



International Coral Reef Initiative (ICRI)

Member's Report | 37th General Meeting

19th – 23rd September 2023 Hawai'i, – United States of America

Reporting Period: 2021 – 2023

A. Member Information:

- Name of ICRI member:
Interamerican Association for Environmental Defense (AIDA)
- Name of person(s) completing member's report:
Sandra Moguel
- Email:
smoguel@aida-americas.org
- Are you a Focal Point: Yes No
 - If no, who are you completing the form on behalf of:
Maria Jose Gonzalez Bernat
mjgonzalezbernat@aida-americas.org
- Which was the last General Meeting you attended:
AIDA attended the 34th ICRI General Meeting in Australia in 2019, and the 35th and 36th General Meeting online.
- Will you be attending the 37th ICRI General Meeting: Yes No
- Member social media:
 - Twitter: @Aidaespanol
 - LinkedIn: AIDA- Asociación Interamericana para la Defensa del Ambiente

B. Reporting on the implementation of ICRI Plan of Action 2021-2024: turning the tide for coral reefs. *Your responses will help inform the Secretariat about members' contributions toward the current Plan of Action*

Theme 1 - Preparing for the Future: Promoting Resilient Coral Reefs

1.A - Strengthening policies - Supporting conservation and recovery of coral reefs and associated ecosystems through resilience-based management frameworks.

- (ICRI) How have you embedded resilience-based management into your policies? (Tip – refer to the RBM policy brief: <https://icriforum.org/resilience-hub/>)

Answer: AIDA has been contributing to reduce local stressors to support reef resistance and recovery through advocacy and litigation. Below are some examples of the activities we are leading or participating in:

Advocacy. On August 11, 2023, AIDA, in coordination with fifteen civil society organizations and individuals, filed a request for a **hearing before the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights** under folio PS 188-763, to obtain information from the States on the actions engaged **to prevent the massive coral bleaching** that has occurred in the last month of May and is expected to continue until November of this year 2023. Restoration efforts have been severely affected by global warming and the creation of the emergency protocols is needed.

The thematic hearings of the IACHR are not a judicial mechanism per se, but rather an opportunity to promote advocacy actions and direct dialogue with States, before one of the highest human rights bodies of the continent. Through this space, we seek to urge Latin American countries with coral reefs to take urgent and concrete measures to prevent the extinction of corals, and to safeguard the human rights of the communities that depend on these ecosystems. The context report is available at: <https://aida-americas.box.com/s/uh4o2a10x9luqdv1bnz8lgr78pdih9u0>

Litigation. AIDA has filed several **amicus briefs** – that refer to relevant information or arguments provided by a person or organization who is not a party to a case- on behalf of local communities to protect coral reef in Veracruz and their human right to a healthy environment to Mexican courts. This amicus is expected to support compliance with a Supreme Court ruling **to conduct a comprehensive and holistic environmental impact assessment for port expansion**. In this brief, arguments are presented on access to justice but also on the environmental services provided by coral reefs, which are also expected to educate the judiciary.

1.B - Promote capacity building for applying resilience-based management approaches to coral conservation Ad Hoc Committee on Resilience-based Management.

- (ICRI) Please list any examples of leading practices, techniques and strategies for building reef resilience that your organisation/country is involved in. Include their location and extent, methods of implementation, financing, and an assessment of their results (or likely results), with links for more information if possible.

Answer: AIDA has been collaborating for nearly three years with civil society organizations to provide legal and scientific advice to some Latin American countries to reach consensus on the World Trade Organization's Fisheries Subsidies Agreement, approved in June 2022.

To disseminate information on subsidies, support internal ratification processes and identify opportunities for the implementation of the mentioned Agreement, AIDA has developed workshops on the benefits of revamping negative fisheries subsidies, to research, and/or data generation. Some examples may focus on coral restoration. This information has been provided to decision-makers in Mexico, Costa Rica, and with member countries of the Organization of the Fisheries and Aquaculture Sector of the Central American Isthmus (OSPESCA in Spanish).

- (ICRI) Have you developed, or are you aware of, training materials that you can share?

Answer: Factsheet on the World Trade Organization's Fisheries Subsidies Agreement <https://aida-americas.box.com/s/sknm9f6ph4pes1qmpt7tchnd674pkgyo>

1.C - Promote and build capacity for the restoration of resilient coral reefs Ad Hoc Committee on Reef Restoration

- (ICRI) Please list any examples of reef restoration mechanisms that your organisation/country is involved in. Include their limits, conditions of implementation, financing and an assessment of their results, with links for more information if possible.

Answer:

AIDA does not directly monitor coral reefs, however, we also used, to a large extent, the indicators of our partner organization Healthy Reefs Initiative, specifically the [Report Cards](#) for the Mesoamerican Reef, as well as the Inter-American Development Bank study ["Economic Valuation of the Ecosystem Services of the Mesoamerican Reef, and the Allocation and Distribution of these Values"](#)

Theme 2 – Coral Reef Science and Oceanography: Advancing and Utilizing the Latest Science and Technology

2.A – Coral monitoring capacity building

- (ICRI) Do you have information / case studies that could contribute to the update of the “Methods for ecological monitoring of coral reefs” (<https://portals.iucn.org/library/efiles/documents/2004-023.pdf>), especially related to the use of new technologies.

Answer: AIDA does not directly monitor coral reefs, however, we are seeking collaboration opportunities with Skytruth to support arguments with mapped information.

- (ICRI) Are you aware, developing, or involved with, any capacity building activities related to the use of coral reef monitoring mechanisms, especially regarding the advancement of monitoring practices (noting technology)?

Answer: Not applicable

2.B – The Global Coral Reef Monitoring Network (GCRMN)

The GCRMN would like to receive feedback on the [Status of Coral Reefs of the World: 2020 report](#) to improve the production of future regional and global reports. As such, please kindly respond accordingly to the questions below:

- (ICRI) In reference to the Status of Coral Reefs of the World: 2020 report:
 - Have you read the report?
 - Did you utilise the report and/or use the results and contents?
 - How could the next report be improved (considering the entire process from data acquisition to reporting)?

Answer: AIDA's Ecosystems team has read the report and we use it in our advocacy strategies. We consider that it is important to have consider or create materials focused on the general public, that includemore graphic design. Particularly for AIDA, our focus is Latin America, so we would like to see more contribution from NGOs, universities and scientists from the hemisphere.

- (ICRI) The GCRMN intends to establish time-bound task forces to address specific priority issues and to build capability and capacity across the network. As a first priority, a Data Task Force was established. The Task Force brings together subject matter experts to increase the transparency, reproducibility, and robustness of future GCRMN reports alongside capacity in monitoring, data collection, analysis,

management and sharing of coral reefs and associated ecosystems. The Task Force will focus on:

- Improving data integration and analyses to facilitate the production of GCRMN regional and global reports; and
- Promoting good data management practices based on FAIR data principles for the coral reef scientific community.

Tell us if you will be interested in joining the Data Task Force, or upcoming task forces. More so, please inform us if you have data to contribute to upcoming regional, or global, reports and if you will be organising and/or partaking in any capacity building activities regarding data monitoring:

Answer:

1. *Taskforces:* Not applicable
2. *Data to contribute (GCRMN Region Country, Data description):* Not applicable
3. *Upcoming capacity building activities:* Not applicable

Theme 3 - Local Threat Reduction: Integrating Response Planning Frameworks

Please tick the most appropriate box/boxes:

- (ICRI) Do you have (or in the process of developing) a coral reef response plan(s) on, for example, but not limited to:
 - coral disease
 - vessel groundings
 - bleaching
 - invasive species outbreaks (lionfish and COTS)
 - large storm events
 - other:

If yes, please provide us with more information.

Answer: Impacts on deep sea mining

Theme 4 - Diversity and Inclusion: Expanding the Coral Reef Community

4.A – Connect with youth audiences:

- (ICRI) Are you developing (or planning to develop) any communication campaigns or outreach materials? What will your primary target audiences be and what would your key messages include?

Answer: AIDA's materials are targeted to decision/ policy makers, sometimes to judges who are deciding a coral reef case (e.g. [Blog](#)), and in some groups of organizations -e.g. the Veracruz Reef del Corredor Arrecifal del Golfo de México- where we participate, the materials are targeted to the general public (e.g. [Video](#) from our partners Espora and Cemda)

4.B - Collaborate with Indigenous people and seek to incorporate indigenous and local knowledge into policies and management plans:

- (ICRI) How do you incorporate indigenous and local knowledge into policies and management frameworks. Please provide us with some examples. Do you have any plans or strategies to further promote this incorporation?

Answer: AIDA participates in at least two coalitions that incorporate people from the community; for example, the Gulf of Mexico Reef Corridor Network has fisherwomen from Veracruz among its members. The Cabo Pulmo Vivo Coalition also includes people from the communities, who are families that supported the creation of the Cabo Pulmo marine park.

AIDA seeks to add value to the strategies already being done by local communities, from an international law and science perspective. Local knowledge is fundamental to AIDA's actions.

- (ICRI) Do you have any, or know of, best practices to solicit Indigenous and local community knowledge?

Answer: AIDA is very sensitive to communication with local and indigenous communities. We take human rights into consideration in our meetings and relations, particularly Convention 169 of the International Labor Organization. Our work also seeks to protect the human rights of communities that depend on sensitive ecosystems such as coral reefs. Meetings and interactions are conducted in the communities' territory, taking into consideration their language and interpreters in case we do not share the same understanding.

AIDA includes the visions, experiences and contributions of local and indigenous communities. The strategies are crafted by them because it is precisely the communities surrounding coral reefs that become victims if such ecosystems deteriorate.

C. Kunming-Montreal Global biodiversity framework

- (ICRI) Do your current National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAP) incorporate coral reefs? If not, what kind of material will be useful for your Country/organisation to ensure coral reefs are integrated in the revision of NBSAPs?

Answer: In Latin American countries we have noticed that coral reefs are not included for the most part; neither in the Special Programs for Climate Change are the actions of adaptation to climate change of coastal communities, and promotion of the resilience of ecosystems such as coral reefs detailed.

In the particular case of Mexico, for example, the National Registry of Emissions (RENE in spanish), which depends on the National Institute of Ecology and Climate Change, does not have in its databases information on oceans and climate change; therefore, it is essential to present advocacy initiatives in the next 28th Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change to establish synergies with the Convention on Biological Diversity / Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity framework, and give special emphasis to coral reefs within the NBSAPs.

- (ICRI) How are you planning to implement the Kunming-Montreal Global biodiversity framework. For you, which targets are the most relevant for coral reefs?

Answer: As AIDA is a regional organization, it is very important for our work to **identify synergies and promote coherence with international agreements or instruments**. We consider the following targets to be the most important:

Target 8: Minimize the impact of climate change and ocean acidification on biodiversity and increase its resilience [...]

In the face of massive coral bleaching events, the results of restoration actions have been minimized, so it is essential to address the real anthropogenic causes of climate change.

Target 11: Restore, maintain and enhance nature's contributions to people, including ecosystem functions and services [...]

While crafting strategies, AIDA is including diverse knowledge that can **develop evidence and data on public health**, that can be cross-referenced with scientific information, and that support strong arguments for public policies that promote a high standard of living and a healthy environment, particularly to increase water quality through wastewater remediation. Our programs are cross-cutting and particularly in the Ecosystems team we seek an interrelationship with our climate and human rights programs. The solutions we work on with our partner organizations, scientists and communities promote strategies with a **human rights approach**; the link is through the ecological services that coral reefs provide to people.

Target 20: Strengthen capacity-building and development, access to and transfer of technology, and promote development of and access to innovation and technical and scientific cooperation [...].

In the face of climate change and massive coral bleaching events, developing countries –particularly in Latin America, do not have emergency plans to protect coral reefs. This is because they do not have the financial resources, technology and regulatory structure to act urgently.

Target 21: Ensure that the best available data, information [...].

Without information, accurate diagnoses are not available and better decision making is not guaranteed, so modelling scenarios and developing solutions to promote coral reef resilience and livelihoods requires the best scientific information.

D. Upcoming events

Please tick the most appropriate box/boxes:

September 19th – 23rd 2023: 37th ICRI GM, USA, Hawaii

30th November – 12th December 2023: 28th Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change

- 26th February – 1st March 2024: 6th session of the United Nations Environment Assembly
- 10th – 12th April 2024: 2024 UN Ocean Decade Conference, Barcelona, Spain.
- 2024: United Nations Biodiversity Conference (COP16) of the Parties to the UN Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), Turkey.
- Other

Please list any upcoming regional / international events relevant to ICRI that your organisation plans to attend:

Answer:
Meeting on fisheries subsidies with OSPESCA delegates (October 2023).

International Seabed Authority Board meetings, where possible protocols for ocean mining exploitation are discussed (Jamaica, November 2023).

Meetings of the Council and General Assembly of the International Maritime Organization (London, UK, November and December 2023).

E. Publications. Please list relevant publications / reports you have released recently (+ add a link if possible)

| Publication | URL |
|---|---|
| The context report under the IACHR’s hearing request August 11 th , 2023 (in Spanish only) | https://aida-americas.box.com/s/uh4o2a10x9luqdv1bnz8l9f78pdih9u0 |
| | |
| | |
| | |
| | |
| | |

F. ICRI Member Feedback. What do you find most valuable about being a member of ICRI as well as completing the ICRI member reports? If you have any ideas to improve the Member Reports, please list below:

Answer: The national reports provide a space for reflection internally at AIDA to review our strategic plan and work on coral reefs.

Belonging to ICRI gives us the opportunity to know what are the relevant discussions on international issues, what kind of scientific information is being generated, and opens the possibility to include points of view and arguments in international conventions and treaties relevant to coral reefs.

The national reports allow us to identify relevant actions being taken by the countries in a more open manner, and thus also to learn about public policy and/or regulatory needs. Perhaps we could add a section in the national report on success stories on this topic.

G. Contact information & member information. (Note that this information will be posted on the ICRI website on your member page: <https://icriforum.org/members/>).

Please use the table below to provide us updates to your member’s focal points as well as the blank cells to indicate changes to information (please add more rows, as needed):

| Focal Point 1: | |
|---|--|
| <i>Name:</i> | Maria Jose Gonzalez Bernat |
| <i>Title/Organisation:</i> | Co-coordinator, Ecosystems Program |
| <i>Email:</i> | mjgonzalezbernat@aida-americas.org |
| Focal Point 2: | |
| <i>Name:</i> | Maria Paula Conrado |
| <i>Title/Organisation:</i> | Scientist |
| <i>Email:</i> | mpconrado@aida-americas.org |
| Focal Point 3: | |
| <i>Name:</i> | Santiago Piñeros |
| <i>Title/Organisation:</i> | Attorney |
| <i>Email:</i> | spineros@aida-americas.org |
| Member page updates: | |
| <i>Section</i> | <i>Update</i> |
| Interamerican Association for Environmental Defense | https://aida-americas.org/ |
| | |
| | |
| | |
| Do you have new resources (reports, guidelines etc.) that you would like to display? | |
| <i>Resource description</i> | <i>URL</i> |
| | |
| | |
| | |



Thank you very much for sharing your valuable experiences and information with ICRI. Members reports, meeting outputs and resources will be uploaded to: <https://icriforum.org/events/37th-icri-general-meeting/>