

Resolution on Coral Bleaching and Climate Change to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change

*Adopted during the ICRI Coordination and Planning Committee (CPC) Meeting
27 and 28 October, 1999, Guadeloupe (France)*

- Reaffirming** the ITMEMS¹ and ISRS² statements and USCRTF³ resolution on coral bleaching;
- Recognizing** that in 1998 the mass coral bleaching and mortality events appear to be the most severe and extensive ever documented and tropical sea surface temperatures were the highest on modern record;
- Noting** that the geographic extent, increasing frequency, and regional severity of mass bleaching events are likely a consequence of a steadily rising baseline of marine temperatures in combination with regional climate change (e.g., El Niño);
- Noting also** that the rise in sea temperature and consequent coral bleaching and mortality events pose a significant threat to coral reef ecosystems and the human populations which depend on them, particularly small island developing states;
- The ICRI Partners***
- Note with approval** the conclusions and recommendations on priority areas for action resulting from the CBD expert consultation on coral bleaching⁴;
- Note specifically** that the experts concluded that coral bleaching is relevant not only to the Convention on Biological Diversity but also the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (FCCC) and that the ultimate objective of the FCCC is to reduce emissions in a manner that allows ecosystems to adapt «naturally» to climate change;
- Note also** that the FCCC calls upon Parties to take action in relation to funding, insurance, and technology transfer to address the adverse effects of climate change.
- Further note** that the experts call for joint actions of the Convention on Biological

¹ International Tropical Marine Ecosystems Management Symposium, November 1998, Townsville, Australia

² International Society for Reef Studies, 1998

³ U.S. Coral Reef Task Force, March 1999, Maui, Hawaii

⁴ 11-13 October 1999, Manila, Philippines

Diversity and the FCCC to:

1. develop approaches for assessing the vulnerability of coral reef species to global warming;
2. build capacity for predicting and monitoring the impacts of coral bleaching;
3. identify approaches for developing response measures to coral bleaching;
4. provide guidance for financial institutions, including the Global Environment Facility, to support such activities.

Encourage the UNFCCC to:

- Note the conclusions and recommendations on priority areas for action resulting the CBD experts consultation on coral bleaching;
- Ask the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) to explicitly address the causes and consequences of mass coral bleaching and mortality, including possible societal impacts, in future assessments reports, from the perspectives of both biodiversity and marine ecosystems.
- Consider ICRI as a forum for the discussion of the ecological and socioeconomic impacts of climate change on coral reef systems and the ICRI partners as potential facilitators for the FCCC and CBD to achieve their shared objectives on coral bleaching and mortality.