



CORAL REEFS AT CBD COP16: THE #FORCORAL PAVILION

Cali, Colombia 21st October – 1st November 2024

FOREWORD

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

Allow me to repeat the mantra, "There can be no healthy planet without a healthy ocean, and the ocean's health is currently, measurably in decline". The corollary is plain: ruled as we must be by the principle of intergenerational justice, we have to stop and reverse the decline.

The alarm bells are ringing for the survival of coral reefs. That brings into question prospects for our own survival, for one quarter of marine species are supported by coral reefs. If we lose coral reefs this century and as a result we lose that great swathe of marine biodiversity, surely this brings into question the ability of the ocean to be healthy. No coral reefs, no healthy ocean, no healthy planet: if you follow the logic, you see why the survival of coral reefs is so important to our own survival.

It needs to be clearly understood by the political and business leaders of this world that humankind's activities, principally our burning of fossil fuels, are putting at risk the collapse of the planet's coral reef ecosystem. The burning of fossil fuels, leading to the greenhouse gases that are creating the climate crisis and global warming, are the chief cause of coral's demise. Keeping levels of global warming to the Paris Climate Agreement's aim of remaining well under 2 degrees, will give coral a fighting chance; but we must at the same time be addressing the multiple threats posed to coral reefs from land-based sources of pollution, unsustainable extraction, and other destructive activities.

Coral reefs are currently experiencing their worst-

ever global bleaching event, pushing corals to their limit, and thereby threatening the very foundation of ocean biodiversity. In 2021, the Global Coral Reef Monitoring Network (GCRMN) announced a 14% decline in the world's coral reefs during the period 2009 to 2018. Despite this sobering evidence, coral reefs continue to face mounting pressures and threats.

At the 16th Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD COP16), recently concluded in Cali, Colombia, it was made clear to all that humanity's commitment to preserving biodiversity, and particularly coral reefs, has reached a critical juncture. The bulk of the COP16 work on coral reefs took place at the #ForCoral Pavilion, hosted by the International Coral Reef Initiative (ICRI), with the pavilion serving as a dedicated platform to elevate coral reefs in the global biodiversity agenda. Those who gathered there took part in the fostering of innovative thinking, collective responsibility, and unwavering dedication to the survival of these vital ecosystems.

It was heartening to see the way the #ForCoral Pavilion brought together governments, scientists, indigenous communities, youth leaders, and advocates in our great quest on coral's behalf. Their participation underscored the interwoven roles we all play in the journey to fulfil the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, to protect 30% of the planet by 2030, and to hold up coral's survival as the massive global challenge that it truly is. We can say that as a result, the aspiration to protect 100% of coral reefs by 2030 is now firmly in play.

All agreed that we must ensure pledges turn into tangible actions, and that we must jointly hold ourselves accountable for the protection and restoration of coral ecosystems. Emphasis was placed on raising and mobilising funding, with the leveraging of funding under the Coral Reef Breakthrough at its heart. The Breakthrough aims to secure at least \$12 billion by 2030 to secure a future for coral reefs, and I look forward to great progress in this endeavour when the world meets at the UN Ocean Conference in Nice, France, 9-13 June 2025.

At COP16, ICRI released its six key asks for coral reefs. The ICRI call is for both coral reef and non-coral reef States to: strengthen management frameworks; to ensure effective restoration; to integrate effective pollution management and regulations; to build capacity and share knowledge; to establish robust monitoring systems; and to scale finances in coral's defence from both public and private sectors. It is a comprehensive list and I urge all to champion these asks #ForCoral. In so doing, I extend my gratitude to ICRI and the many partners who contributed to efforts on coral's behalf at COP16. The vision, hard work, and collaboration embodied in what transpired at the #ForCoral Pavilion in Cali are precisely the qualities we need to engender around the world, as we go forth to meet our inescapable obligation of safeguarding the future of coral reefs.



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Peter Thomson'.

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

#FORCORAL PAVILION IN NUMBERS


“The #ForCoral Pavilion provided a much-needed rallying point at COP 16 to galvanise attention and energy for coral reefs. The many events hosted at the Pavilion reflected the strong engagement of ICRI and the coral reef community at COP 16, which carried over into positive momentum in the negotiating halls.”

Joseph Appiott,
Secretariat of the Convention
on Biological Diversity

1 
Website created
cop16forcoral.org



+ 1100
attendees


Reaching over
157,000+
subscribers


Call for events shared across
40+
platforms


40+
events

1 
detailed agenda flyer


217
speakers

from
44
Countries 

(46 % female and 55% male), including 31 youth and 17 Indigenous Local Knowledge holders, from 44 countries including 25 ODA Countries, with 8 events driven by 100% ODA Country speakers and Livestreamed across 10 days!

#FORCORAL PAVILION SUMMARY

At the occasion of the **Sixteenth Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD COP16)**, Cali, Colombia, ICRI's involvement was essential in advancing coral reef-focused conservation strategies within the global biodiversity agenda. Over 23,000 people from 196 countries, including more than 100 ministers, civil society representatives, Indigenous peoples, and local communities, gathered for COP16. This event marked a historic moment as the first biodiversity COP since the adoption of the GBF in 2022, with a strong focus on accelerating actions to protect both people and nature.

ICRI, alongside a coalition of sponsors hosted the **#ForCoral Pavilion** - a central hub for coral reef conservation efforts that attracted over **1,000 attendees**, with over 40 events between 21st - 31st October 2024. The pavilion served as a dedicated space to explore and highlight the ecological and economic value of coral reefs while mobilising support for one of the world's most vulnerable ecosystems. Positioned at the intersection of global policy and science, the pavilion highlighted the urgent need for coral reef conservation and served as a beacon for collaboration, innovation, and action under the GBF.



The #ForCoral Pavilion events facilitated knowledge sharing, strengthened partnerships, and amplified the need for scalable and effective solutions to protect coral reefs. These efforts highlighted the global urgency of ensuring a future with healthy, vibrant coral reefs, especially in light of the Fourth Global Bleaching Event, the second in a decade, which, in May 2024 exceeded the spatial extent of the Third Global Bleaching Event (2014-2017), previously the most severe on record.

The #ForCoral Pavilion was made possible thanks to the generous support of our sponsors. Their contributions have enabled a dedicated space to foster collaboration, showcase innovative solutions, and amplify the global call to protect and restore coral reef ecosystems. We extend our deepest gratitude for their partnership in securing a resilient future for coral reefs.

In addition to the #ForCoral Pavilion, the ICRI Secretariat released an information note to include **Key asks for coral reefs at CBD COP16**. Whilst not explicitly mentioned in its 23 Targets, the GBF remains relevant to coral reef ecosystems with 16 out of 23 targets proposed to be highly relevant. The urgency for action has never been more pressing, which made CBD COP16 a pivotal moment for coral reef ecosystems.



COLOMBIA DAY

A TRIBUTE TO CULTURE AND CONSERVATION!



On October 22, 2024, the #ForCoral Pavilion highlighted Colombia's vibrant heritage and underscored the critical importance of coral reefs to ocean health. The day featured five engaging events that celebrated the remarkable diversity of marine ecosystems and the inspiring efforts of those working tirelessly to protect them. Discussions ranged from Colombia's progress toward achieving the 30x30 conservation target, to over three decades of ground-breaking research, and strategies for addressing emerging challenges such as coral bleaching.

As the day drew to a close, attendees were treated to a special screening of the documentary *Saving Atlantis*. This powerful film offered emotive and

compelling accounts from individuals deeply connected to coral reefs, serving as an urgent call to action for their preservation. The evening concluded with a vibrant cultural celebration led by Jalimer Caraballo Ramírez, a talented Colombian Champeta singer, whose performance embodied the spirit of conservation and community.

"We're honoured to have *Saving Atlantis* screen at CBD COP16 and are thankful to ICRI for hosting us at the #ForCoral Pavilion. I hope the documentary can make a difference in addressing the challenges facing coral reefs," shared David Baker, the documentary's director.

[> Watch the trailer for the documentary](#)

Saving Atlantis documentary



Saving Atlantis, directed by David Baker and Justin R Smith, focuses on the loss of coral reef ecosystems around the world, and the impact of that decline on the communities that depend on them, on a global journey that celebrates the majesty and mystery of coral habitats.



COLOMBIA DAY EVENTS

1 Towards Effective Ocean Conservation in the 30x30 Framework

Lead Organisation: Dirección de Asuntos Marinos, Costeros y Recursos Acuáticos, Ministerio de Ambiente y Desarrollo Sostenible de Colombia

Co-organisation: INVEMAR

[> Full Summary](#)



2 Three decades of coral reef research and monitoring for ecosystem adaptive management

Lead Organisation: Dirección de Asuntos Marinos, Costeros y Recursos Acuáticos, Ministerio de Ambiente y Desarrollo Sostenible de Colombia

[> Full Summary](#)

3 Facing the new challenges for coral reef conservation: a look at mass bleaching events and coral diseases

Lead Organisation: Perry Institute for Marine Sciences (PIMS)

Co-organisations: Nova Southern University (NSU), Universidad Autónoma de México (UNAM), Instituto de Investigaciones José Benito Vives de Andrés INVEMAR

[> Full Summary](#)

“As a marine biologist devoted to the study of coral reefs, I hold deep admiration for these vibrant ecosystems, which face escalating threats from environmental degradation and climate change. At COP16, I had the honour of organising several events at the #ForCoral Pavilion, highlighting Colombia’s dedication to coral reef conservation through scientific research, community engagement, and cultural advocacy. I am deeply thankful to ICRI for their efforts in establishing the Pavilion as a critical platform to amplify global action for coral reef protection. The Pavilion’s collaborative spirit inspires hope for resilient reefs and aligns with the vision of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework. I am grateful for this opportunity to contribute to the global effort to raise awareness and protect coral reefs, their goods and services, and the well-being of coastal communities.”

Tomás Lopez Londoño, Ministerio de Ambiente y Desarrollo Sostenible (DAMCRA), Colombia



4 Restoration actions in coral reef ecosystems: lessons and future challenges to promote socio-ecological resilience

Lead Organisation: Dirección de Asuntos Marinos, Costeros y Recursos Acuáticos, Ministerio de Ambiente y Desarrollo Sostenible de Colombia

[> Full Summary](#)

5 Panel discussion and screening of the documentary «Saving Atlantis» with a traditional music concert

Lead Organisation: Dirección de Asuntos Marinos, Costeros y Recursos Acuáticos, Ministerio de Ambiente y Desarrollo Sostenible de Colombia

Co-organisations: The Pennsylvania State University, Oregon State University

[> Full Summary](#)



EVENTS #FORCORAL ON FINANCE

Financing is critical to safeguarding coral reefs, which provide immense ecological, economic, and social benefits but face escalating threats from climate change, overfishing, and pollution. Sustainable funding ensures effective conservation, restoration, and management efforts to protect these ecosystems. Key financial mechanisms include public funding from governments and international institutions, private investments in reef-friendly enterprises, and innovative solutions like blue bonds, insurance schemes, and carbon credits. By diversifying and scaling financial flows, stakeholders can secure the future of coral reefs and the communities that depend on them.

1 The Coastal Risk Index: Building Resilience with Nature



Lead organisation: Ocean Risk and Resilience Action Alliance (ORRAA)

Co-organisations: UCSC, Standard Chartered, Iberostar Group, UNDP, AXA

Summary:

ORRAA introduced the Coastal Risk Index (CRI) Data Platform, showcasing its capacity to quantify the resilience benefits of coastal ecosystems and presented findings from a Dominican Republic case study on flood mitigation. Key discussions included reflections from Carlos Correa, former Colombian Environment Minister, on the protective value of ecosystems during Hurricane Iota; efforts by Iberostar to safeguard coastal areas through coral restoration; and AXA's support of the CRI to value ecosystems and encourage investment in nature-

The Coastal Risk Index (CRI)

ORRAA's *Coastal Risk Index (CRI)* is a ground-breaking modelling tool that equips policymakers, financial institutions, investors, insurers, and infrastructure project managers with unparalleled insights into ocean risks and the critical role of Nature-based Solutions in building cost-effective coastal resilience. During CBD COP16, ORRAA rolled out the *new data platform* for the CRI, which highlights that USD \$363 billion of coastal assets and 14.2 million people would be at risk of flooding without mangroves and coral reefs.



based solutions. UNDP and Standard Chartered underscored the importance of creating enabling environments and partnerships to scale NbS financing. The event's outcomes align with the GBF, particularly Targets 8, 14, 19, and 21, by advancing the valuation and financing of coastal biodiversity conservation through risk reduction quantification.

[> Full Summary](#)

2 Blended Finance Innovation for Reef Conservation in Latin America & the Caribbean

Lead organisation: Mesoamerican Reef Fund (MAR Fund)

Co-organisations: Fondo Acción, The Nature Conservancy (TNC), Global Fund for Coral Reefs (GFCR)

Summary:

The event showcased the Global Fund for Coral Reefs' (GFCR) innovative approach to coral reef conservation, focusing on blended finance mechanisms that leverage public and private capital to protect resilient reefs while fostering sustainable, reef-positive businesses. It highlighted

GFCR-supported initiatives in Latin America and the Caribbean, such as the San Andrés Archipelago, the Andros Barrier Reef, and the Mesoamerican Reef, which address threats to coral reefs, promote sustainable fisheries, and enhance community resilience. Panellists discussed the challenges faced by early-stage businesses, the need for de-risking financial tools, and the importance of capacity-building in financial literacy and business skills. The event underscored the critical role of Conservation Trust Funds in incubating reef-positive ventures and the necessity of aligning with mission-driven investors and policymakers to overcome barriers. These discussions align with the GBF targets 3, 7, 10, 14, 15 and 19.

[> Full Summary](#)



3 Ocean-Climate Financing for a Resilient Future: Commonwealth Approaches and Solutions

Lead organisation: The Commonwealth Blue Charter

Summary:

The event centred on advancing ocean and climate resilience by enhancing capacity and access to innovative financing solutions for marine conservation. It featured key Commonwealth initiatives such as the Blue Charter and Climate Finance Access Hub, which support sustainable ocean governance across member countries. Discussions emphasised the critical need for capacity-building, innovative financial instruments like blue bonds, and fostering public-private

partnerships to fund conservation efforts. The event addressed challenges faced by Small Island Developing States (SIDS) in accessing climate finance, the integration of marine conservation with climate adaptation, and equitable solutions for coastal communities. Recommendations included scaling regional collaboration, expanding technical support, engaging the private sector, and empowering local communities to finance and implement conservation initiatives. These outcomes align with the GBF, notably Targets 2, 3, 11, and 20, contributing to the overarching goal of halting biodiversity loss and enhancing ecosystem resilience.

[> Full Summary](#)



4 Climate risks and insurance solutions

Lead organisation: Mesoamerican Reef Fund
Co-organisations: WTW, Ocean Risk Resilience Action Alliance (ORRAA), Fondo Acción, Caribbean Biodiversity Fund, Forever Costa Rica Association, Mexican Fund for the Conservation of Nature
[> Full Summary](#)



5 Launching the First Impact Loan Facility for Coral Reef Conservation

Lead organisation: Blue Alliance
Co-organisations: BNP Paribas, GFCR, UNCDF, ORRAA, Revolutionary Government of Zanzibar
[> Full Summary](#)

6 Mobilising private financial resources to protect corals

Lead organisation: Institut de la Finance Durable (IFD)



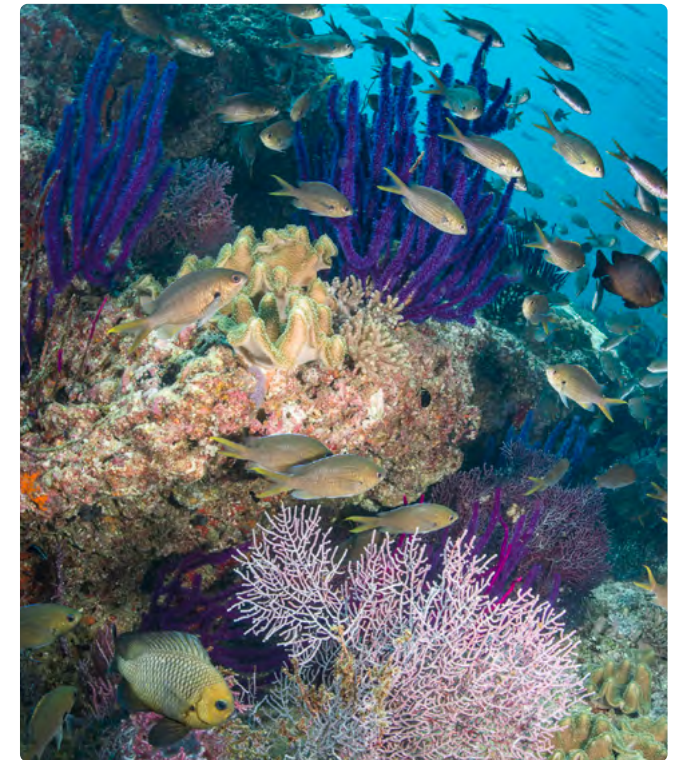
7 Closed Door Ocean Finance Meeting

Lead organisation: United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF)
Co-organisations: International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), Global Fund for Coral Reefs (GFCR), UN Environment Programme (UNEP), UN Global Compact, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)



8 Forging Coral Reef Resilience – A Now or Never Moment for Action

Lead organisation: Global Fund for Coral Reefs (GFCR)



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EVENTS #FORCORAL ON RESILIENCE AND RESTORATION

Resilience and restoration are critical pillars for ensuring the long-term health and survival of ecosystems, particularly coral reefs, which are among the most biodiverse and vulnerable ecosystems on the planet. Resilience emphasises the ability of coral reefs to withstand and recover from disturbances, such as coral bleaching and storms, while maintaining their ecological functions and biodiversity. Restoration actively repairs degraded reefs, enhancing their ability to support marine life, sustain coastal livelihoods, and act as natural barriers against storm surges and erosion. With coral reefs facing threats from climate change, pollution, and overfishing, integrating resilience and restoration is essential to preserving their ecological integrity and the vital services they provide. This combined approach ensures the sustainability of coral reefs, securing their ecological, economic, and cultural value for future generations.



Coral Triangle Oil and Gas Threat Assessment

Known as the 'Amazon of the seas', the Coral Triangle is one of the most biodiverse marine regions in the world and the threat from oil and gas expansion is immense. The Coral Triangle contains more than 600 Marine Protected Areas (MPAs). **About 16% of the protected area overlaps with oil and gas blocks** – a large majority of which are still in the exploration phase. A new analysis *Coral Triangle at Risk: Fossil Fuel Threats and Impacts* from Earth Insight, SkyTruth, CEED Philippines, and others, released at CBD COP16 found that 24% of coral reefs, 22% of seagrass areas, and 37% of mangroves overlap with current or planned oil and gas blocks. The report warns that fossil fuel expansion will increase tanker traffic and the risk of oil spills, with dire consequences for local populations and marine life.



1 Safeguarding Climate-Resilient Coral Reefs for GBF Target 3 and Beyond

Lead organisation: Wildlife Conservation Society
Co-organisations: Global Fund for Coral Reefs, Government of the Philippines (Department of Environment and Natural Resources - Biodiversity Management Bureau), Government of Mozambique (Ministry of Sea, Inland Waters and Fisheries), Government of Fiji (Ministry of Environment and Climate Change), AFD - Agence Française de Développement, Bloomberg Philanthropies

Summary:

This event convened international stakeholders, including government representatives and conservation organisations, to address the critical need for safeguarding climate-resilient coral reefs within the framework of the GBF, particularly Target 3. Discussions focused on leveraging

community-led initiatives, identifying resilient reefs, advancing sustainable resource management, and utilising innovative monitoring and financing mechanisms. The event underscored the ecological, economic, and cultural importance of coral reefs, highlighted pressing climate and human-induced threats, and explored actionable strategies such as expanding Marine Protected Areas (MPAs), promoting Indigenous stewardship, and scaling financial solutions like debt-for-nature swaps and biodiversity credits. With robust support from funders like the Global Fund for Coral Reefs (GFCR)



and insights from pioneering countries such as Fiji, Madagascar, and the Philippines, the event advanced collaborative, science-led, and equitable approaches to conserving these vital ecosystems, aligning with the GBF's mission to sustain biodiversity and ecosystem services for future generations.

[> Full Summary](#)

2 Protecting the 'Amazon of the ocean', the Verde Island Passage

Lead organisation: CEED
Co-organisations: Earth Insight, SkyTruth

Summary:

The Coral Triangle, a global marine biodiversity hotspot home to 76% of the world's coral species, faces escalating threats from fossil fuel expansion, particularly in the Verde Island Passage, a vital marine corridor. This event highlighted the severe impacts of oil and gas activities on marine ecosystems, biodiversity, and coastal communities, emphasising the urgency of protecting the Coral Triangle. It discussed the detrimental role of fossil fuel expansion by local and international entities,

the overlap of oil and gas blocks with critical habitats, and the resistance of communities advocating for renewable energy and biodiversity conservation. Key recommendations include halting oil and gas development, advancing renewable energy aligned with the Paris Agreement, securing increased funding for conservation, and designating the Coral Triangle as a Particularly Sensitive Sea Area. The event aligns with the GBF by addressing Targets 1, 3, 7, 8, and 14, underscoring the need for biodiversity integration into decision-making and actions to mitigate climate and industrial impacts on ecosystems.

[> Full Summary](#)



3 Empowering Youth for Global Biodiversity: Ocean Leaders Driving Change

Lead organisation: Sustainable Ocean Alliance
Co-organisations: Sustainable Ocean Alliance Costa Rica, Sustainable Ocean Alliance México, Sustainable Ocean Alliance Perú.
> [Full Summary](#)



of Oceanography-National Taiwan University
> [Full Summary](#)

4 Latinoamérica Azul: Amplifying Youth Voices for Ocean Conservation in Latin America



Lead organisation: Sustainable Ocean Alliance Hispanoamerica
> [Full Summary](#)

5 Ocean Resilience in Focus: Developing Science-based Approaches for Coral & Biodiversity

Lead organisation: Delta Environmental & Educational Foundation
Co-organisations: Mote Marine Laboratory & Aquarium, Society for Wildlife and Nature, Institute

6 Protecting Places of Hope – Cuba’s Coral Reefs

Lead organisation: Environmental Defense Fund



(EDF)
Co-organisation: Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS)
> [Full Summary](#)

7 Preserving the Future: The World Coral Conservatory Initiative

Lead organisation: Monaco Oceanographic Institute
Co-organisations: Monaco Scientific Centre, Prince Albert II Foundation
> [Full Summary](#)



8 Safeguarding Pacific Coral Reefs: Resilience, Restoration and Sustainable Solutions

Lead organisation: The Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP)
Co-organisation(s): Pacific countries
> [Full Summary](#)

9 Boosting Coral Health: Caribbean Strategies for Climate Resilience

Lead organisations: Caribbean Biodiversity Fund
Co-organisation: Perry Institute for Marine Science (PIMS)
> [Full Summary](#)



10 Bringing gratitude and hope in facing eco-anxiety



Lead organisation: Penn State University
Co-organisation: ASU Center for Biodiversity Outcomes
[> Full Summary](#)

11 Coral Restoration Techniques in Colombia: Join the #EcoRockstar Movement

Lead organisation: Corales de paz
[> Full Summary](#)

12 Reviving Reefs: Coral Reef Conservation in Latin America

Lead organisation: Interamerican Association for Environmental Defense – AIDA
Co-organisation: Mesoamerican Reef Fund
[> Full Summary](#)

13 Youth Can Save Corals: Five Pathways for Action



Lead organisation: Reserva: The Youth Land Trust
Co-organisations: Global Youth Biodiversity Network (GYBN), Global Alliance for the Rights of Nature (GARN)
[> Full Summary](#)

14 Seascapes of the Future: NbS, the Blue Economy and the Great Blue Wall

Lead organisation: International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN)



15 Advancing the Marine Conservation Breakthroughs: Connecting Global Action to Scale Nature-Based Solutions

Lead organisation: High Level Climate Champions
Co-organisations: CRI, GFCR, GMA, UN-CMS, CCT
[> Full summary](#)

16 Let's Be Nice to Coral Reefs

Lead organisation: Let's be Nice to the Ocean



17 Honduras: Improving reef health via crab cultivation

Lead organisation: Honduras Coral Reef Fund (HCRF)
Co-organisations: Fauna & Flora, Healthy Reefs for Healthy People (HRHP)

EVENTS #FORCORAL ON 30 X 30

The 30by30 initiative, driven by Target 3 of the GBF, seeks to conserve at least 30% of the world's lands and waters through area-based conservation measures by 2030. For coral reefs, this target holds significant promise. When well-managed, area-based measures such as Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) can deliver a wide range of benefits, from safeguarding biodiversity and improving ecosystem health to supporting fisheries and enhancing human well-being. Currently, 39% of coral reef habitats are under some form of protection through Area-based Management Tools (AMTs). However, the Coral Reef Breakthrough calls for an 65,000 km² of coral reef habitats to be protected by 2030, going beyond the global target to ensure these critical ecosystems are safeguarded.

Beyond AMTs, effective coral reef conservation requires comprehensive strategies that consider climate change adaptation, proactive and passive restoration, as well as direct threat abatement. A diverse suite of integrated management measures is essential to ensure the long-term resilience of coral reefs in the face of ongoing environmental challenges.

"The Caribbean Biodiversity Fund was delighted to partner with the International Coral Reef Initiative as a sponsor of the #FORCORAL Pavilion at COP Biodiversity in Colombia this year. The pavilion provided an invaluable platform to spotlight the collaborative efforts of our organization and partners, emphasizing the critical need for collective action to combat the threats facing Caribbean coral reefs. It also underscored the pivotal role of national conservation trust funds and long-term partnerships in driving sustainable financing initiatives and delivering impactful, ground-level conservation outcomes. Spaces like this are critical for fostering regional dialogue and aligning efforts to strengthen global commitments, including the Global Biodiversity Framework. Kudos to the outstanding ICRI team for their exceptional work in making this initiative a success and for enabling us to contribute to this important conversation."

Caribbean Biodiversity Fund



© Matt Curnock

1 Actioning the Blue: A Caribbean 30 X 30 Vision for the Ocean

Lead organisation: Caribbean Biodiversity Fund

Co-organisations: Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS), Blue Nature Alliance and Conservation International



Summary:

The event convened political leaders, finance experts, and regional implementing agencies to address Caribbean SIDS' unique vulnerabilities to biodiversity loss and the triple planetary crisis. A two-part dialogue featured the presentation of a Caribbean SIDS Declaration of Action, delivering urgent political messages to mobilise innovative financing and advance GBF targets, including the 30x30 ocean conservation goal. The technical financing panel explored challenges and practical strategies for improving funding access, emphasising youth engagement, collective political action, and alignment with global conservation goals. Key outcomes included advancing the



Caribbean 30x30 Vision with a transformative roadmap, fostering regional cooperation, and strengthening platforms like the Ministerial Alliance for Nature Finance to secure \$20 billion annually for biodiversity funding by 2025. These efforts align with the GBF, supporting Targets 3 and 19 by driving collaboration, resource mobilisation, and inclusive conservation actions.

[> Full Summary](#)



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Launch of the first impact loan facility for coral reef conservation

Blue Alliance Marine Protected Areas and BNP Paribas, through its Impact Investment team, launched the *Blue Finance facility*, a targeted USD 35m impact loan facility designed to provide up-front and early-stage impact financing to reef-positive businesses (RPBs) that strengthen the Blue Economy within MPAs. With initial funding from BNP Paribas of up to USD 2.4m, the facility will be first active in Indonesia, the Philippines, Tanzania, and Cabo Verde to support the regeneration of 1.8 million hectares of coral reef ecosystems in 115 MPAs, and to directly improve the livelihoods and food security of some 110,000 local community members. The structure relies on a blended finance approach, in which philanthropic capital provided by long-term partners such as the GFCR, co-led by the UNCDF, supports conservation efforts in the MPAs and helps design the overall framework to attract private, impact-focused investors.



2 High Seas Coral Reefs: Important Ecosystems in need of protection

Lead organisation: Coral Reefs of the High Seas Coalition

Summary:

This event spotlighted the significance of the high seas coral reefs and efforts to protect two key sites: the Salas y Gomez and Nazca ridges in the Southeast Pacific Ocean and the Saya de Malha Bank in the Western Indian Ocean. The event began with an introduction to the Coral Reefs of the High

Seas, a global alliance committed to conserving coral reefs in areas beyond national jurisdiction through science, partnerships, and advocacy. The panel featured experts who shared insights on topics ranging from scientific discoveries and Indigenous knowledge to international policy frameworks like the BBNJ Agreement, followed by a Q&A session and networking opportunities. The discussion underscored the ecological importance of these ecosystems and called for urgent action to safeguard them, aligning with GBF targets 2, 3, 4, 5, and 11.

[> Full Summary](#)



3 On track or off course? Achieving the 30x30 target in the ocean

Lead organisation: Bloomberg Philanthropic Ocean Initiative



Summary:

Protecting 30% of the ocean is essential to safeguard both our ocean's diverse ecosystems and human health and livelihoods. In December 2022, governments adopted the Global Biodiversity Framework, with its landmark global target of protecting and conserving at least 30% of land and ocean by 2030 ('30x30'). With the focus now on implementation, it is essential that countries demonstrate leadership and continue momentum for our ocean by announcing new marine protected areas and enhancing and improving existing protections. This event showcased the findings of a new report commissioned by the Bloomberg Ocean Fund and developed in partnership with Campaign for Nature, the Marine Conservation Institute, and SkyTruth. *Off Track or On Course? Assessing Progress Toward Achieving the 30x30 Target in the Ocean* assessed progress toward the global target of protecting and conserving 30% of the ocean by 2030.

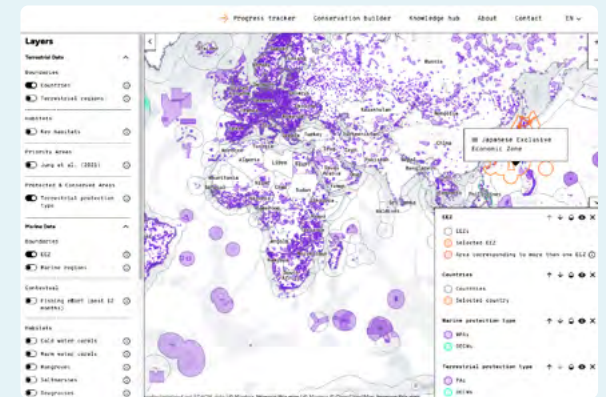


Alongside a discussion of the report's findings, the event highlighted examples of action and best practices at local and national levels. The aim was to generate momentum and share lessons learned in the implementation of 30x30 in the ocean.



An entry point for 30x30

With only a few years left between now and 2030, the world is pushing hard to preserve critical ecosystems. Biodiversity conservation is moving faster than ever, and a host of new organizations, tools, and campaigns are emerging every day. Even for conservation professionals, it can be hard to keep up. And for anyone new to 30x30, it can be hard to know where to start or how to get involved. In partnership with Bloomberg Ocean Initiative, SkyTruth has developed an *entry point for 30x30* stakeholders. The tools enable you to track the world's progress toward 30x30, draw new protected areas, and find additional tools and organizations fighting for the protection of marine and terrestrial ecosystems.



4 Scaling 30x30 marine Planning Through Subregional Co-operation

Lead organisations: Govt. of the Dominican Republic, Govt. of Cuba, Govt. of Jamaica, Caribbean Biodiversity Corridor (CBC), Eastern Tropical Pacific Marine Corridor (CMAR)

Co-organisations: Wildlife Conservation Society, IUCN-WCPA, Global Network of MPA Networks/ The Ocean Foundation, The Cartagena Convention/ UNEP

> [Full Summary](#)

5 The Global Network of MPA Manager Networks, supporting GBF implementation in coral reef MPAs

Lead organisation: The Global Network of MPA Manager Networks, a project of The Ocean Foundation

Co-organisation: Caribbean Biodiversity Fund > [Full Summary](#)



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6 Global Ocean Alliance members meeting

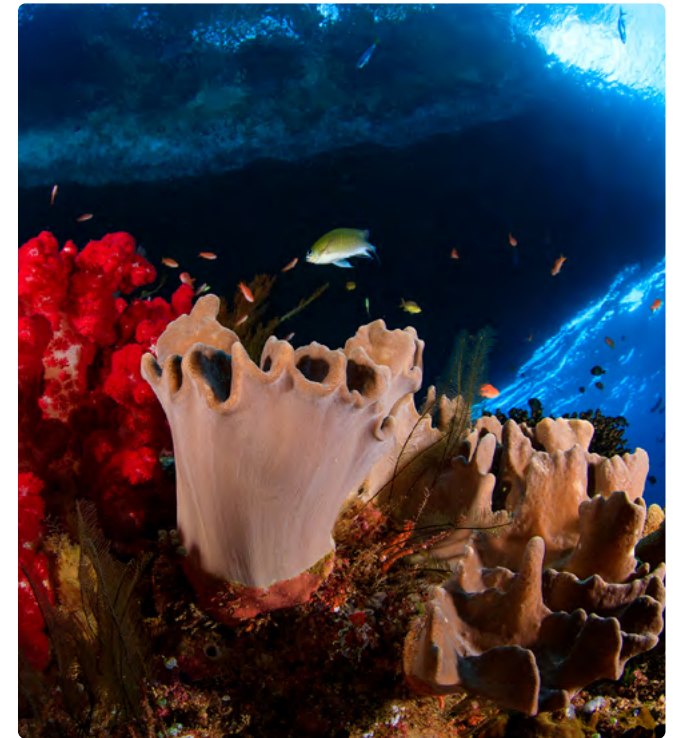
Lead organisation: United Kingdom



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EVENTS #FORCORAL ON MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Monitoring and evaluation (M&E) are crucial for coral reef conservation, as they provide the data needed to understand the health of reef ecosystems, assess the effectiveness of restoration and management efforts, and adapt strategies in response to changing conditions. Coral reefs face numerous threats, making it essential to track key indicators like coral cover, biodiversity, and water quality. Robust M&E systems ensure that limited resources are directed toward interventions that deliver the greatest impact, helping safeguard these vital ecosystems that support marine biodiversity, coastal protection, and livelihoods worldwide.



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1 Positivity in the face of Global Coral Bleaching

Lead organisation: International Coral Reef Society
Co-organisations: IPBES / CORDIO East Africa, Pennsylvania State University, KAUST, Fondation Providence

Summary:

This event explored the ongoing impacts of the Fourth Global Coral Bleaching Event, showcasing examples of recent bleaching and their consequences, while emphasising actions to mitigate these effects and build resilience in coral reef ecosystems. It featured diverse perspectives, including young and experienced researchers, local community representatives, and connections

to the Global Biodiversity Framework. Highlights included innovative research using ancient coral DNA, indigenous knowledge, resilience-based restoration, and the importance of fostering positivity amidst global change. Recommendations centred on addressing climate threats, improving local conditions, investing in restoration, supporting young conservation leaders, and ensuring participatory engagement with stakeholders. The event reinforced the need to scale efforts for coral reef conservation to align with the GBF, Targets 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 9, 14, 15, 19, 20, 21, 22, and 23.

[> Full Summary](#)

2 Coral Reef Monitoring and Evaluation: Gaining Insights to Achieve Conservation Impacts.



Lead organisation: Healthy Reefs for Healthy People
Co-organisations: GCRMN-Caribbean, SPAW-RAC, Mesoamerican Reef Fund
> [Full Summary](#)

3 Roundtable: Integrating Coral Reefs into NBSAPs



Lead organisation: International Coral Reef Initiative
> [Full Summary](#)



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Mesoamerican Reef Report Card 2024

Healthy Reefs for Healthy People launched the 2024 Mesoamerican Reef Report Card, on October 29th, a crucial assessment #ForCoral. The findings of the 2024 report offer a mix of hope and urgency. Despite some improvements, the overall health of the reef system is fragile and facing increasing threats. The health of the Mesoamerican Reef remains a concern, with most of the 286 monitored sites categorised as either in poor (39%) or critical (23%) condition. However, sites in fair and good condition have improved, rising from 20% to 28% and 5% to 9%, respectively.



ANNEX 1

BLOOMBERG PHILANTHROPIES OCEAN INITIATIVE

The Bloomberg Ocean Initiative is working to protect and preserve ocean ecosystems by collaborating with a global network of partners to advance evidence-based conservation practices.



The Caribbean Biodiversity Fund (CBF) is a regional umbrella environmental fund that implements innovative solutions and consolidates regional conservation impacts in the Caribbean through a range of financial instruments.



A global alliance of partners that aims to protect coral reefs in areas beyond national jurisdiction, also known as the High Seas.



The Commonwealth Blue Charter is an agreement by all 56 Commonwealth countries to actively cooperate to: solve ocean-related challenges and meet commitments for sustainable ocean action.



Coral Reef Rescue Initiative is working to safeguard globally-significant coral reefs and the benefits they provide against climate change and other threats.



The Global Fund for Coral Reefs (GFCR) is a public-private coalition deploying a range of financial solutions and support for sustainable businesses to improve the resilience of coastal ecosystems, economies, and communities.



The Government of Monaco has been a longstanding supporter of ICRI through its commitment to marine conservation and protecting the world's coral reefs.



Sweden is a founding member and, the Swedish Government continues to be a strong supporter of ICRI's work, enabling impactful actions to safeguard the world's coral reefs.



Great Barrier Reef Foundation

The Great Barrier Reef Foundation is creating a future for the world's coral reefs by protecting ocean habitats, restoring coral reefs and helping them adapt to the impacts of climate change.



ICRS promotes the acquisition and dissemination of scientific knowledge to secure coral reefs for future generations.



IUCN is a membership Union of government and civil society organisations. Together, we work to advance sustainable development and create a just world that values and conserves nature.



MAR Fund seeks, secures and facilitates regional funding, fosters partnerships and drives capacity building for the conservation, restoration, and sustainable use of marine and coastal ecosystems in the Mesoamerican Reef region.



The Nature Conservancy

The Nature Conservancy is a global environmental nonprofit working to create a world where people and nature can thrive.



The French Biodiversity Agency (OFB) was created by law on 1st January 2020 (Law no. 2019-773 of 24 July 2019) to protect and restore biodiversity in Metropolitan France and its Overseas Territories. It is a public institution under the authority of the ministries responsible for Ecology and Agriculture & Food.



ORRAA is the only multi-sector collaboration connecting the international finance and insurance sectors, governments, non-profits, and stakeholders from coastal communities to pioneer finance products that incentivise investment into coastal and ocean Nature-based Solutions (NbS).



SPAW-RAC's mission is to promote regional cooperation for the protection and the development of the Wider Caribbean Region.



Our mission is to inspire and empower humanity to achieve breakthroughs that accelerate an abundant and equitable future for all.



The Designated Administrative Representative to ICRI. BPC also provides technical services related to the conservation and sustainable use of natural resources.



Oceans and International Environmental and Scientific Affairs
50 years of diplomacy for people and the planet.

Leading America's foreign policy to advance the interests and security of the American people.



The Coral Reef Conservation Program is a partnership between the NOAA Line Offices that work on coral reef issues. We bring together expertise from across NOAA for a multidisciplinary approach to understanding and conserving coral reef ecosystems.

ANNEX 2

KUNMING-MONTREAL GLOBAL BIODIVERSITY FRAMEWORK TARGETS

Table 1. Action Targets of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework and their relevance to warm water coral reefs and associated ecosystems¹.

2030 GBF ACTION TARGETS	RELEVANCE TO CORAL REEFS AND ASSOCIATED ECOSYSTEMS
Target 1. Spatial planning and retention of wilderness/intact areas	HIGH – Marine and coastal ecosystem extent, integrity, and connectivity are all aspects that will require increased capacity to monitor and achieve.
Target 2. Restoration	HIGH - Restoring tropical marine and coastal ecosystems such as coral reefs, mangroves and seagrass beds is critically important
Target 3. Protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures	HIGH – Crucial for the recovery of tropical marine and coastal ecosystems. A key aspect is ensuring these areas are effectively and equitably managed.
Target 4. Conservation and recovery of species	HIGH – Important for endangered reef fauna such as turtles, elasmobranchs and hard corals, and an important aspect of ecosystem recovery and restoration. Links to T5 and T9 through bycatch mitigation in fisheries
Target 5. Harvest and trade of wild species	HIGH – Relevance to high value trade of marine resources such as shark fins and, sea cucumbers but also strongly linked to sustainable fisheries.
Target 6. Invasive alien species	MEDIUM – However, can be regionally high e.g., lionfish in the Caribbean
Target 7. Pollution	HIGH – Particularly for land-based pollution from agricultural and urban areas and sea-based pollution such as ghost fishing gear, with an overall focus on nutrients and plastic.
Target 8. Biodiversity and climate change	HIGH – Promoting the use of nature-based solutions to increase resilience in the marine and coastal environment to CC impacts. Strong linkages with T1, T2, T3, T5, T7 and T9.

¹ - International Coral Reef Initiative. (2024). *Guidance Document on Integrating Coral Reefs and Associated Ecosystems into National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans*. London, United Kingdom: International Coral Reef Initiative (ICRI) Secretariat.

2030 GBF ACTION TARGETS	RELEVANCE TO CORAL REEFS AND ASSOCIATED ECOSYSTEMS
Target 9. Sustainable use of wild species	HIGH – Sustainable fisheries management is key, especially for small-scale fisheries in SIDS and LDCs
Target 10. Sustainable agriculture, forestry, and aquaculture	MEDIUM – Sustainable aquaculture, minimising downstream effects on tropical coastal ecosystems through sustainable land use
Target 11. Ecosystem functions and services	HIGH – Connections to marine and coastal ecosystems in terms of food provision, coastal protection, and storm-water management
Target 12. Green/blue spaces in urban areas	LOW – Focus on minimising impacts from urban areas on adjacent tropical coastal ecosystems.
Target 13. Access and benefit sharing	MEDIUM – Important for SIDS and LDCs to enable benefits and incorporate traditional local knowledge (ILK).
Target 14. Mainstreaming biodiversity across sectors	HIGH – Mainstreaming biodiversity values for tropical coastal and marine systems across sectors is extremely important.
Target 15. Business and biodiversity	HIGH – Important for sustainable seafood supply chains, coastal tourism, and waste management to minimise pressures
Target 16. Sustainable consumption	MEDIUM – e.g., to minimise waste in urban coastal areas
Target 17. Biosafety	LOW – But linked to transfer of marine invasive species
Target 18. Subsidies and incentives	MEDIUM – Important to reduce or remove harmful incentives and subsidies e.g., for inshore fisheries
Target 19. Increasing financial and other resources for biodiversity	HIGH – Critical to ensure there are sufficient resources to scale up the restoration and management of tropical coastal ecosystems
Target 20. Capacity Building and Development	HIGH – Critical for the monitoring, management, and governance of tropical coastal ecosystems in order to meet the GBF Goals
Target 21. Information and knowledge	HIGH – Adequate availability of quality information is essential for the management of tropical marine and coastal systems
Target 22. Participation of IPLCs	HIGH – Building management and governance systems that involve indigenous peoples and local communities including women and youth in decision making is essential, especially in SIDS and LDCs
Target 23. Participation of women, girls, and youth	HIGH - As per target 22

ABOUT ICRI

The International Coral Reef Initiative (ICRI) is a global partnership of 102 members for the preservation of the world's coral reefs and associated ecosystems (www.icriforum.org), including 45 countries that represent 75% of the world's coral reefs. Founded in 1994 by eight countries, 2024 marks 30 years of commitment to the conservation, protection, and restoration of coral reef ecosystems. Over the years, ICRI's actions have been pivotal in highlighting the global importance of coral reefs and related

ecosystems to environmental sustainability, food security and social and cultural wellbeing. The work of ICRI is regularly acknowledged in [United Nations documents](#), highlighting the Initiative's important cooperation, collaboration, and advocacy role within the international arena.

ICRI has been a long-term partner to the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Biodiversity (CBD), and its formation was announced at the inaugural

Conference of the Parties to the CBD, on 7th December 1994. ICRI has continued to support CBD Parties over the year's including developing a recommendation to the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) to ensure the appropriate inclusion of coral reef ecosystems, and more recently the release of "[A guide for Integrating coral reefs and associated ecosystems into National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans \(NBSAPs\)](#)".



Learn more about ICRI:
www.icriforum.org



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CORAL REEFS AT CBD COP16: THE #FORCORAL PAVILION

Cali, Colombia 21st October – 1st November 2024