



CORAL TRIANGLE INITIATIVE

ON CORAL REEFS, FISHERIES AND FOOD SECURITY

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Shared Oceans, Shared Responsibilities: Reflections on World Oceans Day and Coral Triangle Day

By Suseno Sukoyono, Executive Chairman, CTI-CFF Interim Regional Secretariat

On June 8, 2012, we will once again mark **World Oceans Day** and celebrate the bounty of the seas that sustains the lives of millions and nurtures cultures across countries. This year's celebration also signals a new beginning as the Coral Triangle Initiative on Coral Reefs, Fisheries and Food Security (CTI-CFF) join partners in celebrating **Coral Triangle Day** for the first time on June 9, 2012.

Coral Triangle Day brings together individuals, organizations, and communities for beach clean-ups, sustainable seafood dinners, and multi-media exhibitions, among others, on one special day of the year to shed light the numerous ways to protect and conserve the world's richest marine environment which is also the cradle of marine life on the planet – the Coral Triangle.

This year's World Oceans Day and Coral Triangle Day celebrations give us an opportunity to reflect not only on benefits that our shared marine heritage provide, but also of the risks that threaten its sustainability and how we can work together to sustain it.

For those of us living in the Coral Triangle, the impact of our marine and coastal resources' decline is an everyday reality. Fish stocks continue to dwindle and fishermen have to go venture out further into the sea for the day's catch; communities in coastal areas have to grapple with climate risks; and overfishing and destructive fishing practices continue to threaten our endangered marine species.

Despite this grim scenario, the CTI-CFF has demonstrated that by working at the regional, national and community level, we can make headways in protecting our marine resources. We have made significant achievements in achieving the goals that we laid out in 2009.

At the 7th CTI Senior Officials Meeting in Jakarta in October 2011, the six Coral Triangle countries adopted a Region-wide Early Action Plan for Climate Change Adaptation that guides communities in developing and implementing effective adaptation measures. A complimentary tool that enables the Coral Triangle's most vulnerable communities to tailor-fit their adaptation activities to their own needs has also been developed and is now being applied in the Verde Island Passage in the Philippines, at the Nino Konis Santana National Park in Timor-Leste, and in Gizo, Solomon Islands, to name a few.

The CTI-CFF also scored a breakthrough this year in integrated the principles of fisheries, biodiversity and climate change in establishing effective marine protected area (MPA) networks in the Coral Triangle. In the past, many MPA networks were unsuccessful because they focused solely on one principle and objective. The CTI-CFF also strengthened its fight against destructive fishing practices by developing a framework that is envisioned to spur new legislation that will promote sustainable fisheries and curb illegal and unsustainable fishing.

The year 2012, proved also to be a good start as a record number of 1.44 million endangered green sea turtle eggs were laid last year in Baguan Island, southern Philippines - achieving an all-time high since 1984. Factoring life expectancy rates, the eggs are expected to grow into 13,000 adult sea turtles and boost a dwindling population classified as endangered under the International Union for Conservation of Nature Red List of Threatened Species. The expected increase in sea turtle population supports the goals of the CTI-CFF to improve the status of threatened species and is a direct result of conservation, enforcement and community engagement in the area.

Recognizing the need to involve more stakeholders to multiply our impact, the CTI-CFF engaged more than 100 business leaders in our annual business forum in Kuala, Lumpur which has resulted in partnerships with government, communities and non-government organizations, giving much needed boost to conservation projects on the ground. This year, Indonesia will conduct the 3rd Regional Business Forum to continue the effort to engage private sectors in pursuing CTI-CFF goals.

As we enter into the third year of working together, the CTI-CFF held its first ever high-level financial roundtable last May in Manila where the six Coral Triangle governments and development partner organizations pledged to continue supporting and investing in the initiative's CTI-CFF's regional and national plans of action, specifically priority activities which are deemed the most critical to each country's needs and ensuring the long-term sustainability of the work that we've started.

Imbued with confidence by the milestones that we have achieved, we look forward to bringing our experiences to a larger world stage at the United Nations Summit on Sustainable Development (Rio+20) in Rio De Janeiro, Brazil this June. Echoing the United Nation's call that Rio+20 must galvanize action to improve the management and conservation of oceans, through multi-stakeholder initiatives, CTI-CFF will highlights how a **multi-stakeholder, people-centered, and goal-oriented** conservation approach can effectively stem the decline of our marine resources and sustain it for the millions who depend on it. Rio+20 provides excellent opportunity to promote and showcase the CTI-CFF. Emerging concept of Blue Economy will be a focus of discussion, and CTI-CFF is well positioned to present a leading example of how a Blue Economy can be achieved.

With this in mind, we hope that you will join us this June 8 in celebrating World Oceans Day and on June 9 for Coral Triangle Day to pay tribute not only to our shared oceans but also take stock of our shared responsibility in sustaining and protecting it.

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