

*10<sup>th</sup> Coral Reef Task Force Meeting*  
*October 3-7, 2003*  
*Guam & CNMI*

**Resolution 10-7: Proposal on Response to Environmental Impacts of Natural Disasters**

WHEREAS, All U.S. states, territories and commonwealths and the Freely Associated States are subject to recurring, devastating natural disasters which significantly impact human communities and the natural environment and;

WHEREAS, coral reefs and tropical ecosystems and temperate climate aquatic and terrestrial ecosystems are fragile and the impacts of disasters can result in the loss of years of successful reproduction and recruitment, and;

WHEREAS, failure to respond to environmental impacts of natural disasters can result in immediate dangers to the human communities and result in permanent damage to the natural ecosystems and resources and serve as the impetus for long-term degradation and;

WHEREAS, both short and long-term damage to the natural environment negatively impacts the security, environment and quality of life in the states, territories and commonwealths of the United States, and;

WHEREAS, in a Presidentially declared natural disaster, the current National Response Plan defines the areas of response, and;

WHEREAS, the Federal Response Plan contains twelve Emergency Support Functions, and;

WHEREAS, the only Emergency Support Function addressing any aspect of response to environmental damage deals narrowly with hazardous materials, and;

WHEREAS, federal agencies are limited in their ability to assist in environmental response and states and territories are limited in their ability to fully address emergency needs of environmental damage, and;

WHEREAS, the National Response Plan is currently being written by an interagency workgroup led by the Department of Homeland Security, and;

WHEREAS, the inclusion of environmental response requirements in the Plan will increase the real security of the United States.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that

The United States Coral Reef Task Force will consult with the Department of Homeland Security to discuss development of one or more Emergency Support Functions, as necessary, to address emergency response for environmental impacts of natural disasters. The Task Force would also suggest that the Steering Committee communicate its response to this resolution the U.S. Agency for International Development Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance, and recommends that the Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance adopt similar measures.

2. Federal members of the Task Force, as appropriate, will engage the states, territories and commonwealths of the United States and the Freely Associated States in developing partnership response plans for environmental impacts to coral reef ecosystems from natural disasters, and developing strategies to support implementation of the plans.

3. The steering committee will investigate and consider the opportunities to include mass coral bleaching in natural disaster relief efforts. The steering committee will report to the Task Force on this issue at the February 2004 meeting.