



**CORAL TRIANGLE
INITIATIVE**
ON CORAL REEFS, FISHERIES
AND FOOD SECURITY



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1. Excellency, Dr. Melchior Mataki, Chair of CTI-CFF Committee of Senior Officials, Head of Delegation of CT6 Member Countries, Distinguished Representatives, Colleagues, Ladies and Gentlemen,
A pleasant morning and afternoon to each and every one.
2. In November 2019 when I assumed the post as the Executive Director of CTI-CFF Regional Secretariat at the 15th Senior Official Meeting in Honiara, Solomon Islands, it never occurred to me that in the following years, things are about to change and reshape the way many aspects in our lives are conducted. Since the 2nd quarter of 2020, after the first wave of Corona Virus crisis hit us, RS has been conducting almost everything virtually.
3. Despite this pandemic and all the challenges it brings, RS remains dutiful to its function as the facilitator and coordinator of CTI-CFF.
4. RS has successfully conducted virtually 20 Working Group meetings, 12 Internal Resource Committee, 2 Financial Resource Working Group, 7 Women Leaders' Forum, 1 Sustainable Business Forum discussion, and 2 University Partnership meeting.
5. RS also has conducted a series of virtual meeting on the finalization of draft Host Country Agreement, draft RPOA 2.0, monthly meeting of the Technical Committee of CTI Conservation Trust Fund and Special SOM in May 2021.
6. RS continues to strengthen strategic partnership with CTI Partners in many sectors, which will be elaborated on the IRC presentation.
7. An increased of CTI-CFF visibility was manifested through participation in many international fora such as the International Coral Reef Initiative (ICRI) 35th General Assembly Meeting (36th ICRI Meeting will be tonight, which I will be attending), other international meetings are ATSEA Phase 2, Eastern Tropical Pacific Marine Corridor (CMAR), Allen Coral Atlas, ASEAN Centre for Biodiversity's ASEAN-UK COP26 preparation, PEMSEA, UN DESA, Biodiversity COP15, UN Climate Change Conference COP26, as well as contributing a 5-page article on the achievement of CTI-CFF in the publication entitled A Better World Volume 6 which is distributed widely in the internet. Recently, RS has also completed the new corporate video of CTI-CFF accomplishment and status.
8. To achieve all these accomplishments, RS has to tackle many challenges affecting RS and member countries.

9. To address the issue of lack of quorum due to the present day challenges, RS had taken necessary measures which include:
 - Constantly reminding and following up the confirmation of attendance to the CT6, officially and informally,
 - Offering support and assistance in improving communication faced by Member Countries,
 - Initiating in-situ virtual meeting participation (in-situ VMP) where participants attending meeting from rented meeting room in hotels to ensure better internet connection.
10. The crisis that hits Member Countries as well as the rest of the world has consequently affects Countries' financials. RS is in total understanding with this issue, and has taken mitigating measures to help ease member countries in terms of Country Contribution.
11. RS, through CTI Partners WCS, was able to secure funding from EU and KfW to support in terms of technical expertise from CFA in helping RS to develop the design for the establishment of CTI Trust Fund.
12. RS had also discussion with USAID Regional Mission for Asia (RDMA) in which USAID RDMA is now initiating through its Public International Organization a grant of USD2 million for a duration of 3-year project to CTICFF countries through RS.
13. At the Secretariat itself, RS control its cash flow prudently. The purchases of many non-urgent equipment has either been put on hold or bought when absolutely needed.
14. RS also does not pursue the 2 positions that had been freezed in the IRC Meeting in 2021 as well as does not fill in the Program Support Officer who has been vacant since January 2021 since the workload are capable to be carried out by the present number of Staff. For this, RS was able to save more than USD 67,000 per year in terms of salary plus other related expenditure.
15. Without compromising, the pandemic has indirectly showed that the present number of Staff are actually sufficient to carry out work at RS with extra effort and commitment from the present Staff.
16. Therefore, in considering this commitments from the Staff, RS would like to seek kind support on the decision to be made regarding the percentage of increment which is to be decided. RS as proposed in the IRC for a consideration of 10 % annual increment in view of the increase cost of living. This increment will also boost staff commitment and spirit as well as help in increasing the PLOCA organization performance index on staff satisfaction and commitments to be at par with other international organization.
17. RS faces many challenges in securing the best and most suitable candidates for positions in RS. Three major examples are given here, MEM, FOM and CIM post. For Monitoring & Evaluation Manager (MEM) in February 2020, RS received 31 candidates, 9 from ID, 3 MY, 1 PNG, 1 PH, and 17 from outside CT6 member countries. RS had shortlisted 3 candidates, one each from ID, Bangladesh, Pakistan. The candidate from Bangladesh, our current MEM was the most qualified candidate at that moment. RS takes note of the IRC Meeting on SPPM where Member Countries voiced out their hope for the prioritization of candidates from member countries. Regarding MEM, I had no choice.

I had to apply Article 8 on Professional Staff and Support Staff, Para 3 of THE AGREEMENT ON THE

ESTABLISHMENT OF THE SECRETARIAT which states that “Wherever possible, Professional Staff shall be nationals of Parties. Nationals of other States will only be appointed where there are no suitable candidates from Parties.”

18. For Finance & Operation Manager (FOM) and Communication & Information Manager (CIM), RS had to advertise 3 times.
19. When RS started the 1st cycle of FOM recruitment in August 2020, RS opened the vacancy only to CT6, as expressed by Member Countries. RS received only three (3) applicants, 2 from ID and 1 from PNG. The 3, however did not meet qualifications.
20. On September 2020 RS had to open the 2nd vacancy globally to widen the pool of qualified candidates. RS receives 53 applications, 21 from ID, 3 from PH, 1 from TL and 28 from outside CT6. Two candidates fitted well, one from Indonesia and the other from the Philippines. The Indonesian later withdrew to except an offer from another organization and the one from Philippines withdrew due to the salary scale that did not meet her expectation.
21. On the 3rd cycle of FOM recruitment in December 2020, the candidate from Papua New Guinea was chosen.
RS would like to seek kind consideration of the respected Senior Officials to peruse the proposal by RS on the salary scale adjustment later in the IRC session.
22. Despite the long and overdue process, RS is pleased to announce that at this moment, RS has welcomed the new Technical Program Manager, Mr. Muhammad Ichsan from Indonesia, who has been with us since October. The new Financial and Operation Manager, Mr. Brian Nerre from Papua New Guinea, will arrive at the Secretariat before Christmas. And the newly selected Communication and Information Manager, Ms. Cecilia Cabusas from the Philippines, who has been notified.
23. As we welcome new Staff, we have to bid farewell to excellent and dedicated individuals who have been with RS for many years of hard work and dedication. Dr. Sharifah Nora Ibrahim of Malaysia, the Deputy Executive Director of Program Service; Dr. Gregory Pakovari Bennett of the Solomon Islands, the Technical Program Senior Manager. And later this month, Ms. Janet Polita of the Philippines, the Communication and Information Manager will follow suit.
24. Dr. Nora during her 4 years in RS from November 2017 to last November this year, had rendered many accomplishments and valuable contributions to this organization. Dr Gregory and Ms. Janet are no exceptions too. Their commitments are incomparable. Ms. Janet even forgo a job offered to her only to help RS to face this meeting and the Ministerial Meeting later this week before bidding farewell to all of us after Christmas.
25. Although it is unfortunate that RS is not able to introduce the new DED-PS during this Senior Officials Meeting because of many unforeseeable circumstances which resulted to a slight delay for the Appointment Committee to finalize the selection of candidates, RS is fervently anticipating that the arrival of the new DED-PS will be early next year.
26. As I close my address, allow me to thank the Committee of Senior Officials for giving me time to brief some of RS challenges and initiatives.
27. Thank you.