



Memorandum of Understanding on the  
Conservation and Management of Marine Turtles and  
their Habitats of the Indian Ocean and South-East Asia

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THIRD MEETING OF THE SIGNATORY STATES  
Bangkok, 29-31 March 2005

## ADVISORY COMMITTEE

### Background

1. The Memorandum of Understanding, in its operational paragraph 6, provided for the establishment of an Advisory Committee to offer scientific, technical and legal advice to the Signatory States:

“The signatory States may nominate for membership on the Committee individuals with expertise in the fields of marine turtle biology, marine resource management, coastal development, socio-economics, law, fisheries technology, and other relevant disciplines. The size, composition and terms of appointment of the Advisory Committee shall be determined by the signatory States at their first meeting.”

### Report on activities and future work programme

2. The Chairman of the Committee, Dr. Colin Limpus, is expected to give an oral report on the Committee's activities since the Second Meeting of Signatory States. The Committee last met in person on 15 March 2004 and has conducted its business largely by e-mail correspondence. Aspects of its future work programme will be covered, in part, under other agenda items and may be consolidated in the discussion of this agenda item.

### Membership

3. The first Meeting of Signatory States confirmed that the Advisory Committee could comprise up to ten members, who would serve on the Committee in their personal capacity. A procedure was agreed at the second Meeting of Signatory States whereby the Advisory Committee would make recommendations, intersessionally, with regard to the appointment of additional individuals in order to fill existing vacancies and to bring in additional specialised expertise. The current membership of the Advisory Committee is given in Annex 1. At the time of writing, one vacancy remained to be filled from the complement of eight agreed by the Second Meeting of Signatory States.

4. In its invitation letter of 8 November 2004, and reminder note of 14 January 2005, the Secretariat drew attention to the fact that four of the current Advisory Committee members will have served a full-two year term as of March 2005. They would, however, be eligible to continue for another two-year term if re-nominated by one of the Signatory States. By the deadline of 28 January 2005, the Secretariat had received re-nomination papers for Dr. Colin Limpus, Dr. Jack Frazier, and Dr. Jeanne Mortimer. The Secretariat had earlier proposed that the re-nomination process be waived for the three members who had been appointed intersessionally only recently (i.e. within the last seven months): Dr. George Hughes, Dr. Sejal Worah, and Mr. Bundit Chokesanguan. This proposal represented a departure from the original procedure envisaged in paragraph 4 of the Advisory Committee's terms of reference, which would also have seen the terms of intersessional appointees expire at the present meeting. No objection to this pragmatic proposal was lodged. That being the

case, the Meeting of Signatory States has a slate of six candidates to consider for continued membership on the Advisory Committee, subject to the agreement of the named individuals to continue to serve. In the interest of economy, the Secretariat is not recirculating the nomination papers or curricula vitae of these six individuals, already known to the IOSEA constituency, but can make them available upon request.

5. Additionally, the Secretariat has received from the Department of Wildlife Conservation of Sri Lanka, in conformity with the agreed procedure, the nomination of Mr. Wellaketeye Sarath Kumarasingha Pathirathna, for consideration by the Meeting of Signatory States. His nomination papers are attached at Annex 2.

6. The Secretariat received by e-mail two additional “self-nominations” accompanied by curricula vitae, however these were not supported by any official nomination on the part of a Signatory State; as such they have not been presented for further consideration.

7. Finally, the Advisory Committee has recently undertaken to recommend to the Signatory States the name of a candidate to fill an outstanding vacancy in the area of protected areas management, in line with the extraordinary procedure agreed by the Second Meeting of Signatory States. Should a suitable candidate be identified prior to the Third Meeting of Signatory States, the Secretariat will circulate any documentation received so that this individual may also be considered for appointment in March.

8. To summarise, at the time of writing, the Meeting of Signatory States had the following slate of nominated candidates to consider for appointment/re-appointment to the Advisory Committee. Areas of specialisation (non-exhaustive) are noted in parentheses:

*Current members whose term is due to expire in March 2005:*

Dr. Colin Limpus (marine turtle biology/resource management, fisheries technology)  
Dr. Jeanne Mortimer (marine turtle biology/resource management)  
Dr. Jack Frazier (marine turtle biology/resource management, community-based conservation)

They have been re-nominated by: Australia, Seychelles and United States, and United States, respectively.

*Current members appointed inter-sessionally (expected to continue without need for re-nomination)*

Dr. George Hughes (marine turtle research, management, capacity-building)  
Dr. Sejah Woral (community-based conservation, participatory natural resource management)  
Mr. Bundit Chokesanguan (fishing gear technology specialist)

*New nomination:*

Mr Wellaketeye Sarath Kumarasingha Pathirathna (national park management)

*Recommendation expected from Advisory Committee:*

Protected areas management specialist (pending submission)

9. The Meeting of Signatory States is invited to consider what additional expertise might be needed on the Committee, and whether or not it may accept, exceptionally, any further nominations that might be tabled at or before the meeting, provided they are accompanied by all necessary supporting documentation, if this were in the interest of broadening the field of candidates from which to choose.

## Terms of reference

10. The Second Meeting of Signatory States amended the terms of reference for the Advisory Committee, and these have been reproduced at Annex 3 for ease of reference. The Secretariat is not aware of any Signatory State intending to introduce proposals for further changes to the terms of reference. Should any amendments be contemplated, it would be helpful if these could be circulated prior to the meeting, for consideration and eventual adoption by consensus.

11. Notwithstanding the above, as the Advisory Committee has now been in existence for a full two-year cycle, it may be useful at the present meeting to have a general discussion of the strengths and weaknesses of the current arrangements, and to reflect on any improvements that might be introduced. Among the limitations of the present approach is that all of the members serve voluntarily, without remuneration, and have other personal commitments that, understandably, take precedence over IOSEA work. This has meant that the responsiveness to Secretariat requests for feedback over the past two years has been less than ideal. It is not necessarily the case that organising an intersessional meeting of the Committee would improve involvement, even if funding and logistical constraints did not prevent such a meeting being held.

12. One solution that might be contemplated to improve the dynamics would be for the Advisory Committee to include selected regional representation of IOSEA Focal Points, who may have a more direct interest – through their functional responsibilities – in the work of the Memorandum of Understanding. For example, the four IOSEA sub-regions (South-East Asia “plus”, Northern Indian Ocean, Northwest Indian Ocean, and Western Indian Ocean) might each agree to nominate, by consensus, a focal point who would serve on the Advisory Committee on a two-year rotational basis. In practice, this would mean that correspondence would be circulated among, and advice sought from, four additional individuals. There would be no significant financial implications, per se, as the individuals concerned would normally be attending the Meeting of Signatory States in any case. If this suggestion were taken up, the terms of reference of the Advisory Committee would need to be adjusted accordingly.

## Other

13. Although the terms of reference encourage, but make no provision for, Advisory Committee members – other than the Chair – to participate in the Meeting of Signatory States, it is hoped that sufficient funding will be made available to allow for this eventuality at the present meeting. It may be useful for the Committee to meet again, later in 2005, in order to follow up on certain issues; however this will depend on availability of funds and a mutually convenient venue and timing.

### *Action requested / Expected outcome:*

(1) Identification of any additional expertise required for the Advisory Committee; (2) re-appointment/appointment of Committee members; (3) agreement on any necessary amendments to the Committee’s terms of reference (e.g. should the membership be expanded to include regional representation of Focal Points); (4) identification of major tasks to be undertaken by the Committee intersessionally; and (5) agreement the timing, venue and financing of the Committee’s next meeting.