members and other experts and now available through the ICRI Forum and at the WRI web site ([www.wri.org/project/valuation-caribbean-reefs](http://www.wri.org/project/valuation-caribbean-reefs)):
  - a) Expand the current online compilation to include additional examples and case studies of applications of economic evaluation information to public policies and private sector actions.
  - b) Develop an online searchable data base providing summaries of key economic valuation literature with emphasis on coral reefs, utilizing the expertise of UNEP-WCMC and the Coral Reef Economics Community of Practice (Coral CoP) among others, and taking into account the potential fields contained in the annex to these terms of reference. Such a database should integrate existing efforts and avoid duplication.
  - c) Develop a web-based site to access additional literature and references on economic valuation within the user community, including copyrighted journals with permission of the publishers, in coordination with the Coral CoP. The user groups that will have access to the site should be delineated.
  - d) Host web-based seminars ("webinars") utilizing expert facilitators for timely discussion of matters related to the economic valuation of coral reefs;
- (3) The Ad Hoc Committee will initiate the activities in (2) above pending the availability of sufficient funds.
- (4) The Ad Hoc Committee will report progress and make recommendations for continued work of the Committee at the next two ICRI General Meetings.

Potential fields in a database summarizing key economic valuation literature with an emphasis on coral reefs



- a. Citation
- b. Year of study (date of valuation - not date of publication)
- c. Number of surveys (if relevant)
- d. Ecosystem valued (i.e., coral reefs, mangroves, forests, etc.)
- e. Total ecosystem valuation or marginal or average valuation?
- f. Geographic area
- g. Goods and services evaluated
- h. Method(s) used
- i. Area (km<sup>2</sup>) covered
- j. Type of value(s) estimated (described by category, such as direct use value, indirect use value, non-use value)
- k. Management issue/research question being addressed
- l. Summary of results
- m. Link (provide a link if the study is available on-line)

Note: Fields a, d, f, and g comprise the simplest summary for a reference catalogue.



### Annex 3: Terms of Reference for the ICRI East Asia Regional Workshop Ad Hoc Committee

1. The following tasks are to be done by the ICRI East Asia Regional Workshop Ad Hoc Committee as preparation, organization, and follow-ups for the workshop in 2008, and preparation for the workshop in 2009:
  - a. Further develop workshop agenda and other relevant materials, and post on ICRIForum;
  - b. Prepare and organize the preparatory meeting by the workshop organizers, co-chairs and facilitators (tentative time/location: September 2008, Tokyo);
  - c. Provide necessary arrangements and supports to expected participants (e.g., invitation letter, travel, visa, etc.);
  - d. Organize the workshop;
  - e. Draft workshop summary and circulate to participants;
  - f. Post finalized workshop summary on ICRIForum;
  - g. Develop plans for the 2009 workshop; and
  - h. Any other matters what the Ad Hoc Committee regards deemed necessary.
2. The activity of the Ad Hoc Committee based on this TOR will be reported to the next ICRI General Meeting, These instruments would be required to be discussed and adopted.
3. Ad Hoc Committee members: existing Ad Hoc Committee members and other interested and relevant countries and organizations.

## Annex 4: ICRS Outcomes and Potential Emerging Issues for ICRI Based on General Meeting Discussions (Keyed to Mexico-U.S. Secretariat Action Plan Major Themes)

### ICRS Outcome Resiliency = ICRI Action Plan Overarching Theme

- Need scientists to determine reef “resiliency thresholds” (managers need to know)
- Conserve marginal reef ecosystems (often stress adapted), as well as pristine systems (ICRS)
- Bolster reef resiliency to climate change (ICRS)
- Marine protected areas
  - Reef recovery in no take areas
  - Positive effect on surrounding areas
  - Potential for coral nurseries
  - ICRI East Asia MPA workshop

### ICRS Outcome on Climate Change

- **Ocean Acidification**
  - Look at ways to bolster reef health and promote resilience (ICRS)
  - Can ICRI contribute to raising awareness of problem?

### ICRS Outcome on Fisheries = ICRI Action Plan Theme 1 on Fisheries

- Fisheries depletion
- **Sharks**
  - Indicator species related to coral coverage
  - ICRI recommendation on sharks
  - Can ICRI contribute to global campaign focused on reef sharks?

### ICRS Outcome on Nutrients = ICRI Action Plan Theme 3 on Integrated Ecosystem Management

- Catchment management
- Water quality (reefs are only as good as their water)
- Address/mitigate “extreme” coastal development

### ICRS Outcome on Integration of Science and Management = ICRI Action Plan Themes 2 and 4 on Environmental Services and Monitoring and Research

- Strengthen linkages between science and management
- Scientists explain/interpret their findings
- Managers identify communicate their needs to scientists
- Improve quality of global databases
- Consider science codes of conduct to minimize damage to reefs



- ICRI reaches out more to science community
- **Targeted environmental education**
  - Fisherman, scientists, communities, decision-makers
  - University programs
  - Children's programs (kids in the water)