

Sustainable Management of Coral Reefs; UNEA-2 Resolution

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Coral reefs occur in over 100 countries and territories worldwide, including most SIDS and many LDCs. About half a billion people draw direct benefits from coral reef ecosystem services, coral reef fisheries are a critical source of protein for tens of millions of people, and coral reef tourism provides a significant source of foreign exchange for many countries.

The Global Coral Reef Monitoring Network (GCRMN) report Status of Coral Reefs of the World 2008 found that a fifth of the world's area of coral reefs has already been lost, with 15% of reefs at risk of being lost within the next 10–20 years and a further 20% under threat of loss in 20–40 years. The report noted that, while some areas had shown recovery from mass bleaching and mortality in 1998, recovery is stalled or weak where there are substantial human pressures, such as over-fishing, pollution, sedimentation and unwise development.

The most recent global threat-based assessment of coral reefs, Reefs at Risk Revisited 2011, estimated that two thirds of coral reefs in the world are under immediate and direct threat from human activities. Overfishing was identified as the most pervasive immediate threat, affecting more than 55% of the world's reefs, followed by coastal development and watershed-based pollution, each estimated to threaten about a quarter of reefs. The assessment further noted that “the combined impacts of ocean warming and acidification will increase the threat levels on more than half of all reefs by 2030, pushing the percentage of threatened reefs to more than 90 % by 2030.”

The recently adopted resolution on Sustainable Coral Reefs Management at UNEA-2 at Nairobi, inter alia, calls for initiatives, cooperation and commitments to conserve and sustainably manage coral reef, including cold-water coral reefs, and mangrove forests;



recognizes that education, capacity-building and knowledge transfer is crucial; and encourages integrated, ecosystem-based and comprehensive approaches including partnerships with industry, as well as establishment of MPAs and other spatial and relevant sectoral approaches to enhance climate change resilience. The resolution further requests UNEP to pursue a number of actions, inter alia in relation to awareness raising, including through GEO; knowledge transfer and development of tools for coral reef climate change resilience; conducting an analysis of global and regional coral reef policy instruments; supporting development and implementation of national or regional measures and action plans; development of indicators and support towards assessment of coral reef status and trends through the Global Coral Reef Monitoring Network (GCRMN).

The South Asia Cooperative Environment Programme (SACEP) did establish a Task Force comprising of representatives of the South Asia Seas Programme (SASP) member countries for the protection and sustainable management of coral reef in the waters of Indian Ocean. The platform was very affective in but recently due to lack of global priority for the protection of coral reefs, it also slowed down. Before the adoption of the Coral Reef resolution, SACEP worked with the SASP member countries are revamped the Coral Reef Task Force in South Asia which is reconstituted now for playing its role in the South Asian region. The reconstitution of the Coral Reefs task force in South Asia was reviewed in the consultation meeting on implementation of UNEA-2 Resolution on Coral Reefs at Manado, Indonesia on the first day of its deliberation on the 28th June 2016 and it was highly appreciated that SACEP has already worked on this very important aspect of providing institutional platform at sub-regional level in South Asia and this model shall also be replicated in other such sub-regional forums. The global efforts for sustainable management of coral reefs as an important component of the marine ecosystem will go a long way in protecting the coral reefs in South Asia through the South Asia Coral Reefs Task Force. SACEP is committed to provide the institutional platform for the global initiative in coordination and cooperation of the SASP member countries.

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