



Over one-half
of the world's population lives
within **100 kilometres**
of the sea.



MEDIA RELEASE

December 4, 2007

'YOUNG GUNS' MUST MAN THE BARRICADES FOR CORAL REEFS

The world already knows enough, through science and human understanding, to save the planet from disaster, the next generation of leading coral reef scientists and managers will be told in Australia next week.

"Who, in the grim ending of 2007, can believe human beings will transform how we live and thus save the natural world - and our place in it? The warning signs are un-mistakable," media science guru Robyn Williams will argue in a keynote speech to open the Future Leaders Forum at The University of Queensland (UQ).

"We are trashing our marine environment, and yet we know enough to reverse the catastrophe. It's not yet too late to act, but the clock is ticking and every day it gets later," Robyn Williams will warn 55 postgraduate students and postdoctoral researchers in coral reef studies from 20 countries next Monday (December 10).

Sponsored by the Coral Reef Targeted Research Program & Capacity Building for Management Program (CRTR), the first-ever CRTR Future Leadership Forum will be staged at UQ's St Lucia campus on December 10-14, 2007.

Students from Mexico, The Philippines, Cuba, Tanzania, Kenya, USA, Australia, United Kingdom, Colombia, Venezuela, Palau, Thailand, Canada, Costa Rica, Belize and Guatemala will attend the special event.

The students will be joined by internationally renowned coral reef scientists and managers and together they will build the students' understanding of a wide range of issues surrounding coral reef ecosystems.

The CRTR Program is a leading international coral reef research initiative that provides a coordinated approach to credible, factual and scientifically-proven knowledge for improved coral reef management.

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The CRTR Program is a partnership between the Global Environment Facility, the World Bank, The University of Queensland (Australia), the United States National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), and approximately 40 research institutions and other third-parties around the world.

Says Professor Paul Greenfield, Senior Deputy Vice-Chancellor at UQ, a key partner in the CRTR Program: "Next week these future leaders in coral reef science will hone their leadership skills and learn how to increase their influence among networks that manage and set policy for coral reefs worldwide.

"One of the major goals of the CRTR Program is to build the scientific capacity and knowledge necessary to give coastal managers and policy-makers the information they need to sustain the world's coral reefs."

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Please note:

A copy of the forum program containing session times and speaker details can be downloaded from www.gefcoral.org; copies of speaker presentations or press releases will be made available at this same address.

The media is welcome to attend the CRTR Future Leaders Forum. The forum will be held at the Hawken Engineering Building (50), The University of Queensland, Research Road, St Lucia, QLD 4067.

www.gefcoral.org