



Call to Action

Coral reefs are the foundation of life in our island nations. They are extremely important for our food security, economic well-being, livelihoods, protection from natural disasters, and cultural identity and traditions. Policy is a critical cornerstone of effective coral reef stewardship. We believe that the ultimate value of science is to inform our policies and guide decision making. We recognize that to take appropriate action, it is critical that we have a convergence of the best available science with bold commitment from political leadership. By working together, political and scientific leaders can promote the effective stewardship of coral reefs, not only locally and nationally, but also regionally and internationally.

We face many challenges. Our coral reefs are currently experiencing an unprecedented level of impacts from climate change, ocean acidification, land-based sources of pollution, overfishing, and illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing. If our coral reefs are further degraded, then our reef-dependent communities will suffer and be displaced. Unfortunately, our islands lack the adequate financial, human, and institutional capacity to meet these challenges, including accessible sustainable financing mechanisms. Existing national coral reef stewardship policies need to be strengthened with solutions-oriented science, traditional knowledge, and relevant cultural practices. Further, while we share concerns and aspirations, we recognize that solutions need to be tailored to a country-specific level due to inherent differences between our island nations.

Because of these daunting challenges, immediate and bold action is required. It is imperative that we act.

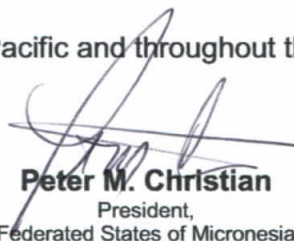
As national leaders, we boldly commit to strengthen our coral reef stewardship efforts across Micronesia by:

- Refining and strengthening the bridge between scientific knowledge and policies by making management decisions based on sound science that can be immediately acted upon;
- Strengthening the technical and financial capacities of our island nations through partnerships with the international scientific and technical community;
- Collaborating and supporting one another's coral reef stewardship efforts in an open, transparent, and adaptive process;
- Using successful national and regional frameworks—including our existing national protected area networks and national and regional financing mechanisms—to leverage new regional initiatives; and
- Increasing the integration of traditional knowledge, customary practices, and scientific research in guiding national coral reef policies.

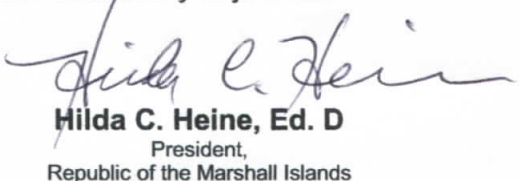
We challenge our neighbors in the Pacific and throughout the global community to join us.


Tommy E. Remengesau, Jr.
President,
Republic of Palau




Peter M. Christian
President,
Federated States of Micronesia




Hilda C. Heine, Ed. D.
President,
Republic of the Marshall Islands





RESPONSE from the Scientific and Technical Team to the 13th ICRS Leaders' Call to Action

It is with a sense of hope, optimism, and commitment that we offer our response to the 13th ICRS Leaders' Call to Action.

As the invited scientific and technical experts attending the 13th ICRS Leaders' Summit, we pledge to serve as an international team of natural and social scientists, engineers, lawyers, and governance experts to fully engage and support national leaders on questions and needs regarding their bold policy actions to address urgent threats to coral reefs.

We commit to provide:

- Advice – *immediate and focused guidance, including updates regarding new findings;*
- Technical assistance – *provision of technical support and services, as requested;*
- Capacity building – *including research exchanges and academic support and partnerships; and*
- Action – *supporting place-based policy and management actions with solutions-oriented research.*

We proactively offer our assistance that includes, but is not limited to, the following areas:

- Climate change adaptation and coral reefs – *leads: Drs. Dunbar, Hughes, Palumbi, and Cinner;*
- Coral reef fisheries management – *leads: Drs. Hixon, Sale, Crowder, and Cinner;*
- Legal and regulatory review and drafting – *leads: Justice Dennis Yamase and Denise Antolini;*
- Human dimensions of coral reef stewardship – *leads: Drs. Cinner, Kittinger, and Hamnett;*
- Addressing sedimentation and land-based sources of pollution – *leads: Drs. Richmond and Golbuu;*
- Coral reef and reef-associated habitat resilience and restoration – *leads: Drs. Golbuu, Richmond, Hughes, Hixon, and Palumbi; and*
- Design and implementation guidance on coral reef marine protected areas – *leads: Drs. Palumbi, Crowder, Hixon, and Sale.*

Coral reefs provide invaluable economic, cultural, and ecological benefits to Pacific Island nations and humanity at large. Preserving these reefs demands bold action at national, regional, and global levels, supported through local participation. We pledge to take up the 13th ICRS Leaders' Call to Action, and will work together with national leaders of the Federated States of Micronesia, the Republic of Palau, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, and the world to curb the continued loss of coral reefs.

Robert H. Richmond, Ph.D.
Professor,
University of Hawai'i

Denise E. Antolini, J.D.
Professor,
University of Hawai'i

Joshua Cinner, Ph.D.
Professor,
James Cook University

Larry B. Crowder, Ph.D.
Professor,
Stanford University

Robert B. Dunbar, Ph.D.
W.M. Keck Professor of Earth Sciences,
Stanford University

Yimnang Golbuu, Ph.D.
Chief Executive Officer,
Palau International Coral Reef Center

Michael P. Hamnett, Ph.D.
Researcher,
University of Hawai'i

Mark Hixon, Ph.D.
Professor,
University of Hawai'i

Terry Hughes, Ph.D.
Professor,
James Cook University

Jack Kittinger, Ph.D.
Sr. Director, Hawai'i Program,
Conservation International

Stephen Palumbi, Ph.D.
Professor,
Stanford University

Peter Sale, Ph.D.
Professor Emeritus,
University of Windsor

Dennis Yamase, J.D.
Chief Justice,
Federated States of Micronesia