



*

OKINAWA - 28 JUNE / 3 JULY 2004
10TH INTERNATIONAL CORAL REEF SYMPOSIUM

*

Okinawa Declaration on Conservation and Restoration of Endangered Coral Reefs of the World

Coral reefs are an invaluable human treasure, which sustain diversified species and beautiful seascapes, and provide wave-resistant structures and resources for fisheries and tourism. However, coral reefs and associated ecosystems are now under serious threats of degradation and local extinction due to direct devastation caused by development of the coastal zone and destructive fishing technique, and indirect stress caused by terrestrial run-off and the consequences of changes resulting from over-fishing. Moreover, global warming, decreasing carbonate levels and sea level rise from increasing anthropogenic CO₂ are potential stressors on coral reefs which, in some cases, may lead to severe bleaching and extensive coral mortality. The degradation of coral reefs by local and global environmental stresses is destroying irreplaceable values and functions of coral reefs and leading to loss of this treasure.

The participants of the 10th International Coral Reef Symposium (28 June to 2 July, Okinawa) highlight that this degradation of coral reefs has now reached a critical stage and declare in the strongest terms that further efforts by coastal communities for conservation and restoration of coral reefs should be made in each nation acting individually and in concert through closer international cooperation. To this end, not only scientific research, but also continuous extensive monitoring using multiple approaches and appropriate measures for conservation and demonstrable sustainability and human uses and impacts, must be promoted. Sound restoration measures for already-degraded coral reefs must be applied on the basis of secure scientific understanding.

These efforts must be fostered and sustained through stewardship and cooperation among scientists, managers, policymakers, local residents, and nongovernmental

organizations. The task must be enhanced through international linkages such as between the principal world scientific body (International Society for Reef Studies [ISRS]), the main international management initiative (International Coral Reef Initiative [ICRI]), leading international organizations (e.g. UNESCO, UNEP, IUCN) and NGOs.

The 10th International Coral Reef Symposium Participants appeal to all researchers, managers and users/lovers of coral reefs to work collectively to accomplish the above task, and they urge relevant international organizations, national governments and NGOs to find common understanding and means to collaborate towards this aim.

<http://www.plando.co.jp/icrs2004/>

* * *



* * *