

WCC-2016-Rec-106-EN

Cooperation for the conservation and protection of coral reefs worldwide

RECALLING that coral reefs and lagoons cover 600,000 km² of our planet, that they are found in over 100 countries and territories, and are home to around 25% of all known marine species and occupy only 0.2% of the world's ocean floor;

UNDERLINING the importance of the services provided by coral ecosystems in terms of the sociocultural and cultural well-being and sense of identity of human populations, and recalling that half a billion people are involved and that the economic prosperity of certain major financial sectors depends on their proper functioning every day;

NOTING that coral bleaching events have become increasingly frequent, severe and widespread over the last few decades, and include those associated with the El Niño and La Niña phenomena, and that models predict that this will continue in the future;

ALSO RECALLING decision VII/5 of the Seventh meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD COP7, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, 2004), which describes the difficulties involved in protecting coral reefs and marine ecosystems, and Aichi Biodiversity Target 10, which states that "*By 2015, the multiple anthropogenic pressures on coral reefs, and other vulnerable ecosystems impacted by climate change or ocean acidification are minimized, so as to maintain their integrity and functioning*";

NOTING that, according to the *Global Biodiversity Outlook 4* report, Aichi Biodiversity Target 10 has not been attained and coral reefs are continuing to decline worldwide;

NOTING ALSO that, in the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development entitled, "The Future We Want" (2012, paragraph 176), which recalls that: "We also recognize the significant economic, social and environmental contributions of coral reefs, in particular to islands and other coastal States, as well as the significant vulnerability of coral reefs and mangroves to impacts including from climate change, ocean acidification, overfishing, destructive fishing practices and pollution";

BEARING IN MIND the outcome document of the United Nations Sustainable Development Summit 2015 entitled, "Transforming our World; the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development", in particular paragraph 14, which, among other things, recognises that the adverse effects of climate change are seriously affecting coastal areas and low-lying coastal countries, including many least developed countries and small island developing States; as well as Sustainable Development Goal 14: "Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources";

WELCOMING the existence of the International Coral Reef Initiative (ICRI), and several regional and national initiatives;

STRESSING the scientific community's recognition of the need to strengthen monitoring and observation of coral reefs worldwide, particularly in order to learn more about their resilience mechanisms; and

UNDERLINING the need to strengthen regional cooperation for the conservation, protection, monitoring and sustainable management of coral reefs and associated ecosystems as part of a regional and global vision;

The World Conservation Congress, at its session in Hawai'i, United States of America, 1-10 September 2016:

ASKS States and both regional and international organisations responsible for environmental and economic sustainability issues to strengthen regional cooperation on the conservation of coral reefs and associated ecosystems, in order to achieve Aichi Biodiversity Target 10, and more specifically to:

- a. establish regularly, through regional reports, a global summary of the status of coral reefs, using standardised methodological tools; and

- b. develop and strengthen international, regional and national initiatives by:
 - i. adopting integrated management and spatial planning approaches for the conservation of coral reefs and associated ecosystems;
 - ii. implementing conservation projects for coral reefs and globally important species, in particular aiming to reduce anthropogenic threats;
 - iii. building stakeholders' capacities regarding the integrated management of coral reefs and associated ecosystems;
 - iv. promoting the implementation and dissemination of best practices to improve the management, protection and conservation of coral reefs; and
 - v. promoting scientific cooperation and the development of awareness-raising actions, particularly participatory science approaches.