

U.S. Coral Reef Task Force Meeting
March 2007
Washington, DC

Resolution 17-1: Recognition and support for the United States as co-host of the International Coral Reef Initiative (ICRI) Secretariat for 2007-2009.

Responsible Party: USCRTF Steering Committee and International Working Group.

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Issue Statement: The Final Report of the U.S. Commission on Ocean Policy (USCOP) recommends that the United States continue to be a leader in coral reef conservation at the international level (chapter 21) and in international ocean policy-making generally (chapter 29). In response to these recommendations, the Bush Administration recommended in its U.S. Ocean Action Plan that the United States seek to co-host the International Coral Reef Initiative (ICRI) Secretariat from July 1, 2007 – June 30, 2009. At the most recent ICRI General Meeting in October 2006, the United States and Mexico announced their agreement to co-host the ICRI Secretariat for the 2007-2009 term. With full support and endorsement of the role of U.S. as co-host of the ICRI Secretariat by the USCRTF, the United States would continue to exercise and demonstrate leadership in the area of coral reef conservation.

Background:

The United States was instrumental in establishing the International Coral Reef Initiative (ICRI) in 1995. Over the past decade, due in large part to persistent USG efforts, ICRI has been the driving force behind scientific, governmental and civil society efforts to protect coral reefs and related ecosystems. The U.S. was the first ICRI host and served in that capacity during ICRI's formative years, 1995-1997. Resuming the chair at ICRI will signal continued USG commitment to the conservation of coral reefs globally and will provide important opportunities to further U.S. objectives.

ICRI is a partnership among governments, and international, scientific, and civil society organizations seeking to stop and reverse the global degradation of coral reefs and related ecosystems. ICRI was founded by the United States in partnership with Australia, France, Japan, Jamaica, the Philippines, Sweden, the United Kingdom, the World Bank and UNEP. The ICRI approach is to mobilize governments and a wide range of other stakeholders in an effort to improve management practices, increase capacity and political support, and share information on the health of these fragile ecosystems. ICRI activities have spurred successful regional and national efforts worldwide to protect coral reef ecosystems, including the launch of national coral reef initiatives in numerous countries, including the U.S. ICRI is leading the effort to improve science-based management of coral reef ecosystems, and to track and assess the health of coral reef ecosystems globally.

Statement Decision:

The USCRTF decides to:

- Reaffirm the President's commitment to the United States serving as co-host of the ICRI Secretariat;
- Encourage its members to actively participate in the interagency planning process for the ICRI Secretariat, and to consider the roles and duties of their agency or jurisdiction in the ICRI Secretariat;
- Encourage its members to support the ICRI Secretariat through financial and in-kind contributions during the 2007-2009 term;
- Requests that its members report on their initial level of support for the ICRI Secretariat prior to the Fall 2007 CRTF meeting.