



FOREWORD

THE Coral Triangle is aptly described as one of the biodiversity hotspots in the world today. The area supports a highly diverse marine flora and fauna shared by several countries. The diverse types of habitat found along the coasts of the islands have attracted myriads of species, many of which are economically important and on which thousands of generally impoverished people depend as sources of food and livelihood. During the last few decades, however, the production capacities of these fishery resources have significantly diminished due to the unmanaged and unregulated exploitation of the resources. The urgent need to manage and conserve these resources is the primary concern of the governments within the Coral Triangle.

Biodiversity is the base of life in all ecosystems. The authors of this book are concerned about the possible adverse effects of the loss of biodiversity caused by the increasing pressure on the resources by the people who depend mainly on them. They fear



Above: Communities can earn a living income from culturing seaweed as an alternative to fishing and harvesting from the reefs.

Opposite: Orange Cup Corals (*Tubastraea coccinea*) are non-zooxanthellate corals. They usually occupy shaded habitats under overhangs in caverns and in wrecks.

that the loss of biodiversity may lead to the eventual extinction of keystone species in the marine ecosystem. The book also tells of the different conservation efforts that are being carried out by the governments, non-governmental organizations and the private sector in the countries of the Coral Triangle. The different approaches and methods used by these groups are interesting and make good reading for those who are engaged in conservation works.

With the implementation of the conservation programmes and the protection and conservation of coastal fisheries, it is expected that the area's resources will recover to their former productive status in the near future. Alternative sources of livelihood for any displaced fishing families must be implemented so that they can earn enough for their needs. Seaweed farming is known as the most productive and environmentally friendly alternative livelihood for coastal populations.

To provide examples of the conservation projects and programmes of the different countries in the Coral Triangle the authors have gathered information from both published documents and interviews with the people in charge of the implementation of the conservation efforts. The book also includes sections describing the structure, function and beauty of pristine marine ecosystems.

This book on the Coral Triangle is a must; beautiful and informative reading material for people from all walks of life.

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Dr Trono was awarded the rank and title of National Scientist by President Benigno S. Aquino III of the Philippines in recognition of his work in the field of tropical marine phycology: seaweed biodiversity, biology, ecology and culture, developed during his 40-year scientific career. He is currently affiliated with Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) Aquaculture Seaweed Research and Development as technical consultant.

Acronyms

WWF World Wide Fund for Nature

TNC The Nature Conservancy

WCS Wildlife Conservation Society

NGO non-governmental organization

CTI Coral Triangle Initiative

CTI-CFF Coral Triangle Initiative on Coral Reefs, Fisheries and Food Security

CITES Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species

IUCN International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources