



For Immediate Release

UNEP, GCFI produce guidance document addressing Stony Coral Tissue Loss Disease in the Wider Caribbean

Kingston, Jamaica. 15 November 2021 – The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) Cartagena Convention Secretariat and the Gulf and Caribbean Fisheries Institute (GCFI) are pleased to announce the development of a document designed to help regional partners make informed decisions about coral disease monitoring and response to the newly identified Stony Coral Tissue Loss Disease (SCTLD).

“Stony coral tissue loss disease can have devastating impacts on Caribbean coral reefs and on the communities and economies that are dependent on them”, said Ms. Ileana Lopez, Programme Officer for the Cartagena Convention’s Protocol Concerning Specially Protected Areas and Wildlife.

The new paper provides a comprehensive overview about the coral disease – from its distinguishing characteristics and appropriate monitoring strategies, to its impacts on coral reef ecosystems and threat to economies in the region. It also highlights best management practices and communication techniques, as well as possible interventions to respond to the disease.

“The document contains up-to-date, credible, scientific information,” explains Mr. Robert Glazer, GCFI’s Executive Director. “It’s also designed to be as user-friendly as possible for Caribbean policymakers, natural resource managers, and field practitioners who need to have the best science at their finger tips as they face this new threat to coral reefs.”

“We know that regional collaboration between managers and multiple actors at various levels is essential to respond to the threat that SCTLD poses to the Caribbean region,” added Ms. Lopez.

Accordingly, the White Paper describes existing platforms for collaboration, such as the SCTLD Caribbean Cooperation Team coordinated by the United States National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration’s Coral Reef Conservation Program and the Atlantic and Gulf Rapid Reef Assessment Program (AGRRA). It also highlights further recommendations on how actors at regional, national, and local levels can plan and work together to tackle the coral disease.

The White Paper on Stony Coral Tissue Loss Disease can be accessed on the website of the [UNEP Cartagena Convention Secretariat](#) and the [Gulf and Caribbean Fisheries Institute](#). The development of the White Paper was made possible through funding provided by the Government of Sweden.

Further Resources

[Recording](#) of the launch of the White Paper held on 25th October 2021.

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Notes to Editors

About the Cartagena Convention

The Convention for the Protection and Development of the Marine Environment in the Wider Caribbean Region was adopted in 1983 in Cartagena, Colombia. Known as the “Cartagena Convention”, it became legally binding in 1986.

The Convention is supported by 3 Protocols, or technical agreements, namely the Protocol Concerning Cooperation in Combating Oil Spills, the Protocol Concerning Pollution from Land-Based Sources and Activities (LBS) and the Protocol Concerning Specially Protected Areas and Wildlife (SPAW).

The Secretariat for the Cartagena Convention and its Protocols is based in Kingston, Jamaica and is supported by specialized Regional Activity Centres (RACs). The RAC for Oil Spills is hosted in Curacao ([RAC REMPEITC Caribe](#)), the one for marine biodiversity is hosted in Guadeloupe ([SPAW RAC](#)), while the LBS RACs are hosted in Trinidad and Tobago ([Institute of Marine Affairs](#)) and Cuba ([Centre of Research and Environmental Management of Transport-CIMAB](#)).

For more information, please visit the Secretariat’s website <http://www.unenvironment.org/cep> and social media pages: [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#), [YouTube](#) and [LinkedIn](#).

About the Gulf and Caribbean Fisheries Institute

The Gulf and Caribbean Fisheries Institute (GCFI) was founded in 1947 to promote the exchange of current information on the use and management of marine resources in the Gulf and Caribbean region. From its beginning, GCFI has endeavored to involve scientific, governmental, non-governmental, academic, and commercial sectors to provide a broad perspective on relevant issues, and to encourage dialogue amongst groups that often operate in relative isolation from one another. GCFI is a 501(c)(3) non-profit corporation governed by a Board of Directors elected by and from its membership. All Officers and Board members serve GCFI on a volunteer basis.

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