

THE AMBON STATEMENT

(On small islands, coral reefs, archipelagos and related marine ecosystems)

Abstract

The International Conference on Small Islands and Coral Reefs (ISI-C) was held on August 3rd-5th 2010 in Ambon City, Indonesia. The conference was organised to share knowledge, information and experiences about the management and academic study of coral reef ecosystems. Within this, its main focus was on the effort needed to ensure sustainable small island development in balance with ecosystem health and social justice for island communities. An additional objective was to ensure that action plans were established that could respond to the impact of climate change on small islands, a priority identified at the World Ocean Conference in Manado (north Sulawesi) in May 2009. During ISI-C, the nature of archipelagos and archipelagic planning arose as key factors in debates. Reflecting these elements of discussion, the following statement was drafted during and formerly presented at the conclusion of the conference.

Keywords

Small islands, coral reefs, archipelagos, marine ecosystems

We, the delegates of the International Conference on Small Islands and Coral Reefs (ISI-C), conducted between the 3rd–5th of August 2010 in Ambon, Indonesia, affirm that:

- 1) Archipelagic regions, consisting of small islands and extensive marine territories, including coral reefs, have very specific policy, planning and development requirements.
- 2) Small islands and coral regions have unique ecosystems and cultural heritages, including traditional systems for managing terrestrial and marine resources.
- 3) Small islands and coral reefs are especially vulnerable to modern global and local human impacts, including climate change and unsustainable human uses. Unsustainable fishing practices, mining or poor land-use practices can seriously damage both ecological and social systems.
- 4) Regional management must acknowledge and engage with traditional community practices and incorporate with these into coastal management initiatives.
- 5) There is a need to develop partnerships of all stakeholders to rehabilitate, restore and conserve coastal and small island ecosystems and contribute to sustainable development for communities. Enhanced knowledge from research is needed to contribute to effective policy.
- 6) There is a need to develop international dialogue between archipelagic states and regions in order to identify and progress global strategies to address the challenges identified above.

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7) Finally, we strongly recommend enhanced efforts to address the impacts of climate change, especially sea-level rise, on small island regions. This should involve urgent adaptation and mitigation initiatives, and national and international efforts to reduce carbon emissions.

We acknowledge the Indonesian Ministry of Marine Affairs and Fisheries, the Provincial Government of Maluku and Pattimura University as hosts and facilitators of the International Symposium on Small Islands and Coral Reefs and collectively commit to progressing this agenda.

August 5th 2010