



CMFRI's research on India's marine biodiversity displayed at UN meet

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RESEARCH findings of the ICAR-Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute (CMFRI) were showcased as India's commitment to conserving its marine ecosystems at a United Nations meet held at Seoul, South Korea to discuss the Global Biodiversity Framework.

India emphasised its commitment to marine ecosystem conservation, particularly mangroves and coral reefs, the identification of marine protected areas, and the promotion of sustainable marine fishing.

The Sustainable Ocean Initiative (SOI) workshop, held from September 5-8, aimed to accelerate the implementation of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (KM-

GBF) of the UN Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). SOI is a global platform that seeks to build partnerships and enhance capacity to achieve global goals and targets related to marine and coastal biodiversity.

India's report presented at the meeting highlighted CMFRI's efforts in developing a framework to estimate the conservation value of ecologically sensitive areas (ESAs) to reduce threats to marine biodiversity. This effort mapped a total area of 34,127.20 square kilometres as ESAs, including mangroves (5,590 sq. km), coral reefs (1,439), sea-grass (518), salt marsh (600), sand dunes (325), mudflats (3,558), and more.

Dr Shubhadeep Ghosh, Assistant Director-General of the

Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR), New Delhi, and Dr Grinson George, Principal Scientist and Head of the Marine Biodiversity and Environment Management Division of ICAR-CMFRI, presented India's report, which included national conservation priorities and targets.

The report highlighted CMFRI's research in developing a deep learning-enabled image recognition model for classifying underwater coral images as part of efforts to restore ocean ecosystems. Dr Grinson George mentioned coral reef restoration through transplantation in the Gulf of Mannar, the Gulf of Kutch, and the Lakshadweep regions. It also mentioned CMFRI's attempts to map the spatial distribution of aquatic invasive species in the northern Indian Ocean region.

