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## **Under-threat coral reefs get protection strategy**



*Coral reefs are home to 25% of marine species worldwide*

A new report has outlined a strategy to protect the world's declining coral reefs.

Covering just 0.2 per cent of the ocean floor, the reefs are home to 25 per cent of marine species globally.

They also provide livelihoods to 100 million people and the basis for industries such as tourism and fishing, which are worth an annual net benefit of \$US 30 billion (£16 billion).

But climate change is threatening these tropical ecosystems; 20 per cent have already been wrecked and a further 50 per cent are facing immediate or long-term danger of collapse due to increases in sea temperature and ocean acidification.

A new report, *Coral Reef Resilience and Resistance to Bleaching*, issued jointly by the World Conservation Union (IUCN) and the Nature Conservancy (TNC), argues that fighting stress factors such as pollution or over-fishing's impact on coral reefs could help the reefs to better adapt to climate change.

A further report has been issued by the groups, *Managing mangroves for Resilience to Climate Change*, which outlines the strategy that needs to be followed to mitigate the impact of global warming in mangroves.

"The two reports give a clear positive message: while we cannot stop climate change in the short term, we can help tropical marine ecosystems survive. If reef managers and politicians follow the measures proposed in these publications, we may be able to reverse the trend," said Carl Gustaf Lundin, head of the IUCN global marine programme.

"It is high time for action, that is the clear message expressed by scientists around the world."

As well as minimising the impact of pollution and over-fishing, the strategy calls for the protection of so-called 'refuges' of particularly healthy and climate change-resistant sites that may be able to help regenerate degraded coral reefs.