



**ICRI Side event**  
**“Ocean Health, Human Wealth: The importance of coral reefs”**

*4<sup>th</sup> International Conference on Small Island Developing States (SIDS4)*  
*St John’s Antigua and Barbuda*  
*27 – 30 May 2024*

**Time:** 12 - 13:30 pm | **Date:** Wednesday 29<sup>th</sup> May | **Location:** Room 5, American University of Antigua, College of Medicine, University Park, Jabberwock beach Road, Coolidge

**Theme:** Revitalising SIDS Economies for accelerated and sustainable growth

**Lead partner:** International Coral Reef Initiative (ICRI)

**Organising Partners:** *United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), UNEP Cartagena Convention Secretariat, The Commonwealth Secretariat, The Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme*

**Concept Note**

Coral reefs exist in more than 100 countries and territories, and support at least 25% of marine species; they are integral to sustaining Earth’s vast and interconnected web of marine biodiversity. More than one billion people, including vulnerable coastal communities, whose daily lives are inextricably linked with life below water, depend on healthy coral reefs. They are essential to the security, resilience, and climate adaptation of many of the most climate-vulnerable nations on Earth, with 94% of the population of Small Island Developing States (SIDS) residing within 100km of a coral reef. Coastal communities and SIDS are critical to the conservation, protection, and restoration of coral reefs with 30% of the Ocean’s natural and cultural resources under their custodianship.

Coral reefs provide ecosystem services valued up to \$9.9 trillion annually and play a crucial role in SIDS in numerous ways: Economic Importance, Shoreline Protection, Food Security, Cultural and Traditional Values, Tourism Revenue and Biodiversity Hotspots. However, the safeguarding of these resources is becoming increasingly challenging due to the triple-planetary crises, especially in SIDS which are disproportionally vulnerable to the impacts of climate change.

Given the multifaceted importance of coral reefs for SIDS, conservation and sustainable management efforts are imperative. Collaborative initiatives involving governments, communities, NGOs, and international organisations are essential for safeguarding coral reefs and the myriad of benefits they provide to SIDS.

The event will be moderated by Fauna & Flora and explore opportunities for economic diversification beyond traditional reef-based activities, such as through the blue economy concept. By showcasing successful initiatives and sharing lessons learned, the event aims to catalyse transformative change towards a more resilient, and sustainable future for SIDS and their coral reef ecosystems.

## Agenda

**Moderator:** *Kristian Teleki, Chief Executive Officer, Fauna & Flora*

**Welcoming Remarks (5')**

*Nicole R. LeBoeuf, Assistant Administrator, NOAA's National Ocean Service*

**Video:** What if coral reefs disappear? (2')

**Three Decades of championing coral reefs for SIDS (5')**

*Margaux Monfared, ICRI Secretariat*

**People and Reefs**

- **The Pacific (10')**

*Sefanaia Nawadra, Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme*

- **The Caribbean (10')**

*Christopher Corbin, The Cartagena Convention Secretariat*

**Preserving coral reefs for people**

- **Global Fund for Coral Reefs (GFCR) Case Studies (10')**

*Leticia Carvalho, GFCR Executive Board co-chair and United Nations Environment Programme*

- **The Commonwealth Blue Charter: Collaboration towards protection and restoration of coral reefs (10')**

*Nicholas Hardman-Mountford, The Commonwealth Secretariat*

**Protecting our reefs, Sustaining our Islands (10')**

*Adnan Awad, United Nations Development Programme*

**Closing Remarks (5')**

*Ambassador Peter Thomson, UN Secretary General's Special Envoy for the Ocean*