



ITMEMS 3
Regional Caucus Statements

20 October 2006
Cozumel, Mexico

THE CARIBBEAN CAUCUS

STATEMENT

We, the custodians of the Caribbean tropical marine ecosystems recognize that the dramatic and unprecedented decline in tropical marine and coastal systems under our care is already beginning to undermine the foundation of our culture, economy and the environmental services provided by these ecosystems for sustainable development.

Already 50% of coral reefs and mangroves around the Wider Caribbean have been lost or are seriously threatened as a direct result of human activities resulting in coastal erosion, reduced fisheries and loss of biodiversity.

Critical threats are undermining our future prospects for sustainable development. These include the following priority areas for immediate action:

1. Climate change
2. Coastal development and unsustainable tourism
3. User conflicts
4. Inadequate financing for science and monitoring
5. Lack of commitment by policy makers
6. Overfishing

Urgent action is needed by policy makers, governments, communities and funding agencies to create an enabling environment whereby greater emphasis should be placed upon marine conservation initiatives across the region before it is too late.

Through closer collaboration and better communication regionally and internationally, a greater understanding of our marine ecosystems will develop, benefiting communities, countries and the region.

We recognize our responsibilities as stakeholders and commit to:

- Promote community engagement through public awareness and education
- Identify training and capacity requirements necessary for effective management
- Undertake ecosystem monitoring and communicate results effectively to Policy Makers and the Public
- Create a regional network of scientists and managers to exchange information, conservation solutions and tools

RECOMMENDATIONS

With respect to the priority issues listed below we urge Local and National Governments of the Wider Caribbean to carry out the following immediate actions:

CLIMATE CHANGE

Recognizing the vulnerability of the Caribbean to Climate Change, and in view of the major negative impact that it has and will continue to have on marine ecosystems

- Work as a regional body to reduce emissions by developing and enforcing emission standards
- Reduce stressors to marine ecosystems that make them more vulnerable to climate change

COASTAL DEVELOPMENT

Inappropriate coastal development threatens ecosystems resulting in a deterioration of environmental, economic and human health

- Implement Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM) where it does not exist and strengthen existing ICZM centres
- Prepare, adopt and integrate environmental policy into coastal development plans to ensure sustainable development of the countries.
- Utilise and enforce EIA findings in the approval of major coastal development

WATER POLLUTION

In view of increasing levels of nutrients in the water negatively affecting the coral reefs and associated ecosystems,

- Strictly regulate and manage waste water effluents and point sources of marine pollution
- Ratify and implement the LBS (Land based sources of marine pollution) protocol of the Cartagena Convention

OVERFISHING

In view of the negative effects of over fishing in the tropical marine ecosystems,

- Alleviate poverty to reduce the needs of subsistence fishing
- Strictly regulate and manage fisheries in a sustainable way
- Establish No Take Zones to allow recovery of fish stocks
- Provide alternate livelihood training for displaced fishers
- Share good practices in sustainable fisheries

CONNECTIVITY

In view of the regional connectivity of the tropical marine ecosystem of the Wider Caribbean,

- Ratify relevant International Conventions such as the SPAW (Specially Protected Areas & Wildlife) Protocol and the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands.

- Strengthen regional cooperative bodies such as GCFI, AMLC, CaMPAM and CARICOMP.
- Identify connectivity linkages within the large marine ecosystems and collaborate to enhance stewardship of these critical ecosystem elements and processes

SUSTAINABLE FUNDING

In view of the need to effectively protect areas of marine ecosystem significance

- Create of Protected Areas Trust Funds
- Create adequate legislation in order to enable sustainable financing for the existing and proposed MPAs, Biosphere Reserves, World Heritage Sites, Ramsar Sites etc
- Contribute to sustainable development projects

CAPACITY BUILDING

Recognizing that more trained individuals are needed to support effective environmental management

- Provide funding for training
- Provide opportunities for inter island technology and skills transfer
- Develop a regional grant writing group to foster collaboration between inter island agencies
- Develop internship programmes

RESOURCES NEEDED

- Sustainable financing
- Institutional Strengthening
- Commitment
 - Local level
 - National Level
 - Regional Level
- Legislation and Enforcement
- Public Engagement

“We do not inherit the earth from our parents; we merely borrow it from our children”

Appendix 1: Contact List

Caribbean Caucus			
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Shona Patterson	The Nature Conservancy		
Tasha Gough	ReefCheck	Dominican Republic	

CAUCUS MESOAMÉRICA

Habiendo identificado la gran importancia de los ambientes marinos mesoamericanos así como de sus arrecifes asociados, que dada su resiliencia han resistido en gran medida el deterioro observado en otros arrecifes de la región.

Conscientes del papel que la actividad pesquera desordenada juega en el deterioro de estos ecosistemas, en particular cuando se alteran los patrones de las corrientes marinas que arrastran larvas y juveniles de distintos organismos arrecifales.

Teniendo presente el potencial de la industria turística y de cruceros para generar empleos localmente, pero reconociendo asimismo los impactos que ésta genera y su responsabilidad, tanto hacia la conservación y uso sustentable de los ambientes marinos, como hacia las comunidades locales.

Reconociendo que muchos de los impactos que afectan a los ecosistemas marinos, en especial a los arrecifes de coral, son consecuencia de actividades realizadas en tierra relacionadas con el uso de suelo, las descargas de aguas residuales, el uso de plaguicidas y fertilizantes, así como la erosión y la sedimentación.

El Caucus de Mesoamérica retoma y reitera las recomendaciones identificadas durante la reunión ITMEMS2 en 2003 para hacer frente a las amenazas que enfrentan los ecosistemas marinos en general y los arrecifes coralinos en particular, incluyendo:

La planeación y el uso de los recursos:

1. Creación de capacidades para la toma de decisiones a todos niveles: individual, institucional y sistémico.
2. Participación de las comunidades y grupos indígenas en el manejo y uso sustentable de los recursos, en la toma de decisiones y en el diseño de planes de manejo a través de mecanismos de consulta efectivos.
3. Concientización pública a través de programas de educación ambiental.
4. Aplicación de la ley a nivel local, nacional y regional (internacional).
5. Apoyo al monitoreo e investigación en el ramo, incluyendo el desarrollo de protocolos de investigación, incluyendo la conectividad en AMP y otros temas ecológicos.
6. Financiamiento transdisciplinario para sustentar las propuestas presentadas en esta declaración.

Asimismo el Caucus de Mesoamérica ha identificado las siguientes áreas prioritarias adicionales:

1. El desarrollo de mecanismos (encuentros periódicos) para transferir información entre científicos, administradores de sitios, población local, tomadores de decisiones y políticos.

2. La restauración de ambientes degradados, incluyendo un programa de primeros auxilios para arrecifes que ayude a mitigar los efectos de los desastres naturales y antropogénicos.
3. El fortalecimiento de actividades para prevenir y dar respuesta a contingencias
4. En la medida de lo posible, la valoración económica actual y potencial de los ambientes marinos mesoamericanos con el fin de asignarles la prioridad que merecen.
5. Tomar medidas para reducir o eliminar el problema de la corrupción que constituye un gran obstáculo para la ejecución de estas recomendaciones.
6. El retomar los demás postulados de los ITMEMS anteriores, así como de Tulum +8.

Habiendo retomado las prioridades del ITMEMS2 y adicionado nuevas prioridades, los participantes del ITMEMS3 exhortan a todos los involucrados a ejecutarlas mediante:

1. La identificación de un secretario ejecutivo regional por parte de los organizadores del evento, para dar seguimiento a estas recomendaciones.
2. Con base en la participación de los actores involucrados, documentar como mínimo cada año los avances obtenidos en cada una de estas áreas durante los próximos 3-4 años.
3. Evaluar el progreso logrado durante la próxima reunión del ITMEMS.

THE MESOAMERICAN CAUCUS

The Mesoamerican Caucus recalls and reiterates the recommendations of ITMEMS 2 in 2003 to confront the threats faced by marine ecosystems in general and coral reefs in particular, including:

The planning and use of the resources:

1. Capacity building for decision making at all levels: individual, institutional and systemic
2. Participation of communities and indigenous groups in the management and sustainable use of resources, in decision making and in design of management plans, through means of effective means of consultation
3. Public awareness-raising through environmental education programmes
4. Enforcement of the law at local, national, and regional levels
5. Support to monitoring and studies in the area, including development of research protocols related to connectivity in marine protected areas and other ecological topics
6. Cross-disciplinary financing to support the proposals presented in this declaration

At the same time the Mesoamerican Caucus has identified the following additional priority areas:

1. Development of mechanisms (periodic meetings) to transfer information among scientists, site administrators, local population and decision and policy makers
2. Restoration of degraded environments, including a programme of first aid for corals which helps alleviate the effects of natural and anthropogenic disasters
3. Strengthening of activities to prevent and respond to unforeseen events
4. To the extent possible, establish the actual and potential economic value of Mesoamerican marine environments with a view to giving them the priority they deserve
5. Take measures to reduce or eliminate the problem of corruption which constitutes a great obstacle to the implementation of these recommendations
6. Reaffirm the other statements of previous ITMEMS, as well as those of Tulum plus 8.

Having reiterated the priorities of ITMEMS 2 and added new priorities, the participants of ITMEMS3 urge all involved to implement them by means of:

1. Identification, by the organizers of the event, of a regional executive secretary to follow up these recommendations
2. On the basis of participation of the involved actors, document, at a minimum on an annual basis, the accomplishments in each of these areas over the next 3-4 years
3. Evaluate progress achieved at the next meeting of ITMEMS.

THE SOUTHEAST ASIAN CAUCUS

STATEMENTS

Recognizing the important role that local governments play in managing coastal ecosystems,

Taking into consideration the insufficient opportunity to share findings with policy-makers,

Having established various Networks & Linkages to promote regional & national coordination such as the Asia Pacific Coral Reef Network,

With research having been carried out and information disseminated with no baseline to monitor and evaluate progress of existing networks and research, and with action being not filtered down to the core community level,

The countries of the East Asian region have recognized that the following major threats are soil run-off, over-fishing and destructive fishing, tourism, aquaculture and live reef fish trade.

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS FROM COUNTRIES IN THE REGION

1. Expand existing network of local governments among countries, resource managers, scientists, regional programs (PEMSEA, COBSEA, ASEAN APEC etc) to inform decision makers initiate and coordinate action from regional to local levels.
2. Implement effective enforcement at multi-level and inter-agency level as well as community-based enforcement/involvement in collaboration with local governments by establishing more effective MPAs, no-take or multi-use MPAs and establishing incentives through cross-compliance mechanisms (e.g. certification and recognition).
3. Integrate population management initiatives in coastal marine programs (e.g., co-responsible parenthood)
4. Link Research and Information to adaptive management actions with Research on recommended actions at the local level by utilizing up-to-date information such as satellite imagery for monitoring standardizing databases so as to be more accessible to managers and applying scientific-based restoration efforts
5. Propose alternative Income and Sustainable Financing such as user fees, environmental fees, revenues, taxes with donor funding to help develop locally generated financing
6. Establish a network among East Asian countries for Environmental Education and tools as a campaign to educate consumers on the excesses of unsustainable fishing practices (e.g. live food fish trade).

PROPOSED ACTIONS BY THE REGION

1. To establish a regional network for action plan to conserve the coastal and marine resources in this region (Japan to act as Coordinator for the regional network.).
2. To identify a focal point of each country and seek resources for the implementation of the action plan at the national and local level.
3. To convene a regional level Tropical Marine Ecosystems Management Symposium that to be held in sync with the International Year of the Reef (ICRS 2008) for national level focusing on good practices, more interface between scientists, managers, local governors and other stakeholders.

CAUCUS FOR THE WESTERN INDIAN OCEAN, RED SEA AND PERSIAN GULF

BACKGROUND

The 3rd International Tropical Marine Ecosystem Management Symposium (ITMEMS) was held in Cozumel, Mexico during October 16-20, 2006. It is the core activity of the International Coral Reef Initiative (ICRI) and offers a unique forum for coastal and marine managers to ensure that the hands-on, day-to-day concerns of marine and coastal managers reach and inform the global agenda. It brings peers and partners together to share experiences and lessons learned; identify effective local solutions to common management problems; inform future action to manage tropical marine ecosystems; evaluate progress since prior ITMEMS and strengthen and expand the network of tropical marine managers. Some of the activities taking place during this symposium were regional caucuses for the main tropical regions, including for the Western Indian Ocean, Red Sea and Persian Gulf region. These caucuses provide an informal platform for managers in the region to discuss salient issues. As this was the first regional caucus for this region, the discussion was mainly dedicated to debating the possible purposes of such caucuses and possible frameworks for future caucuses. In general, regional caucuses were seen as useful tools for dissemination of knowledge, but capacity for effective caucuses has to be built up.

RECOGNIZE THAT

1. Mainly WIO was represented in the regional caucus meeting, so the discussion concentrated on the WIO region, however there is scope for WIO to collaborate with the Red Sea and Persian Gulf area
2. There are existing structures in the WIO such as the CRTF that could play a role of facilitating coral reef activities
3. That broadly there is a lack of awareness across the region about ICRI and ITMEMS amongst managers, scientists and decision-makers

DISCUSSION POINTS

The following points were generated during the discussion

1. It was agreed that a 'Regional caucus' is potentially a useful concept
2. A wider spectrum of nations, managers and scientists from the region should be represented at the next ITMEMS. In addition, regional ITMEMS caucuses should be promoted
3. National and regional networks for manager should also be encouraged.
4. The caucus could play an important role in raising awareness of international initiatives (e.g. ITMEMS or ICRI and other coral reef-associated ecosystem networks) within nations in the region.

5. The caucus could facilitate the dissemination of recommendations made at international symposia (e.g. ITMEMS) to managers, scientists and decision makers thus creating a direct link between science and practical application.
6. The caucus could play a role in influencing proposals for funding by identifying and prioritizing issues of regional concern.
7. The caucus could provide a mechanism for ITMEMS to reach out to managers of ecosystems associated with coral reefs (mangroves and seagrass beds).
8. The caucus could facilitate the process of developing regional action plans to deal with emerging issues (e.g. the upcoming El Niño).
9. The caucus could play a role in identification of gaps in capacity-building as well as advising and encouraging governments to allocate resources for marine and coastal management.

MECHANISMS/FUTURE ACTIONS

A virtual (email) regional caucus should be created to be administrated by the Regional Coral Reef Task Force and to focus on:

1. Raising awareness about ICRI, ITMEMS and other coral reef networks and activities in the region
2. Facilitating the organization of regional ITMEMS to be held prior to other key regional meetings such as the WIOMSA scientific symposium or the Nairobi Convention COP or the WIO Consortium meetings
3. Facilitating increased attendance and representation at the next ITMEMS
4. Raising awareness about the potential bleaching of 2007 and encouraging monitoring across the region
5. Facilitating contribution to the GCRMN status report in time for the next ICRS (2008)
6. Exploring ways to form links between coral reef initiatives and other marine ecosystem initiatives e.g. at the International Seagrass symposium (2008) or mangrove meetings
7. Facilitating the coordination of Year of the Reef activities across the region

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SOUTH ASIAN CAUCUS

The recommendations outlined in this document are the outcomes of the deliberations of the South Asia regional caucus meetings held during the third International Tropical Marine Ecosystems Management Symposium, in Cozumel, Mexico, October 2006. The South Asia caucus was composed of members of national government institutions, NGOs and civil society organizations, and represents the views of practitioners, researchers and decision makers on marine ecosystem issues from across the region. The group revisited recommendations emerging from ITMEMS 2, 2002, reviewing and updating these as appropriate. The recommendations are targeted at governments, NGOs and civil society alike, and represent priority actions that need to be taken in order to safeguard the future of important marine ecosystems and resources.

Recommendation 1 from ITMEMS2:

Recommend the establishment of a South Asia Coral Reef Unit to facilitate implementation of various regional and international initiatives in the management of coral reefs.

What has been achieved to date:

Though a Coral Reef Unit (CRU) or similar body has not yet been established, the concept has recently been taken forward under a project in the region. Relevant stakeholders from the governmental, NGO and research sector involved in the project agreed on the principle of a CRU in September 2006. ToR and formal name of the CRU are to be agreed on by early 2007.

Recommendations for the future:

- Governments as well as other organizations are asked to support the CRU and to ensure its operations are maintained beyond the lifetime of the project. Provisions should be made to ensure that the CRU will be financially and institutionally sustainable. Other initiatives and organizations in the region operating on a national or a regional level and relevant to the CRU should be supported and their interaction with the CRU facilitated.

Recommendation 2 from ITMEMS2:

Promote the involvement of stakeholders in identifying viable alternative employment options, opportunities and resources in order to reduce pressure on coral reef ecosystems

What has been achieved to date:

This is an area that needs continuous input and support. Implementation has been sporadic, e.g. various alternative livelihoods projects implemented via non-governmental as well as governmental organizations. Such activities have been implemented on a larger scale after the tsunami, mostly through humanitarian agencies. This has also increased the involvement of local stakeholders.

Recommendations for the future:

The involvement of stakeholders is key for successful identification of viable, environmentally as well as economically sustainable livelihood options, and should be the basic principle for all livelihoods enhancement or diversification activities.

Recommendation 3 from ITMEMS2:

Recommend the strengthening of effective enforcement mechanisms and improve capabilities within countries to fulfil requirements under all treaties and conventions.

What has been achieved to date:

Frequently laws are not implemented or enforced. Progress has been made in some areas, including through enforcement capacity building. There are also changes at the policy level, such as the India Biodiversity Act 2002, which includes provisions for the protection of reef resources outside PAs. In the aftermath of the Indian Ocean Tsunami 2004 a Coastal Management Plan has also been taken forward. Communication and networking on a local-national level is insufficient, even within institutions, both vertically and horizontally.

Recommendations:

- Capacity building and awareness raising targeted at a range of stakeholders, including the judiciary and those involved in policy formulation
- Ensure more effective use of scientific and monitoring data to inform the development of new laws and policies
- Improve communication and networking of stakeholders involved in enforcement issues using mechanisms such as the future CRU and coastal management planning processes
- Improve enforcement capability by developing the capacity to enforce regulations through supply of equipment such as boats, communications equipment etc.

Recommendation 4 from ITMEMS2:

Improve funding for biophysical and socio-economic monitoring, restoration, capacity building, establishment or improvement of databases, networking including sharing of information and experiences.

What has been achieved to date:

There has been some progress made but it is limited and there is a need both for needs not only more funding but also more efficient use of existing funding, including within national monitoring programmes. Socioeconomic and community based monitoring appears to be less developed, and less resourced than biophysical monitoring, and socioeconomic monitoring work underway is often not brought to a broader audience (e.g. in GCRMN Status reports). Work done outside the ICRI/GCRMN sphere is not being effectively fed into these processes, including e.g. many activities implemented on site, municipality, province and state level. Improvements in data management are still needed. Private sector involvement and support is currently well below potential, e.g. the utilisation of dive centre based monitoring and connecting this to national monitoring programmes. It was noted that private sector engagement can extend beyond reef monitoring to e.g. water quality monitoring.

Recommendations:

- Ensure relevant monitoring and capacity building activities carried out by 'non-traditional' partners are integrated into the ICRI, GCRMN and related coordination processes
- Continue to build capacity in biophysical and socio-economic monitoring as well as data management and analysis for improved reliability and use of the data
- Increase commitment to socioeconomic and community based monitoring
- Strengthen private sector partnerships in monitoring (as well as other aspects of management)
- Governments are requested to ensure that capacity built for management of marine and coastal areas is not lost through the currently common staff rotation systems, e.g. through the creation of marine units in management authorities
- Support restoration of degraded ecosystems where necessary, and in accordance with internationally agreed policies and approaches such as the ICRI resolution

Recommendation 5 from ITMEMS2:

Recommend the implementation of MPA concept and the application of long-term monitoring results in decision making for effective conservation and management of coral reef ecosystems.

What has been achieved to date:

There is still a need for more MPAs in many parts of the region and establishment of a representative network of MPAs, as reflected in IUCN WCPA appraisals and other assessments. The current MPA situation is well below internationally agreed targets. Enforcement remains problematic, with illegal activities still taking place in several MPAs, and management plans are frequently not implemented. There is a need for more private sector involvement and buy-in, e.g. tourism operators benefiting from MPA could be more directly involved in MPA management.

Recommendations:

- A regional network of well managed, representative MPAs should be established, with the support and input from relevant organizations including e.g. WCPA Marine
- MPAs should be better integrated into broader coastal and marine management strategies
- Continue to build management capacity among MPA staff
- Enforcement of MPA regulations should be strengthened, but this should be coupled with suitable consultative processes to address the needs of local communities and other stakeholders

Recommendation 6 from ITMEMS2:

Recommend the strengthening of education and awareness programmes at all levels to ensure sustainable use of coral reefs.

What has been achieved to date:

Several successful education and awareness activities have been implemented in the region. However, there is a lack of continuity, and initiatives are limited by project lifetimes. Education and awareness needs to be a continuous, ongoing process and built more firmly into conservation and management activities.

There is a lot of existing education and awareness material that is not always reaching those that could benefit from it, and much of it is applicable to the region with some adaptation. In some cases existing materials are not sufficient, and there is still the need to develop new materials.

Recommendations:

- Successful programmes from other regions should be replicated and the use of exchange programmes supported
- Strengthen networking regionally and inter-regionally
- Develop school based conservation programmes, including appropriate resource materials
- Integrate coastal systems, into school curricula, including information on their benefits, conservation and sustainable use
- Establish resource centres for the general public
- Ensure that conservation projects always have awareness component, including dissemination mechanisms

PACIFIC CAUCUS

The Pacific Island region includes some 38 million kms of ocean and is host to unique coastal and marine biodiversity. Pacific island countries are highly dependent on their extensive marine resources for their livelihoods and economies, in particular fishing.

In most countries, traditional resource management systems of marine and coastal resources are the dominant unit of management. Changes in lifestyles and population growth though, have put pressure on island coastal and marine environments.

Balancing development and the protection of natural resources and culture is a critical in a context of small economies, remoteness and limited capacity. Responding to emerging issues such as unsustainable fishing practices, expanding tourism activity, new technologies, waste management and adapting to climate change are key management issues for the region.

Working with communities and building the capacity of government are the most effective means to ensure the protection of coastal and marine environment and maintain community livelihoods.

Issues identified by the group as particularly important to the Pacific region:

- Pacific island communities culture (e.g. marine tenure) and aspirations as essential to marine resource management
- Persistent and emerging threats and opportunities such as tourism and fishing (Threats include: subsistence overfishing, live fish trade, Aquarium trade, foreign offshore fishing and aquaculture offshore)
- The management of remote reefs and related marine ecosystems

What can ITMEMS can do

Technical support and capacity building

- Support/strengthen existing mechanisms (eg policy, institutions, community based management) for marine resource management and provide support for implementation
- Foster partnerships across sectors, government and community for long term sustainability of community based initiatives and protection of marine resources
- Build capacity at regional, national and local levels to reduce dependency on external expertise
- Increase management driven research and give priority to investment to communities and government management needs
- Increase focus of activities on the effective management of Pacific Islands EEZ (such as seamounts, deep sea corals and remote reefs) from over exploitation and destructive practices
- Increase focus of activities on adaptive management mechanisms to increase resilience to climate change and other global threats (such as disease)
- Document extent and potential impact of emerging technologies and threats and propose management solutions, and tools for effective management responses

Awareness raising of Small Island Developing States (SIDS) issues

- Raise awareness of threats to Pacific marine ecosystems in international fora and generate support for addressing them
- Use the Year of the Reef 2008 as a vehicle for raising awareness of those issues
- Take active steps to reach out to fisheries and tourism organizations to engage in ITMEMS

Specific Actions

- Leverage financial and technical support for:
 - A regional meeting engaging governments, community NGOs and private sector to communicate regional priorities and develop concrete actions for supporting them
 - The development of a regional framework for the establishment and management of MPAs
 - Strengthening and maintenance of national and regional marine ecosystems manager learning networks
 - The development of a user friendly guide to the outcomes and products of ITMEMS for Pacific communities and government officials

Resourcing

- Initiate a dialogue with donors to review procedures for funding community related activities to take account of the need for long term engagement with communities and recognize the need for flexibility. Funding for community projects should be long term (at least 10 years) and in line with their absorptive capacity.