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IUCN Congratulates the six States for the groundbreaking Coral Triangle Initiative on Coral Reefs, Fisheries and Food Security (CTI)

Manado, North Sulawesi, Indonesia, Sunday 17 May, 2009 (IUCN) – The main highlights of this week was the Coral Triangle Summit where the Heads of States from the six countries involved in the Coral Triangle Initiative signed the first inter-state agreement in the coral triangle towards marine conservation efforts, supported by an NGO consortium.

“IUCN warmly congratulates the six governments of the CTI for their leadership in protecting the most diverse coral reefs of the world. The Coral Triangle is truly the Amazon of the Sea”, says **Taholo Kami**, IUCN Regional Director for Oceania Regional Office.

The *Coral Triangle Initiative on Coral Reefs, Fisheries and Food Security (CTI)* was launched yesterday at a Leaders Summit in Manado, North Sulawesi. This represent new ground breaking commitments by the six governments to an extraordinary joint effort to safeguard the world's richest marine resources and thereby ensuring food security for millions of people who dependent on these resources. The Heads of States of Indonesia, Malaysia, Papua New Guinea, the Philippines, Solomon Islands, and Timor Leste formally adopted one of the most comprehensive and specific plans for marine conservation.

“IUCN fully supports this new multilateral partnership to help safeguard the marine and coastal biological resources within the region in achieving their priority goals as stated in their Plans of Action. IUCN will seek to engage our Species Survival commission, World Commission on Protected Areas (WCPA) and other members. IUCN Oceania will seek to align this initiative with the Pacific Round table for nature conservation”, said **Bernard O’Callaghan** at the CTI Summit intervention on behalf of IUCN.

The Coral Triangle, the epicenter of marine life and diversity contains 76% of all known coral species and more than 3000 fish species despite only covering 1.6% of the planet’s oceanic area. Over 120 million people directly depend on these resources. This area also supports the largest tuna fisheries in the world, which generates billions of US dollars globally every year.

The value of tourism and fishery industry, as well as shoreline protection is estimated to be USD 2.3 billion per year. These valuable but yet vulnerable marine resources are threatened by over harvesting, pollution and unsustainable and uncoordinated coastal development.

“Healthy coastal and marine ecosystems will reduce the vulnerability of coastal communities, especially in the face of climatic changes. Protection of coral reefs, sea grass beds and mangroves is vital to help people adapt to increased frequency and intensity of extreme weather events”, says **Don Macintosh**, MFF Coordinator.

The CTI leaders recognise the urgent need to address poverty issues in the Coral Triangle countries, as well as the need for a stronger climate change focus.

“IUCN further urges donor governments, funding agencies, NGOs, and the private sector to embrace this Initiative, and for world leaders at the UN Climate Conference in Copenhagen later this year to support the Coral Triangle countries in their efforts to protect their most vulnerable assets from the impacts of climate change,” says **Aban Marker Kabraji**, IUCN Asia Regional Director.

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Photos/Audio/Video material is available at/from: www.iucn.org/asia

About IUCN

IUCN, the International Union for Conservation of Nature, helps the world find pragmatic solutions to our most pressing environment and development challenges by supporting scientific research; managing field projects all over the world; and bringing governments, NGOs, the UN, international conventions and companies together to develop policy, laws and best practice.

The world's oldest and largest global environmental network, IUCN is a democratic membership union with more than 1,000 government and NGO member organizations, and almost 11,000 volunteer scientists and experts in some 160 countries. IUCN's work is supported by over 1,000 professional staff in 60 offices and hundreds of partners in public, NGO and private sectors around the world. IUCN's headquarters are located in Gland, near Geneva, in Switzerland.

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