

Recommendation on the Global Coral Reef Summit 2026

Presented by the ICRI Secretariat, amended following review by members

Proposed for adoption at the International Coral Reef Initiative (ICRI) 39th General Meeting (Kingdom of Saudi Arabia)

Plain language statement

This recommendation acknowledges the Global Coral Reef Summit 2026 as an opportunity to align science, policy, and finance, mobilize investment, and advance scalable solutions including capacity development to halt coral reef decline. It encourages ICRI members to participate in the Summit, where possible, and to engage with the development of summit pillars that are critically important for the future of coral reefs worldwide. It also recognizes the importance of broad participation, including the meaningful engagement of reef-dependent communities.

The Members of ICRI,

Expressing grave concern at the escalating impacts on coral reef ecosystems globally, driven by changing ocean conditions, including heat stress events, ocean acidification, and cumulative local stressors, as evidenced by the fourth global coral bleaching event and the continued decline of reef health worldwide,

Recalling relevant global commitments and frameworks of particular relevance to coral reef conservation, restoration and management, including UNEA resolutions on resilience and sustainable coral reef management and the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, noting that endorsement of these frameworks varies across ICRI members,

Acknowledging the leadership of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in announcing the Global Coral Reef Summit (herein the Summit) in January 2026 and convening it on 2–3 November 2026,

Acknowledging also the role of the United Nations Secretary-General's Special Envoy for the Ocean, the Global Fund for Coral Reefs (GFCR), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), and other partners, as co-conveners of the Summit,

Recognizing the Summit as a key opportunity to bring reef communities and key stakeholders together in an effort to align science, policy, and finance, mobilize investment, and advance scalable solutions including capacity development to halt coral reef decline,

Recognizing further the importance of broad participation in the Summit and its preparatory consultations, including the meaningful engagement of reef-dependent communities whose diverse knowledge systems contribute to coral reef conservation and management,

Emphasizing the importance of aligning near-term actions with a long-term vision for resilient coral reef ecosystems and dependent communities,

The 39th General Meeting of the International Coral Reef Initiative:

1. **Welcomes** the leadership of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in convening the Global Coral Reef Summit 2026 as a platform to advance coordinated global action to halt coral reef decline;
2. **Encourages** ICRI Members and partners to participate, where possible, in the Summit and ancillary activities;
3. **Further encourages** ICRI Members, as appropriate, to engage with the proposed summit themes, critically important for the future of coral reefs worldwide, including:
 - a) creating a shared global vision grounded in best available science;
 - b) translating diverse knowledge systems, including scientific knowledge, into actionable and scalable policy pathways;
 - c) exploring the mobilization of innovative and blended financing; and
 - d) strengthening coordination, implementation and delivery.
4. **Requests** the Host Secretariat to report back to ICRI members on Summit outcomes and progress on implementation, and to explore how ICRI can support follow-up and sustained momentum beyond the Summit.

Conclusion

ICRI Members recognize the Global Coral Reef Summit 2026 as an opportunity to bring reef communities and key stakeholders together in an effort to align science, policy and finance, and advance scalable solutions to halt coral reef decline.