

Meeting of the ICRI Coordinating and Planning Committee

8/9 April 1997

Draft MINUTES

ITEMS 1 AND 2 OPENING AND ADOPTION OF AGENDA

The meeting was opened by Richard Kenchington and the agenda adopted.

ITEM 3 PROGRESS REPORTS ON ICRI ACTIVITIES

The meeting received progress reports on ICRI activities.

3.1 Pacific Region

Joe Reti and Lucille Apis-Overhoff (SPREP) outlined ICRI progress in the Pacific region. The main focus of ICRI activity is the 1997 Pacific Year of the Coral Reef (PYOCR) campaign, which is being coordinated by SPREP and which is proving to be a success in raising awareness of the issues facing coral reefs in the region. PYOCR has evolved after extensive consultations and development work to involve key stakeholders. A campaign strategy has been developed and SPREP is producing a range of supporting campaign resources (with assistance from GBRMPA). A progress report has been prepared by SPREP and is included as attachment 1.

Despite the progress achieved there remains some uncertainty about funding for the campaign. SPREP has written to the ICRI Secretariat seeking support in its efforts to secure resources. The ICRI Secretariat agreed to lend whatever support it could.

CPC members agreed that the PYOCR campaign provides a model for effective regionally-coordinated ICRI activity. Ian Dight noted that UNEP's Caribbean Environment Programme (designated ICRI regional focal point) plans to adopt some of the materials used in the PYOCR for use in the Caribbean region.

Copies of the PYOCR Campaign Plan and other resources are available from SPREP or from the ICRI Secretariat.

3.2 East Asian Seas Region

Tetsuro Uesugi and Kenji Konishi summarised the outcomes of the ICRI 2nd Regional Workshop for the East Asian Seas held in Okinawa 16-20 February, 1997. This had been attended by over 100 participants from Japan and throughout the region. The workshop included a Symposium which involved the general public in issues of coral management in Japan and generated significant publicity for ICRI. The workshop adopted the 'Okinawa Declaration' which outlines actions and priorities for the implementation of the ICRI East Asian Seas Regional Strategy.

A copy of the report of the workshop including the 'Okinawa Declaration' is attached (attachment 2).

Ian Dight reported on behalf of the UNEP East Asian Seas Regional Coordinating Unit (EAS/RCU), designated ICRI focal point for the region. He noted that the intergovernmental Coordinating Body for the Seas of East Asia (COBSEA) had endorsed the ICRI East Asian Seas Regional Strategy. However, at this stage no funding is available to assist the EAS/RCU to implement the Strategy. As a result the EAS/RCU is concentrating on seeking resources for ICRI-related activities including the implementation of the Global Plan of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-Based Sources of Pollution (GPA) and the development of a GEF Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis.

3.3 Western Indian Ocean

Ian Dight advised on progress in the Western Indian Ocean region. The report of the ICRI regional workshop for this region has been finalised and copies were provided to the meeting (in French and English). Further copies can be obtained from Ian Dight or from the ICRI Secretariat.

As a result of the entry into force of the Nairobi Convention the UNEP East Africa Regional Coordinating Unit (EARCU) has been established for the region, and will be the focal point for coordination of ICRI activities. The ICRI Secretariat agreed to initiate contact with the EARCU to promote their potential role for ICRI.

Given the resourcing constraints on UNEP the reality is that ICRI objectives must be achieved by working through existing programs, and a number of coral reef-related demonstration projects are now underway.

3.4 Middle East Region

Peter Thomas provided an update on progress in arrangements for the ICRI regional workshop for the Middle East region. He noted positive developments in that funding has been secured and contracts arranged for organisation of the workshop. However, a delay in the transfer of funds from the US has resulted in postponement of the workshop until September, 1997. The workshop will be hosted by the Aqaba Regional Authority in Jordan.

Participants noted a wide range of coral reef-related activities underway in the region. It was clear that holding the ICRI regional workshop was potentially an important means to strengthen cooperation and coordination in these activities.

The US and the ICRI Secretariat agreed to liaise closely in the development of arrangements for this workshop, including the identification of potential future ICRI regional focal points (eg ROPME & PERSGA). CPC members agreed that holding this meeting was a clear priority for ICRI and urged that the necessary arrangements be put in place.

3.5 South Asian Region

Prasantha Dias Abeyegunawardene (SACEP) noted that SACEP, based in Colombo, Sri Lanka, is the designated ICRI coordinating unit for South Asia.

SACEP is promoting training relevant to coral reefs and has developed a coral reef project involving capacity building for reef management. SACEP is also working towards implementation of the GPA in the South Asia region.

An officer has been appointed at SACEP with ODA funding to coordinate development of the GCRMN.

United Kingdom

Alex Holland (ODA) outlined the UK's support to ICRI through the Overseas Development Administration (ODA). This support covers capacity building activities in a range of regions (South Asia, Africa, Caribbean) with a total of 3.4 million pounds committed.

ODA is directly supporting the GCRMN in South Asia and has provided funding to support the appointment of the GCRMN regional coordinator.

A copy of a project proposal on 'Regional Training for Management of Protected Areas & Coral Island Ecosystems in the Indian Ocean' was provided to the meeting. Further copies of this can be obtained from the UK representative or from the ICRI Secretariat.

At the suggestion of Alex Holland the meeting agreed to develop a statement on ICRI for consideration by the Commission on Sustainable Development, which was meeting concurrently with the CPC. This statement was prepared and adopted by the CPC and is included at attachment 3.

Maldives

Mr Abdullah Naseer provided an overview of coral reef issues for the Maldives. The Maldives is keen to be involved in ICRI and IYOR but has limited funding for these activities.

Reef issues are increasing in importance with the expansion of the reef export fishery to unprecedented levels. Reef-based tourism is also critical for the Maldives and there has been an increase in tourism and fishery conflicts. A number of initiatives are underway including local monitoring initiatives and mariculture programs.

CPC members welcomed the participation of the Maldives in the meeting and looked forward to their continuing involvement.

3.6 Caribbean

A written statement was provided to the meeting by ICRI regional focal point Alessandria Vanzella-Khoury (CEP/RCU). A copy is enclosed at attachment 4.

Peter Thomas outlined other initiatives including the bilingual travelling reef exhibit which is now located in Miami but will be moving on to Washington, DC and beyond! He noted that a working relationship has been established between the GCRMN and CARICOMP which should see progress for the GCRMN in the region.

Thomas raised the issue of how to achieve the effective involvement of Brazil in ICRI. Ian Dight summarised recent discussions with Brazilian representatives who indicated their enthusiasm to be involved. The Secretariat undertook to contact Brazil to determine their interest in becoming involved, and would also contact other ICRI partners with an interest in the region (such as the Interamerican Development Bank) to identify possible mechanisms.

3.7 France

Gerard Siclet and Pascal Joannot provided an update on France's participation in ICRI. They informed the CPC that the government of French Polynesia had offered to host the GCRMN sub-node for the Pacific region.

Pascal Joannot outlined issues and initiatives underway in New Caledonia which included measures to address coastal erosion and deforestation, the establishment of an Environment Centre in Noumea, a second aquarium and the MPA system.

3.8 UNEP

Ian Dight provided copies of the ICRI Resolution adopted by the UNEP 19th Governing Council meeting (attachment 5). This Resolution was the result of cooperation by ICRI partners with 15 governments sponsoring and more than 70 supporting the resolution.

Unfortunately the funds to enable UNEP to implement the Resolution are lacking and as a result the Water Branch of UNEP is able to carry out only limited supporting work for ICRI.

Ian Dight raised the issue of the connection and possible continuity between IYOR and the UN International Year of the Oceans. The ICRI Secretariat undertook to liaise with IOC, the UN agency responsible for the Year of the Oceans, to pursue this issue.

3.9 IUCN

Paul Holthus explained that IUCN's main involvement in ICRI was through maintenance of the ICRI web page (via John Waugh in Washington), as a member of the STAP of the GCRMN and as an active participant in the international year of the Reef. He is involved in organising the next meeting of the Global Biodiversity Forum which will focus on private sector involvement in marine conservation.

IUCN holds a store of IYOR information in Gland which is available for distribution.

3.10 World Bank

In a telephone hook-up, Marea Hatziolos provided the CPC with an update on World Bank support to ICRI. An information paper was tabled at the meeting (attachment 6).

The proposed World Bank ESD V ICRI-related event was discussed by participants. This meeting will occur in conjunction with the ESD V conference to be held in Washington, DC in October, 1997 and will have coral reefs as its theme. This conference will follow the World Bank annual meeting in Hong Kong.

The Bank's proposal is to have an event focussed on achieving action to address key problems such as cyanide and other forms of destructive fishing, live fish exports etc. Achieving best practice in tourism management and economic analysis of the benefits of MPAs were noted by the CPC as two other possible themes. The Bank would welcome guidance from the CPC on potential topics.

Two days are set aside. The Bank will be inviting donors to support the participation of developing country representatives. Although the meeting is unlikely to involve donor 'pledging' it could be a forum where proposals are received for further consideration.

The ICRI Secretariat agreed to follow this up with the Bank in coordination with the network of ICRI regional focal points.

It was noted that the World Bank Annual General Meeting presents an important opportunity to secure support for ICRI. The meeting is attended by key World Bank staff and Finance Ministers. The ICRI Secretariat undertook to work with the network of regional contacts to make use of this meeting as a means to secure support for ICRI activities. It was noted that logistical arrangements would need to be in place by early September.

3.11 ICRI Secretariat

Richard Kenchington (GBRMPA) summarised the background to the hand-over of the ICRI Secretariat from the United States to Australia. The Secretariat is based in the GBRMPA Townsville office and is headed by John Baldwin.

The resourcing situation is that funds are available to support the Secretariat for the short- to medium-term but the long term position remains uncertain. Additional resources are being sought, in particular for the ITMEMS major progress review and evaluation proposed for the conclusion of Australia's term.

ITEM 4 INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF THE REEF

Will Jones, representing IYOR, provided an overview of the activities underway around the world to promote coral reef conservation and management as part of this campaign.

IYOR's approach has been to build bottom-up support and momentum. The challenge is to organise and coordinate this activity with the minimal resources available. Given that IYOR is a flagship activity for ICRI for 1997 there would appear to be some role for the ICRI Secretariat. A number of members pointed out that it is important that IYOR-type activities continue beyond 1997 through ICRI. The ICRI Secretariat agreed to look at ways it could promote coordination and facilitation of IYOR activities, recognising the very limited resources available.

Copies of an update on IYOR activities were provided to the meeting (attachment 7). Further copies are available from the ICRI Secretariat.

ITEM 5 GLOBAL CORAL REEF MONITORING NETWORK (GCRMN)

Clive Wilkinson, GCRMN Coordinator, provided a summary of progress in establishing the Network. A progress report was tabled at the meeting. Additional copies can be obtained from the Coordinator or from the ICRI Secretariat.

Participants noted the considerable progress achieved although, as expected, this had varied considerably between regions. Clive Wilkinson noted the imminent publication of a revised version of the "Survey Manual for Tropical Marine Resources".

In subsequent discussions the Coordinator sought assistance from ICRI regional focal points in identifying functional GCRMN sub-units where these do not already exist. Assistance with the Caribbean and Pacific regions was of the highest priority.

ITEM 6 WORK PROGRAM FOR ICRI

The draft work program (attachment 8) was adopted by the CPC as providing a framework for the development of ICRI in its current phase.

ITEM 7 ICRI REGIONAL STRUCTURE AND CPC COMPOSITION

The meeting considered the important issue of how to institute ICRI's agenda of increased regional emphasis. Ian Dight noted that the designated ICRI focal points were the relevant UNEP Regional Seas units, and that significant differences existed between regions in the capacity and nature of these units. The issue, given the considerable regional differences and limited resources, is how to make an effective operating environment for these coordinators so they can build self-sufficiency.

The possibility of establishing sub-nodes in some regions was raised. It was agreed that in some instances, such as the Caribbean, this might be appropriate where there are organisations such as OECS and CARICOMP. However, the initiative and responsibility on whether and how to develop appropriate collaborative arrangements rests with the designated ICRI regional focal point and partner governments and organisations within each region.

The Secretariat agreed to write to all designated regional focal points to confirm the structural arrangements for ICRI in each region, including the appointment of a

contact officer responsible for ICRI, and seeking advice on what activities were being undertaken to implement ICRI's objectives and what assistance is required from the Secretariat. It was considered important to refresh communications with partner government and the Secretariat undertook to communicate with regional focal points to seek advice on the best means of achieving this.

The meeting considered that it would be useful to bring the regional coordinators together to Townsville at some stage in the next year or in conjunction with the proposed International Tropical Marine Environment Management Symposium (ITMEMS). The Secretariat agreed to examine the options for securing the necessary resources.

CPC Membership

In considering the issue of CPC membership it was agreed that this would be kept open, with the expectation that membership involved a commitment to contribute to ICRI activities and a responsibility to coordinate with other partners.

The ICRI Secretariat noted that an expression of interest had been received from IOC and the International Center for Living Aquatic Resources Management (ICLARM) and undertook to contact IOC and ICLARM to explore the possibility of them becoming CPC members. The Secretariat also noted that the considerable coral reef-related work underway in Indonesia placed that country in an ideal position to contribute to ICRI and agreed to follow-up the matter of Indonesia's potential involvement.

ITEM 8 COMMUNICATION

Peter Thomas (US) noted the importance of maintaining communication with the ICRI 'community' developed through the long series of ICRI workshops and other activities.

Web sites are in existence and are fulfilling part of the requirement for this communication. Members expressed their appreciation to IUCN for maintenance of the ICRI website and looked forward to seeing the revised version which is to be launched shortly. The Secretariat undertook to liaise with IUCN to develop an appropriate linkage with Secretariat activities.

It was considered timely to provide the broad ICRI constituency with an update of ICRI activities. It was agreed that the ICRI Secretariat would produce this update and that it would be provided to the regional focal points for distribution through their existing information distribution mechanisms. Each regional focal point would be responsible for distribution of information within their region, with a focus on using existing resources and publications.

It was pointed out that translation of this material could be an issue. Facilities exist within the US State Department and the Government of France which could be used for this purpose.

ITEM 9 INTERNATIONAL AND REGIONAL FORUMS FOR PROMOTION OF ICRI ACTIVITIES

The maintenance of a listing of international and regional forums which present opportunities for promoting ICRI will continue to be a priority for the Secretariat. The Secretariat will continue to liaise with CPC members and key partners to develop a coordinated ICRI approach to these forums.

A revised list of major forums is included at attachment 9.

ITEM 10 PROPOSED INTERNATIONAL TROPICAL MARINE ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT SYMPOSIUM

The Secretariat presented its proposal to hold a major Symposium to mark the conclusion of Australia's term as Secretariat and to provide a platform from which to build the following phase of ICRI.

The proposal for the symposium is attached (attachment 10).

The CPC endorsed the concept of the Symposium, subject to resources. It was agreed that the Secretariat would produce a detailed proposal and costing for consideration by CPC members and donors.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Overview of the 1997 Pacific Year of the Coral Reef Campaign
2. Report of the Second Regional Workshop for the East Asian Seas
3. Statement to the Commission on Sustainable Development by the ICRI Coordinating and Planning Committee
4. Summary of ICRI Activities in the Wider Caribbean/Tropical Americas Region
5. ICRI Resolution from the 19th session of the UNEP Governing Council
6. World Bank paper on Mobilising Support for Coral Reef Conservation
7. Update on the International Year of the Reef
8. ICRI Work Program
9. List of Major International and Regional Forums/Events of relevance to ICRI
10. Proposal for the International Tropical Marine Environmental Management Symposium

OTHER RESOURCES

The following information tabled during the meeting can be obtained through the ICRI Secretariat.

1. Project Proposal on Regional Training for Management of Protected Areas & Coral Island Ecosystems in the Indian Ocean
2. Testimony of Rafe Pomerance (Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Oceans and International Environmental and Scientific Affairs) to the US House of Representatives Committee on Resources.

3. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration - promotional material for ICRI and the International Year of the Reef
4. 'The Fragile Ring of Life' ICRI video produced by the US Government
5. 'Coral Bleaching in the South Central Pacific During 1994' report published for ICRI by the US State Department
6. 1997 Pacific Year of the Coral Reef - SPREP regional campaign plan
7. Proceedings of the ICRI South Asian Workshop
8. Proceedings of the ICRI Western Indian Ocean Workshop
9. Action Plan for the Protection and Management of the Marine and Coastal Environment of the South Asian Seas Region
10. IOC-UNEP-IUCN Global Coral Reef Monitoring Network - First year Progress Report
11. Report from the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission to the ICRI Coordinating and Planning Committee

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