



NEWS FROM NOAA

NATIONAL OCEANIC & ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION • US DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
January 17, 2008

MEDIA ADVISORY

International Year of the Reef Launched at International Coral Reef Initiative Meeting

WHAT: Coral reef experts and managers from the United States, Mexico, France, and Bonaire will officially inaugurate the International Year of the Reef 2008 with a news conference as part of the International Coral Reef Initiative Meeting in Washington D.C. A live telephone and web connection to a NOAA-funded coral reef exploration of Bonaire, Netherland Antilles will present new findings following release of report on 2005 Caribbean coral bleaching event.

WHEN: Thursday, Jan. 24, 11:00 a.m.- 12:00 noon

WHERE: Georgetown University Marriott Conference Center, Salon F
3800 Reservoir Road, Washington, D.C.

WHO: Bill Eichbaum, managing director and vice president, marine portfolio, World Wildlife Fund
Christian Estrosi, secretary of state for overseas territories, France
Ernesto Enkerlin, director, National Commission for Protected Areas, Mexico
Claudia McMurray, assistant secretary, Bureau of Oceans and International Environmental and Scientific Affairs, U.S. Department of State
Clive Wilkinson, coordinator, Global Coral Reef Monitoring Network
Vice Admiral Conrad Lautenbacher, under secretary of Commerce and NOAA Administrator
Mark Patterson, Virginia Institute of Marine Science, chief scientist, Mission to Bonaire
Frank von Slobbe, secretary for environment, Bonaire

Reporters are encouraged to attend in person, but a teleconference phone bridge will be provided. Reporters will be able to ask questions via teleconference. Call Ben Sherman, 301-713-3066 ext. 191 or David Hall, ext. 178 at NOAA, or Kerry Green Zobor at the World Wildlife Fund, 202-778-9509 for additional information or telephone call-in number and conference password. Reporters are also invited to a reception from 6:00 p.m.-8:00 p.m. Thursday evening at the World Bank. If interested please confirm attendance with ICRI Public Affairs coordinator Francis Staub at 240-395-0251.

International Year of the Reef 2008 seeks to draw attention to coral reefs as sentinels of the ocean environment. Press conference will detail planned international activities, the first of which is a report on the 2005 coral bleaching event in the Caribbean that affected more than 80 percent of the reefs in the region. An ongoing scientific mission using autonomous underwater vehicles and other technologies to examine the reefs off Bonaire will be presented live through web and phone hook-up as part of press event. NOAA, and U.S. Department of State, officials will detail U.S. activities and efforts.

Relevant Web Sites:

International Year of the Reef 2008: <http://www.iyor.org>

International Coral Reef Initiative: <http://www.icriforum.org/>

Global Coral Reef Monitoring Network: <http://www.gcrmn.org>

Mission to Bonaire: <http://www.oceanexplorer.noaa.gov/explorations/08bonaire/>