



# People and Reefs: A Partnership for Prosperity



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## ICRAN: A Partnership for Communities and Reefs Worldwide

**“Healthy coral reefs are critical to the livelihoods and cultures of millions of people in tropical coastal environments, as well as forming part of the crucial life support system of the biosphere.”**

Klaus Töpfer, United Nations Under-Secretary-General and Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme, *Status of Coral Reefs of the World, 2000.*

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**“...75 % of marine fishes are fished to capacity and 60% of the coral reefs endangered. We must reverse this process, preserving as many species as possible while helping people who currently depend on destructive and unsustainable practices to make a transition to more sustainable ways of earning their living.”**

Kofi Annan, Secretary-General of the United Nations,  
*Towards a Sustainable Future, New York, 14 May 2002.*

### People, Poverty and Reefs

Coral reefs are one of the most spectacular and productive underwater environments, benefiting people and the natural world far beyond their boundaries. Coral reefs occupy less than 1% of the ocean floor and support over 25% of all marine fish species. They safeguard lives, economies and cultures, generate jobs, create safe harbours and protection against erosion, provide 10% of the world's fishing harvest, and hold the key to future scientific and medical advances. **Yet 60% of reefs are either severely damaged or threatened with immediate damage unless we act now.**

An estimated one billion people currently depend on fish for their food, income and livelihood, at least 85% of whom rely principally on fish as their major source of protein. Most of these live in coastal communities within developing countries including small island states. Healthy coral reefs are critical to sustaining people - one square kilometre of healthy coral reef can produce 15 tons of food per year, enough to feed 1,000 people. Yet pollution,

destructive fishing, land reclamation, coral mining and global threats such as climate change are taking their toll on coral reefs and the people who depend on them.

### Economic Benefits of Healthy Coral Reefs

Coral reefs, and the marine life that lives within and around them, are the only natural assets for many people living on tropical islands and coastlines. Reef decline is directly related to the loss of economic opportunities and often accelerates the rate of poverty in these areas. As a result, these communities face increasing problems. For example, when normal fishing methods are insufficient to provide a living, fishermen turn to unsustainable alternatives. This can start a spiral of increasing reef damage, reducing productivity and often increasing the use of destructive methods. In Indonesia, overfishing and blast fishing are estimated to result in a net loss of over US\$1.3 billion in the next twenty years. Communities that are unable to sustain themselves through fishing are subsequently forced to produce or import other food—further displacing local opportunities for generating revenue.



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Healthy coral reefs offer relief from hunger and environmental degradation and have significant economic value. For instance, in Indonesia, healthy coral reefs have an estimated annual value of US\$1.6 billion and Southeast Asia's coral reef fisheries alone generate US\$2.4 billion annually. To include other reef services such as tourism, the aquarium trade and shoreline protection, the economic potential of coral reefs becomes enormous.

Healthy reefs can also provide economic opportunities beyond the fish and aquarium trades. Their captivating beauty can sustain a growing and increasingly diverse tourism market that has the power to generate income and create employment opportunities. Specifically, sustainable tourism can create a marine and coastal environment where coral reefs can thrive thus protecting both food and revenue generating resources.

### Threats to Reef Communities

Although coral reefs have coped with changes in the global environment for millions of years, their capacity to continue doing so is now seriously threatened by human impacts, such as coastal development, destructive fishing techniques, the souvenir trade, and pollution.

In most coral reef areas around the world, damage to marine environments is

contributing to increased poverty levels at an alarming rate. The loss or destruction of reefs also means the loss of a natural supply of coral sand to sustain beaches that underpin the tourism industry and the loss of natural breakwaters to protect coastlines from storm waves.

We must act today to halt the degradation and destruction of coral reefs. Otherwise, coral reefs and the communities that depend on them will continue to suffer.

### The International Coral Reef Action Network (ICRAN) is working to halt and reverse the decline in health of the world's coral reefs.

ICRAN is a partnership which acts at the local, regional and global level. The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the world's leading coral reef organizations lead ICRAN at the global level, while the Regional Seas Conventions and Programmes co-ordinate ICRAN activities at regional level. At the local level ICRAN promotes partnerships between communities, government agencies, NGOs and other stakeholders to protect and manage specific coral reef areas. The partnership focuses its research, monitoring and information gathering efforts on the practical management of reef resources. ICRAN recognizes the subsistence, economic and social values of coral reefs, and ICRAN's programme is designed to benefit the coastal communities that depend on reefs for their livelihoods.

**"ICRAN is taking the urgent, practical action necessary to conserve healthy and sustainable coral reefs. Our challenge is to secure the support we need to expand our programmes to save these valuable and irreplaceable ecosystems."**

**Richard A. Kenchington, ICRAN Board Chair**



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### Creating Opportunities for Sustainable Management

ICRAN is creating financial mechanisms to translate scientific knowledge into direct action throughout the world's major coral reef regions. A key target is to establish a Coral Reef Fund that will ensure long term financing for coral reef conservation and management. The Fund will promote public-private partnerships to sustain coral reefs and the people who depend on them.

### An Expanding Partnership

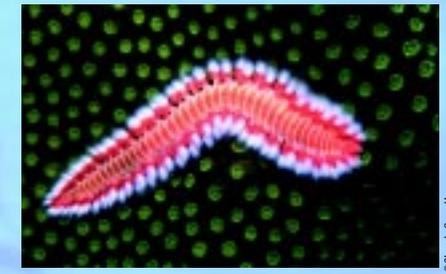
ICRAN's initial programme targets four threatened coral reef regions: the Caribbean, Eastern Africa, East Asia and the South Pacific. Within these regions, ICRAN has created a network of sites to highlight successful examples of coral reef management and extend sustainable management practices to other sites.

#### The Current ICRAN Programme: The First Four Years

The United Nations Foundation has made a grant of US\$5 million to initiate ICRAN's current four-year strategic plan (2001-05). To complete the present programme, ICRAN seeks a minimum of US\$5 million from donors. The UN Foundation has agreed to provide matching funds for the additional funds we now seek from donors in the public, charitable and governmental sectors.

#### Coral Reef Fund: Building Toward the Future

ICRAN aims to raise a minimum of US\$25 million to continue expansion of reef management and conservation activities over the next decade.



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At the World Summit for Sustainable Development (WSSD), ICRAN is announcing two major extensions to the partnership. First, ICRAN will extend its geographical coverage to South Asia and the Arabian Seas. Additional sites will be included in the network, increasing opportunities for exchange of experiences and good practices related to coral reef management. This will mean that all seven of the regional seas with major tropical coral reef resources will be participating in ICRAN.

Second, ICRAN is launching a special partnership to address the links between coral reefs and tourism. This will focus on promoting sustainable tourism including capacity building in developing countries. Within ICRAN, UNEP's Paris office covering the environment and industry will manage this project.

### Our Challenge

We must take action today to ensure the future of coral reefs and the communities that depend on them. We must work together to channel, coordinate, and build expertise, as well as public awareness and involvement, to save the world's reefs.

But we need your help.

### Help Us Sustain Healthy Corals and Coastal Communities

With the necessary funding, ICRAN can expand its Partnership and undertake new activities to preserve coral reefs for future generations. Please join us in our fight to sustain coral reefs and the people worldwide that depend on them for food and resources.