

**U.S. Coral Reef Task Force Meeting
May 4, 2006
Washington, DC**

Resolution 15-2: Endorse an International Year of the Reef in 2008 (IYOR 2008)

Responsible Party: An IYOR Working Group will be formed with representatives from the USCRTF Education & Outreach Working Group, International Working Group, CRTF members and key partners. Initial contacts are:

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Issue Statement:

What is proposed?

- International Year of the Reef 2008 (IYOR 2008) would be a year-long campaign of events and initiatives hosted by a wide range of government and non-governmental organizations around the world to provide information, tools, and action for coral reef conservation.
- IYOR 2008 would include a series of “high-visibility” events including an international launch (press conference), the U.S.-hosted international coral reef science meeting (July 2008), release of the World and U.S. reports on the status of coral reef ecosystems, and 10 year anniversary and review of U.S. efforts through the U.S. Coral Reef Task Force.
- IYOR 2008 would be modeled after IYOR 1997 and other successful international campaigns, with a central coordinator and campaign website for international distribution of information, materials and the calendar of events.
- There is strong domestic and international and NGO support for IYOR 2008, with endorsement from the ICRI Co-Chairs, Japan and Palau.

Why 2008?

There are a number of significant U.S. related events that make 2008 an ideal time for a targeting campaign on coral reef conservation including:

- 10th anniversary of the U.S. Coral Reef Task Force (USCRTF)
- Release of the report on status of U.S. coral reef ecosystems
- Release of the report, Status of Coral Reefs of the World: 2008
- U.S. to host the quadrennial International Coral Reef Symposium (world’s largest meeting on coral reef science and management)
- U.S. government will serve as Co-Chair of the International Coral Reef Initiative Secretariat

Opportunities for USCRTF members:

IYOR 2008 would be a good opportunity to:

- Highlight successful coral reef management, science and education efforts.
- Highlight USCRTF priorities and goals of the U.S. National Action Strategy to Conserve Coral Reefs including:

- Promote Local Action Strategies
- Promote watershed, regional, and ecosystem-based approaches to management.
- Address role of US as a major importer and exporter of coral reef species.
- Assume a global leadership role in promoting policies, management and conservation actions to protect these key coastal and marine resources.
- Highlight commitments under U.S. Ocean Action Plan.
- Highlight U.S. as Co-Chair of ICRI Secretariat.

What it will take for the U.S. to engage and participate:

IYOR 2008 provides an excellent opportunity to showcase your agency's or jurisdiction's commitment to coral reef conservation and past successes. To maximize U.S. participation and enhance our international leadership on coral conservation, USCRTF members will need to identify what role they can play and what commitments they can make in support of the IYOR 2008. Active U.S. leadership role will require some combination of:

- 1) Financial support to assist with IYOR "centralized services" and member-specific IYOR events and initiatives.
- 2) Staff time to plan U.S. and international campaign, orchestrate member involvement and increase visibility of member's coral reef conservation efforts.
- 3) Content for events, announcements and products.

Each agency and jurisdiction should consider contributing:

- Funds for centralized services
- Funds for events specific to your agency or jurisdiction
- Leadership/representation at global and regional IYOR events
- Identification of constituent outreach and education opportunities:
 - Strategy for and implementation of media outreach and engagement
 - Strategy for utilizing IYOR 2008 to enhance and complement research and management priorities
- Development of appropriate communication, education and science materials
- Hosting events, conferences, workshops to strengthen awareness, conservation efforts, and capacity for enforcement and management
- Release of appropriate announcements and new/updated products

Background Statement:

Executive Order #13089 for the Protection of Coral Reefs mandates that the U.S. Coral Reef Task Force assess the U.S. role in "... protection of coral reef species and implement appropriate strategies and actions to promote conservation and sustainable use of coral reef resources worldwide."

Coral Reef Conservation Act of 2000 tasks the NOAA Administrator, with support from the USCRTF, with creating an action strategy and implementation plan to include goals and objectives for "international and regional issues," as well as "outreach and education." The Act also authorizes NOAA to conduct activities to "conserve coral reefs and coral reef ecosystems" including "enhancing public awareness, education, understanding, and appreciation of coral reefs"

and coral reef ecosystems,” and “cooperative conservation and management of coral reefs and coral reef ecosystems with local, regional, or international programs and partners.”

The National Coral Reef Action Strategy (2002) defines outreach and education as “an essential part of fulfilling all the other goals in this Strategy,” and calls on Task Force members to: “(1) Raise public awareness and appreciation for coral reef ecosystems through targeted and focused communications campaigns; (2) Incorporate coral reef ecosystem issues in education programs to promote understanding of marine conservation; (3) Inform the public and policy-makers about accomplishments ... of the U.S. Coral Reef Task Force.”

USCRTF Resolution 14_8 Proposal on 2007 Year of the Reef: At the 14th Meeting for the USCRTF in Palau, the Task Force charged the Education and Outreach Working Group with “developing options and recommendations (in collaboration with the International Coral Reef Initiative) on a possible 2007 Year of the Reef.”

Statement Decision(s):

The USCRTF decides to:

- Endorse the proposal for a 2008 International Year of the Reef.
- Encourage CRTF members to work with the International Coral Reef Initiative and other partners to plan, support and implement IYOR 2008.