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**NEW CENTER DEDICATED TO MARINE CONSERVATION
EDUCATION and TRAINING OPENS IN BALI**

Sanur - A new learning center dedicated to marine conservation and training has opened its doors today in Sanur, Bali aiming to reach 1.5 million people by 2020 to care for the oceans and those that depend on it.

The first of its kind in Indonesia, the **Center for Marine Conservation** is a unique facility, providing an integrated learning space for marine professionals and managers, school children, youth groups, families, tourists and entrepreneurs to learn about and be inspired to protect our oceans.

Indonesia is home to around 60 percent of the worlds' coral species and the greatest diversity of coral reef fishes on the planet. Over 70 percent of Indonesians live along the coast and the ongoing health of these marine ecosystems is critical as a source of food, income and protection from severe weather. Yet these ecosystems are threatened by over-fishing, destructive fishing practices, poor tourism practices, coastal development and pollution.

Awareness, education and training is the key to effecting long term, sustainable change. Through innovative and hands-on learning exhibits, visitors to the new Center for Marine Conservation will learn about the connectivity between oceans and people's well-being and livelihood, and the vital importance of marine protection.

The new center is run by Indonesian foundation **Coral Triangle Center (CTC)**, a non-profit organization based in Bali with a regional scope and global impact. Established in 2010, CTC provides education, training, and makes sure that marine protected areas within the world's epicenter of marine biodiversity are managed effectively.

"With the completion of Phase One of our center, we begin a new chapter our Marine Conservation in Indonesia. We hope the Center will be a source of education, training, information and, hopefully, inspiration," said George Tahija, Chairman of CTC's Board of Trustees during the ceremony that marked the opening of the training facilities held today.

CTC is also a certified training center of the Government of Indonesia and an official partner of the Coral Triangle Initiative on Coral Reefs, Fisheries and Food Security. CTC supports on-the-ground conservation programs through its learning sites in the Nusa Penida Marine Protected Area in Bali and the Banda Islands Marine Protected Areas network in Maluku.

CTC aims to expand its outreach and impact by developing a Center for Marine Conservation in Bali which will serve as a center of excellence for marine conservation training programs and outreach activities and a venue for artistic and cultural performances, to influence a wide range of people to care for Indonesia and the Coral Triangle's marine environment.

“We need to raise awareness, especially amongst the younger generation who will inherit the future and our bio-diversity. It is our goal that this new Center serve as a platform to educate and inspire the next generation to protect our marine resources,” Mr. Tahija added

CTC has also catalyzed collective action by leading networks of women leaders, local government executives, private sector champions, who engage and implement marine resource conservation in the Coral Triangle – which includes Indonesia, Malaysia, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Solomon Islands, and Timor-Leste. The new Center for Marine Conservation will play a key role in reaching out to these stakeholders across the six countries.

"A facility such as CTC's Center for Marine Conservation is the first in Indonesia and very innovative. Once again, this is to prove that CTC is highly capable as the leading institution in marine resource management and fisheries in Indonesia. It also brings up CTC as the center of excellence in leadership of marine conservation development and fisheries management in the world," said Suseno Sukoyono, Special Advisor to the Minister of Marine Affairs and Fisheries Indonesia during the Center's opening ceremony

The Coral Triangle is considered the world's epicenter of marine biodiversity. The area is home to 76% of all known coral species, 37% of all known coral reef fish species. It is an important spawning area for economically important marine species such as tuna, charismatic and endangered animals such as whales, sea turtles, manta rays, sunfish, and many others. Its unparalleled marine and coastal resources provide profound benefits to more than 363 million people who reside within these countries, along with benefits to many millions more outside the region. Fish and other marine resources are a principal source of income, food, livelihoods, and export revenues in all Coral Triangle countries.

Apart from top of the line training pavilions and a purpose-built dive training pool, the **Center for Marine Conservation** will also house innovative and interactive tools to spread the message of marine conservation to the wider public.

One of these is the marine-themed “**Escape Room SOS from the Deep**,” a fun and interactive way to inform people about the ocean environment, and the threats it faces while they challenge themselves against the puzzles. Users will come out with a greater understanding of the situation, what they can do to help, and a smile on their face.

Another exhibit in the works is the **Coral Wall**, a monumental scale ceramic sculptural installation that showcases the beauty of life under the ocean's surface. The design of this community-based artwork draws inspiration from the beauty and diversity coral reef ecosystems and will serve as a tool to increase public awareness about the value of healthy oceans to the Coral Triangle—the heart of marine biodiversity.

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