



**CORAL TRIANGLE  
INITIATIVE**  
ON CORAL REEFS, FISHERIES  
AND FOOD SECURITY



## WELCOME REMARKS

by

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To be delivered during Webinar in celebration of Coral Triangle day  
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1. Good afternoon and a happy Coral Triangle Day to everyone!
2. I am speaking here from my office of the Regional Secretariat of the Coral Triangle Initiative for Corals, Fisheries and Food Security of the CT 6 countries namely Indonesia, Malaysia, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Solomon Islands and Timor-Leste.
3. My office is situated at the North of Sulawesi, in Manado, the land of smiling people. My best wishes to the Government of Indonesia and Manado North Sulawesi and the beautiful people of Indonesia.
4. My well wishes and my big welcome to all of you from the rest of CT countries and the region.
5. This year, the celebration carries the theme “**Working together towards a plastic-free Coral Triangle**” and calls for cooperation and continuous collaborative action regionally and internationally towards addressing marine plastic pollution as it continues to be one of the most pressing environmental issues of our time.
6. Current data reveals that the world now produces more than 380 million tonnes of plastic every year, which is on average of 1.05 million tonnes each day. Hourly, the people of the world produces 43,000 tonnes of plastic - much of which ends up entering our natural environment and oceans.
7. Although it has been reported that the main world’s marine plastic pollution ‘originated’ from Asia – **there is another side of the coin.**
8. Developed countries export their plastic wastes to our region for so-called ‘recycling’. Much of the wastes could not be recycled and ended up in our region’s landfills, rivers and eventually also at sea.

9. Not all plastic materials are recyclable. Developed countries with tight agenda on recyclable materials have plastic products produced by manufacturers which are recyclable but some developing countries have to bear cheaper unrecyclable plastic products. This side of double standards are also due not because of manufacturers seeking of opportunities for more profit but also due to the role of the governments of developing countries. It is timely that the governments of developing countries should also look into the aspects of ensuring that recyclable plastics are produced or use by their local consumers. But of course this has limitation too because some kinds of food need to have multilayer plastic to contain them and multilayer plastic containers are more costly and some can hardly be recycled.
10. Moreover, plastic materials cannot be continually recycled. Plastics are polymers, and everytime the plastic is recycled, the polymer chain grows shorter and its quality is reduced. Each plastic materials can only be recycled 2 to 3 times before its quality reduces to the point that it can no longer be used.
11. Stricter control of plastic scrap wastes in the CT region is urgently required.
12. Additionally, production and use of plastics in this region should be reduced with several strategies such as reduce, recyclable, as well as new alternatives to plastic.
13. Note that the cost of marine litter is estimated to be about USD 1.3 billion to the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) countries alone. And this cost is increasing.
14. The Regional Secretariat had been working regionally and internationally on plastic issues. For example: RS attended the 4th Session of the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA-4) to address priority areas of common concern including marine litter in Nairobi; RS visited ASEAN Secretariat in 2019 to discuss its participation in environmental matters in the region; and RS was invited as an Observer at the 24th Intergovernmental Meeting of the Coordinating Body on the Seas of East Asia (COBSEA) in Bali, Indonesia in June 2019. In fact, CTI-CFF had applied to be a member of COBSEA.
15. RS hopes that CTI-CFF will have collaborations with **UNEP COBSEA Strategic Directions 2018-2022, COBSEA Regional Action Plan on Marine Litter (RAP MALI), RAP-MALI WG on Marine Litter, UNEP Regional Seas programmes, ASEAN, SPREP, the Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-Based**

**Activities (GPA), and Sustainable Development Goals and Post-2030 Agenda** (especially on SDG 14) as some of the implementation platforms for concerted actions in the region. RS also follows with interest on the amendments for a new waste category of plastics under Annex II of the Basel Convention.

16. RS notes the Bali Declaration adopted at the 4th Intergovernmental Review Meeting on the Implementation of the GPA (IGR-4), which stressed capacity building, sharing know-how and including various stakeholders, technology transfer and exchange of best practices on the protection of the marine and coastal environment, with several COBSEA member countries already promulgating their National Action Plans on Marine Litter.
17. Further, the CTI-CFF also continues to collaborate with its Strategic Partners such as the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF), The Nature Conservancy (TNC), Coral Triangle Center (CTC), Wildlife Conservation Society, Conservation International, and GIZ on marine conservation, sustainable livelihoods and food security issues.
18. This webinar will further raise awareness on the adverse impact of marine litter especially plastic wastes, shed light on ocean conservation and the numerous ways to ensure the Coral Triangle communities' well-being, and highlights the work of our Youths.
19. We also would like to recognize the different individuals, organizations and communities who through their own initiatives, have taken actions and have made significant impacts on the ground towards addressing plastic pollution. We hope by highlighting their efforts, a domino effect is created.
20. We thank our resource person from WWF, Ms. Jackie Thomas for being part of this CT Day Webinar to give us information on the status of Marine Litter in the Coral Triangle. We also thank our resource persons from the two (2) youth organizations – Bye Bye Plastic Bags Philippines and Sea Soldier North Sulawesi Indonesia to showcase how they have positively and productively been using their energy and creative ideas and skills to contribute in the protection of our environment and oceans. Our Youths is our Future!
21. We also thank the participants who are joining us here via ZOOM Webinar and CTI-CFF Facebook Account for their interest and hopefully would be translated into action as we traverse to the New Normal. This is a

manifestation of your love for corals, love for Coral Triangle communities' well-being.

22. Again, welcome and may this Webinar provides the information for deeper reflection, inspiration and impetus to progress together with further cooperative, collaborative activities at national, regional and international levels. Thank you and Happy Coral Triangle Day!

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