

PROJECT AWARE FOUNDATION COMMENTS FOR THE U.S.
CORAL REEF TASK FORCE MEETING
FEBRUARY 25, 2009

Good morning Task Force Chairs, Members, and fellow participants and thank you for the opportunity to provide public comment. My name is Jenny Miller Garmendia and I am the Director of Project AWARE Foundation.

Throughout 2008, the International Year of the Reef, all of us were worked hard to educate the public and policy-makers about the threats facing coral reefs and the actions that must be taken. During the International Coral Reef Symposium held last July in Fort Lauderdale, experts, some who are part of the task force, clearly outlined the local and global threats and the need for immediate action. Project AWARE Foundation, along with other conservation organizations, has signed on to a brief set of recommendations for such action that has just been submitted this morning.

The United States is a member of IUCN. As such, the US has a unique opportunity to help implement the world's environmental agenda. My purpose here is to call the attention of the U.S. Coral Reef Task Force members and put into record Resolution 4.080 - the only resolution concerning coral reefs adopted at the IUCN World Conservation Congress held in Barcelona Spain in October of 2008. The resolution entitled "**Mobilizing action to build resilience and assist adaptation to climate change of coral reefs and marine ecosystems and people that depend on them**" began as Motion 137 sponsored by CORDIO East Africa and Co-Sponsored by The Nature Conservancy, Project AWARE Foundation, Conservation International, Save Our Seas Foundation and The Cousteau Society. The full text of the resolution will be submitted as an attachment to my statement. Here is an excerpt:

The World Conservation Congress at its 4th Session in Barcelona, Spain, 5–14 October 2008:

1. CALLS ON IUCN's members to bring to the attention of the IPCC and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), including its Parties, the need for:

(a) more marine science to be incorporated in IPCC assessments; and

(b) the development of adaptation measures to increase the resilience of coral reefs and other marine ecosystems, and the people that depend on them;

In addition, the World Conservation Congress, at its 4th Session in Barcelona, Spain, 5–14 October 2008, provides the following guidance concerning implementation of the IUCN Programme 2009–2012:

2. REQUESTS the Director General and the IUCN Commissions to:

- (a) expand resilience work on coral reefs and mangroves to other marine ecosystems;
- (b) promote actions and linkages by the Secretariat, members and partners that improve science, management and policy relevant to sustaining coral reefs and marine ecosystems and the people that depend on them; and
- (c) promote the development of awareness and adaptation actions in support of sustainable livelihoods and ecosystem-based management.

The *Status of Coral Reefs of the World 2008* report outlines that 500 million people have some dependence on coral reefs for food resources and supplementary income from fishing, coastal protection, building materials and income from tourism. Of these people, about 30 million are almost totally dependant on coral reefs. Within the territories of the various jurisdictions represented by the USCRTF members there are tens of thousands of people whose livelihood and well being depend on healthy coral reef ecosystems. The need to expand resilience work is urgent and I call on the Task Force to assist IUCN in implementing the actions called for in this resolution.

Thank you for your time.

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ATTACHMENT

Resolution 4.080 was adopted by the IUCN World Conservation Congress in Barcelona, Spain at the Members Assembly and as amended during the 3rd Sitting, October 6, 2008.

4.080 Mobilizing action to build resilience and assist adaptation to climate change of coral reefs and marine ecosystems and people that depend on them

RECOGNIZING the key role that oceans play in sustaining life on our planet;

ALARMED at the multiplying threats to marine biodiversity, health and the livelihoods of coastal people through the major climate-change threats of rising sea-surface temperatures, and the impending threat of ocean acidification;

FURTHER ALARMED at the accelerating rate of degradation of marine ecosystems such as coral reefs, mangroves, and marine resources, due to activities such as overfishing on a global scale including Illegal, Unregulated, Unreported (IUU) fishing and the use of destructive fishing methods, which according to the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), resulted in more than 75% of the world's fish stocks being fully exploited or overexploited (or depleted and recovering from depletion);

NOTING findings of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) *Fourth Assessment Report* on the vulnerability of marine ecosystems, especially coral reefs, to climate change and the need for more marine science contained in the IPCC assessments;

RECALLING Resolution 2.55 *Millennium Ecosystem Assessment* adopted by the 2nd IUCN World Conservation Congress (Amman, 2000) and Decision VII/5 of the 7th Meeting of the Conference of Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD COP7, Kuala Lumpur, 2004) that describe the challenge of sustaining coral-reef and marine ecosystems;

FURTHER NOTING the IUCN Members' Report to the International Coral Reef Initiative (ICRI) at the ICRI General Meeting in Tokyo, Japan, 2007, that details IUCN activities in support of coral-reef conservation in the face of climate change;

AWARE that the *IUCN Programme 2009-2012* identifies actions to build resilience in coral-reef and mangrove ecosystems;

FURTHER NOTING that participants in the IUCN World Conservation Forum, (Barcelona, October 2008), called for action by the global conservation community to link science, management and policy to increase the resilience of marine ecosystems and the people that depend on them; and

WISHING to consolidate and support actions to build the resilience of marine ecosystems and help these systems cope with climate change;

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