

Ocean acidification: State-of-the science considerations for Small Island Developing States

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The United States of America and New Zealand, in partnership with the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme, hosted a two-day International Workshop on Ocean Acidification: State-of-the-Science Considerations for Small Island Developing States (SIDS) on August 28 and 29, 2014, in Apia, Samoa.

The workshop was an official parallel event to the Third International Conference on SIDS. Workshop participants included technical experts on ocean acidification and policy experts on ocean issues, some of whom were SIDS delegates from the three SIDS regions.

Participants jointly recognised the nature of the ocean acidification threat to marine ecosystems surrounding SIDS, which provide their communities with food security, livelihoods and economic stability, resilience to extreme weather events, and cultural identity. Some of the important marine species which are potentially vulnerable to ocean acidification include corals; molluscs such as conchs, clams, and oysters; crustaceans such as lobsters and crabs; and reef and pelagic fish.

Ocean acidification is a current and escalating threat. Although some impacts are already occurring, others will increasingly be felt over coming decades. Participants recognised the need to establish standardised, affordable, long term research and monitoring capacity, including consideration of traditional knowledge, while also taking advantage of international communities-of-practice such as the Global Ocean Acidification Observing Network and the Ocean Acidification International Coordination Centre, by leveraging and mobilising existing scientific and technological resources and organisations within individual SIDS countries and across SIDS regions, and through international partnership and cooperation. The importance of awareness raising, capacity building, technology transfer, and resource mobilisation was emphasised, including the potential development of regional centres of excellence, as an efficient way to develop capacity within SIDS.

The workshop fostered the creation of ocean acidification networks for the Caribbean, Pacific Islands, and AIMS SIDS regions which will continue to develop next steps in their regions, including engaging participants from countries not present at the workshop, and through the



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near-term development of SIDS-driven, SIDS-connected and SIDS-focused 'Joint SIDS Recommendations on Ocean Acidification'.

Participants recognised that resilience-building strategies and practical adaptation actions, where feasible, must be simultaneously explored and developed given the serious nature of ocean acidification impacts. Strategies and action should include, but not be limited to, efforts that enhance functioning of local marine ecosystems (for example, management of nutrient run-off, overfishing, land-use change, seagrass beds, and use of marine protected areas), and strengthen resilience of the local communities through open sharing of scientific findings and capacity building to develop local awareness, expertise and knowledge.

Participants encouraged countries taking part in the Oceans, Seas and Biodiversity Partnership Dialogue and side events during the SIDS conference to seriously consider this report and its recommendations and conclusions ■

MORE INFO

This is the Co-Chairs' Provisional Report from the International Workshop on Ocean Acidification: State-of-the Science Considerations for Small Island Developing States, held August 28 – 29, 2014 on the Pacific Jewel, Apia, Samoa.