GFCR Announces Over US$30 Million to Accelerate Coral Reef Resilience and Community Adaptation Across 22 Nations

New wave of partner, investment and country commitments scale up action, as coral reefs face climate tipping point

Antalya, Türkiye, 17 November 2026 — At the UN Climate Change Conference (COP31) today, the Global Fund for Coral Reefs (GFCR) announced more than US$30 million in new investments and donor contributions to scale up reef protection across 22 developing countries. With 96% of assessed warm, shallow-water coral reef ecosystems classified as Critically Endangered and virtually all coral reef ecosystems facing a high risk of collapse within our lifetime, the package brings together new government commitments, funding for frontline implementers and the launch of country-level financing mechanisms to unlock capital for reef-positive businesses and coastal communities. GFCR also welcomed Ireland as its newest state partner and Executive Board member and the Outrigger Impact Fund as a new investment partner.

"We are racing against time to protect coral reefs from climate change, pollution and other pressures. Yet they can and do recover when we invest decisively in their protection and restoration. The Global Fund for Coral Reefs helps drive investment and action to build resilience — protecting biodiversity while supporting fisheries, livelihoods, coastal protection and the communities that depend on healthy reefs," said Inger Andersen, Executive Director and Under-Secretary-General, United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP).

"Coral reefs are vital to millions of lives. They provide food, support livelihoods, and shield coastlines against storms. Losing them would not only be an ecological but also an economic disaster. The Global Fund for Coral Reefs uses catalytic finance to de-risk lending, so banks and investors can back the local businesses that keep reefs healthy. Invest in reefs, and they keep paying off," said Alexander De Croo, Administrator, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

Increasing Science-Based Investment

GFCR announced new areas of action to step up the safeguarding of coral refugia, the coral reefs with the greatest potential to remain resilient against climate impacts. These include more than US$10 million in new investments approved by the GFCR Executive Board, progress in expanding domestic lending through partnerships with local financial institutions, and a new investment partnership to expand access to finance across Pacific Small Island Developing States (SIDS). The new Executive Board approvals include additional funding for priority areas that harbour extensive coral reefs, mangroves and seagrass beds and provide habitat for threatened species:

- **Mexico, Belize, Guatemala, Honduras**: Mesoamerican Reef (MAR) Fund will expand development and investment in reef-positive finance solutions across 18 priority sites. This includes the establishment of a Clean Water Fund for wastewater treatment, sargassum

management, and guaranteed loans and parametric insurance for small-scale fishers. The investments are positioned to mobilise a further US$12 million in blended finance.

- **Indonesia:** Yayasan Konservasi Alam Nusantara (YKAN) will expand the Biru Fund, channeling recoverable grants into reef-positive shrimp, seaweed, fisheries and waste-management enterprises, and establishing self-financing mechanisms for priority marine protected areas that hold a significant share of the world's refugia.
- **Philippines:** Blue Alliance will expand its work to strengthen the management of marine protected area networks spanning nearly one million hectares across Mindoro and Northeast Palawan. It is developing a portfolio of reef-positive blue economy enterprises to generate long-term revenue for marine conservation and benefit more than 1.1 million people in local communities.
- **Tanzania (Zanzibar):** Blue Alliance will aim to close the financing gap for the Pemba Channel Conservation Area and establish a second large conservation area with enhanced management and sustainable finance measures. Reef-positive businesses there will directly address drivers of degradation and support direct adaptation benefits of 21,000 coastal community members.

The new partnership announced with the Outrigger Impact Fund, in collaboration with Catalytic Finance Foundation, is set to expand investment in reef-positive businesses, financial mechanisms and climate-adaptation solutions across Pacific SIDS. The partnership will help address a persistent regional gap: promising local enterprises and solutions often lack access to the appropriately structured capital and technical support needed to reach scale. As an early investor in the Fund's junior tranche, GFCR has helped mobilise a share of the capital required to meet its US$100 million target. GFCR's participation ensures that at least 25 per cent of the Fund's capital will be invested in reef-positive businesses across Pacific SIDS, with further co-investment targeted at the transaction level.

"The Pacific has no shortage of promising enterprises, investable ideas or local leadership. The persistent gap is access to patient, fit-for-purpose capital and the expertise needed to take solutions to scale. Through this partnership with GFCR, the Outrigger Impact Fund will help reef-positive businesses and climate-adaptation solutions move from potential to performance—strengthening livelihoods, food and water security, and the resilience of coastal economies across the region," said Simon Dent, Managing Director, Outrigger Impact Fund.

Economic systems often overlook the costs of reef loss. GFCR works with domestic financial institutions to reduce lending risk and expand access to finance for reef-positive businesses and coastal communities. At COP31, GFCR announced three milestones across the Pacific. In Fiji, the Blue Lending Facility (BLF) is now operational in partnership with the Fiji Development Bank (FDB), UNDP and the United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF). The facility supports viable reef-positive enterprises and income-generating activities, including those of eligible community-owned businesses and cooperatives linked to locally managed marine areas. In Solomon Islands, the Development Bank of Solomon Islands, WWF and UNCDF launched the Blue Economy Financing Facility, which pairs concessional loans with tailored technical support. In Papua New Guinea, the reef-positive lending programme established through Women's Micro Bank Limited (WMBL) in collaboration with UNCDF has provided concessional loans to more than 50 reef-positive businesses. Together, these guarantee-backed facilities help businesses across sectors grow and address local drivers of ecosystem degradation while strengthening livelihoods and coastal community resilience.

New and Renewed State Commitments

GFCR also welcomes new and renewed commitments from state partners totaling more than US$20 million. This additional funding will help move opportunities from GFCR's vetted pipeline into investment, contributing towards its aim of delivering at least 250 additional reef-positive business and finance solutions by 2030. It will also help test how verified reef outcomes can unlock larger, more predictable and longer-lasting flows of public and private finance.

At the *Advancing the Marine Conservation Breakthroughs* event, held under the auspices of the COP31 Presidency, H.E. Stephen Morgan MP, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State at the United Kingdom's Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra), announced an additional £11.8 million for GFCR through the UK's Blue Planet Fund.

Germany and Ireland also announced funding for GFCR. "Healthy coral reefs are essential for biodiversity, coastal protection and the livelihoods of millions of people. The Global Fund for Coral Reefs, which Germany has supported from the very beginning, brings together public funding and capital from private investors to protect marine ecosystems, create sustainable jobs and support coastal communities. It shows that protecting nature and creating economic opportunities can go hand in hand," said Hon. Reem Alabali Radovan, Federal Minister for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), Germany.

"As an island nation, Ireland understands the importance of healthy oceans to communities and livelihoods. We are pleased to join the Global Fund for Coral Reefs coalition and support its work with Small Island Developing States and other countries facing the growing impacts of climate change. Our contribution will help safeguard coral reefs and support sustainable businesses that protect marine ecosystems and provide livelihoods for coastal communities. This partnership reflects Ireland's commitment to ocean protection and to helping those most vulnerable to climate change build a more resilient future", said Hon. Timmy Dooley, Minister of State at the Department of Agriculture, Food, Fisheries and the Marine and Minister of State at the Department of Climate, Energy and the Environment, Ireland.

Building the Coalition to Avert Coral Reef Extinction

"For coral nations like Fiji, the loss of coral reefs threatens our food security, livelihoods and coastal protection. As increasingly frequent and severe marine heatwaves push reefs towards collapse, we need rapid global emissions cuts alongside investment in the reefs with the greatest prospects for survival and the communities that depend on them. GFCR is a proven vehicle for channelling investment into practical solutions that strengthen the resilience of our ecosystems, communities and economies," said Hon. Lynda Tabuya, Minister for Information, Environment and Climate Change, Fiji.

"Coral reefs are the first part of the Earth system to cross a climate tipping point, yet our economic and financial systems continue to treat their destruction as an externality," said Pierre Bardoux, Director of the Global Fund for Coral Reefs. "The profits generated by exploiting nature are captured today, while the costs of its destruction are borne by coastal communities and future generations. At 2°C of warming, fewer than 1% of today's reefs are projected to remain healthy. Meanwhile, overfishing, pollution and coastal development are accelerating their decline and eroding the resilience of those with the greatest chance of survival. We cannot afford to lose the reefs that can still endure. Governments, philanthropies, financial institutions and investors must join the GFCR Coalition to confront coral reef extinction, recognize reefs as essential natural capital, and transform the local economies that depend on them into engines of reef resilience and recovery."

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About the Global Fund for Coral Reefs

The Global Fund for Coral Reefs (GFCR) is the world's leading investment platform dedicated to coral reefs. A UN-backed public-private coalition, GFCR applies blended and innovative finance approaches to mobilise capital to protect the world's most climate-resilient coral reefs while strengthening the communities and economies that depend on them. Operating across 22 coral nations, GFCR brings together governments, UN agencies, financial institutions, philanthropies, impact investors, conservation organisations and civil society to develop and scale reef-positive businesses and sustainable finance solutions. By 2030, GFCR aims to support at least 400 reef-positive business and finance solutions, improve the management of 3 million hectares of climate-resilient coral reefs—representing more than 10 per cent of the world's coral reefs—and strengthen the resilience of 20 million people.

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