



# **Indian Ocean – South-East Asian Marine Turtle Memorandum of Understanding**

## **Report of the Fourth Meeting of the IOSEA Signatory States**

**Muscat, Sultanate of Oman  
11-14 March 2006**

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## Executive Summary

The Fourth Meeting of the Signatory States was held in Muscat, Sultanate of Oman, from 11-14 March 2006. Hosted by the Ministry of Regional Municipalities, Environment and Water Resources, the conference was the best-attended of any IOSEA meeting to date. Twenty-two Signatory States and five non-Signatories were officially represented, along with various IGO and NGO partners. It was the first time the conference had been held outside of the secretariat's Bangkok headquarters.

Many of the deliberations were conducted in three lively sub-regional working groups. For the very first time, the number of participants in the combined 'Northwestern Indian Ocean – Northern Indian Ocean' group outnumbered colleagues of the Western Indian Ocean (WIO) and extended South-East Asia (SEA+) regions. It was fitting then that the meeting adopted a resolution aimed at promoting and strengthening marine turtle conservation in the NWIO sub-region.

The WIO group agreed detailed terms of reference for the establishment of an IOSEA-WIO Marine Turtle Task Force, to be organized in collaboration with the Nairobi Convention, which aims to protect East Africa's marine environment. Reflecting a South-East Asian perspective, Indonesia reported on an important initiative to conserve leatherback turtles through a tri-partite agreement between that vast archipelago, Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands, in partnership with WWF.

The working groups focused two central themes: (1) identifying and describing fisheries potentially interacting with marine turtles in their respective countries, for which there is a paucity of information; and (2) brainstorming on ideas for closer international collaboration and cooperation within each sub-region. Participants in each of the working groups also identified special activities that are taking place in the 2006 Year of the Turtle, including scientific research, awareness-raising events and workshops, production of new information materials, photo and art competitions, release of postage stamps, and many other public activities.

A centrepiece of the meeting was a comprehensive review of implementation progress prepared on the basis of the national reports submitted by Signatory States. The Secretariat generated an overall performance matrix by objectively analysing all of the activities reported to have been undertaken to implement the IOSEA Conservation and Management Plan. Participants remarked that the analytic framework far exceeded that of other conservation agreements in terms of its level of sophistication and depth. The detailed review is contained in Document MT/IOSEA/SS.4/Doc. 8.3, circulated prior to the meeting, and a one-page addendum summarising a number of key issues that were identified.

Dr. Mark Hamann introduced an advanced draft of an "Assessment of the conservation status of the Leatherback turtle in the Indian Ocean and South-East Asia, including consideration of the impacts of the December 2004 tsunami on turtles and turtle habitats". The report suggested that the long-term impacts of the tsunami for turtles could be expected to be marginal whereas in the immediate-term coastal communities and associated conservation programmes had been profoundly affected. The report also revealed gaps in information and basic collaborative work that needed to be addressed, in part through additional research, monitoring, and enforcement of legislation.

Delegates learned of the activities of several non-governmental and intergovernmental partners that are collaborating in the implementation of the IOSEA Marine Turtle MoU. All were urged to share information about their activities through the IOSEA website and other channels. In turn, Signatories were encouraged to find a way to give more recognition to these important activities in their national reports.

As is customary, the meeting considered a number of important administrative and policy issues, notably the uncertain financial prospects for continuing operations into 2007 despite the generous voluntary contributions of a small number of Signatory States. A wide range of views were expressed about the optimal frequency of meetings of the Signatory States. It was agreed to re-examine this

question more closely at the next session, by which time it might also be possible to have a more informed discussion about the future legal character of the memorandum of understanding.

The Advisory Committee was reconstituted with a membership of six experts under the new chairmanship of Dr. Jack Frazier. The Committee's terms of reference were amended slightly to clarify the nomination procedure for members, and to welcome official observers from each of the sub-regions, decided by the member States, as follows: Philippines (for South-East Asia+); Islamic Republic of Iran (for Northwestern Indian Ocean); Sri Lanka (for Northern Indian Ocean); and Comoros (for Western Indian Ocean). The Signatory States expressed their warm appreciation for the *pro bono* services of the Advisory Committee members, acting in their personal capacity.

At the conclusion of the meeting, the Ministry treated participants to an overnight excursion to Ras-al-Jinz, an important nesting beach for Green turtles. The spectacular setting was a fitting way to bring home the message of turtle conservation and to inspire everyone to redouble their efforts in the own countries upon returning home.

Douglas Hykle  
IOSEA MoU Co-ordinator  
Bangkok, May 2006

## **Opening Ceremony**

1. Dr. Mohammed bin Khamis Al-Areimi, Undersecretary of Environment, Ministry of Regional Municipalities, Environment and Water Resources (MRMEWR), welcomed all delegates to the Meeting, in the presence of Her Excellency Dr. Rajah bint Abd Al Amir bin Ali, Minister of Tourism and Patron of the Opening Ceremony, and His Excellency Sheikh Abdullah bin Salem bin Amer Al Rawas, Minister of Regional Municipalities, Environment and Water Resources. He drew particular attention to the importance of international collaboration for the conservation of marine turtles and their habitats, and of the special efforts undertaken by the Sultanate of Oman in this regard.

2. Mr. Douglas Hykle, IOSEA Co-ordinator, expressed pleasure that the Sultanate of Oman had offered to host the Fourth Meeting, which was being held outside of the headquarters of the Secretariat for the very first time. He noted that the region-wide Year of the Turtle campaign launched officially in Bangkok on 1 March 2006 offered a unique opportunity to raise awareness of the complex issues surrounding turtle conservation, and he encouraged all of the organisations present to actively take part. The texts of both opening addresses are reproduced in Annex 1.

### **Agenda Item 1: Welcoming remarks**

3. Welcoming the participants, the Co-ordinator reported that attendance was expected to be the best of any IOSEA Meeting held to date, with all but two Signatory States present, along with several non-Signatories and numerous nongovernmental and intergovernmental observers. The list of participants appears at Annex 2. The length of the meeting had been extended slightly, to allow for more discussion in working groups, and an educational excursion to the Ras al-Hadd turtle nesting area was planned after the end of the meeting. He thanked the Government of the United States for having supported the meeting financially through its Marine Turtle Conservation Act, along with additional support from the Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council and the Convention on Migratory Species.

### **Agenda Item 2: Signature of the Memorandum of Understanding by additional States**

4. The Co-ordinator reported that the Memorandum had been taken effect in another four States of the region (Eritrea, Indonesia, Saudi Arabia and South Africa) over the past year. Although no other States were expected to sign during the present meeting, several States had indicated in recent months that their internal consultations were well-advanced. (See also Opening Statements, below.)

### **Agenda Item 3: Election of officers**

5. The Meeting elected Mr. Ali bin Al-Kiyumi, Sultanate of Oman, as Chair and Dr. Ronel Nel, South Africa, as Vice-Chair. The delegations of Australia and the United States volunteered to assist Dr. Mark Hamann, invited expert, with rapporteuring.

### **Agenda Item 4: Adoption of the agenda and schedule**

6. The agenda (reproduced at Annex 3) and schedule were adopted without amendment.

7. The meeting agreed to establish three sub-regional working groups, comprising Signatory State representatives and observers, to discuss in more detail issues concerning implementation of the Memorandum of Understanding. The following groups were formed for this purpose: (1) Western Indian Ocean, (2) Northwestern and Northern Indian Ocean (combined), and (3) South-East Asia and other interested countries. Each group was requested to examine the following main points:

- National/sub-regional Year of the Turtle preparations;
- National reporting issues;
- Identification/description of fisheries possibly interacting with marine turtles;

- Issues requiring more *international* cooperation among Signatory States;
- Sub-regional observer representation on the IOSEA Advisory Committee; and
- Recommendations arising from the leatherback-tsunami assessment (Agenda item 9c)

The working groups reported back to the plenary at regular intervals during the meeting. The final reports from each of the working groups are attached as Annexes 5.1, 5.2, and 5.3, and are referred to the discussion that follows.

### **Agenda Item 5: Opening statements**

8. The Chairman invited non-Signatory States to indicate their Governments' intentions regarding signature of the Memorandum of Understanding. The observer from Malaysia announced that his country had taken a formal decision to sign the MoU and that the necessary arrangements would be made with the IOSEA Secretariat in due course. The observer from Yemen stated that the matter was presently under consideration by Cabinet, as was a decision on acceding to the parent Convention on Migratory Species.

9. The representative of Indonesia reported on a tri-national cooperative initiative on the conservation and management of leatherback turtles shared by Indonesia, Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands, details of which could be found in document MT-IOSEA/SS.4/Doc. 6.2. The representative of Australia drew attention to its official statement, provided in writing, which made reference to several important issues under consideration. The observer from the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS) described a sister memorandum of understanding for marine turtles of the Atlantic coast of Africa which it hoped to revitalise, and announced that CMS would be contributing USD 5,000 towards Year of the Turtle activities. The latter statements are attached at Annex 4.

### **Agenda Item 6: Report of the Secretariat**

10. The Co-ordinator introduced the Report of the Secretariat (Document MT-IOSEA/SS.4/Doc. 5), drawing attention to the efforts made over the past year to recruit additional Signatory States. The Secretariat had continued to invest in improvements to the IOSEA website, making it an increasingly effective vehicle for exchanging information. The online reporting system had also been overhauled, allowing for a very comprehensive, objective review of the MoU's implementation. A number of project activities had been advanced and additional proposals for Year of the Turtle activities were under review. Collaboration had been sought with various intergovernmental organisations, particularly in relation to fisheries concerns. The co-location arrangement with UNEP/ROAP continued to serve the Secretariat well. Over the past year, the Co-ordinator was assisted by two volunteers provided through the Australian Agency for International Development (AusAID) and several consultants engaged for specialised tasks.

11. In response to a suggestion that Solomon Islands be invited to join the IOSEA MoU in view of its importance for leatherback turtles shared with Indonesia and Papua New Guinea, the Co-ordinator mentioned an initiative to develop an agreement similar to the IOSEA MoU for the countries of the Pacific Ocean. Responding to a query of the observer from United Arab Emirates, the Co-ordinator stated that although the IOSEA Conservation and Management Plan foresaw research using satellite tracking, funds had so far not been made available for that purpose and relatively few countries appeared to have undertaken such studies. However, he expressed hope that the Year of the Turtle might give an incentive to tap into other possible sources of funding for these costly studies. In response to a query from the representative of Jordan about contacts with PERSGA, the Coordinator said that the initial exchanges with the Secretary General had been positive, but required more follow-up. He considered it logical for that organisation to play a leading role in sub-regional coordination of conservation activities to implement the provisions of the IOSEA MoU, much as was being done through SEAFDEC in South-East Asia, and as was envisaged through a linkage to the Nairobi Convention in the Western Indian Ocean.

## **Agenda Item 7: Alliances, synergies and complementary activities**

12. Representatives and observers gave details of complementary initiatives going on within the wider Indian Ocean – South-East Asian region with which linkages might be explored:

### **(a) Regional / Sub-regional**

13. **CMS African Marine Turtle MoU:** The observer from CMS reported on positive developments within the framework of the Atlantic Coast of Africa MoU, notably the recent signature of Namibia and the creation of a coordination unit in Senegal, in collaboration with NEPAD.

14. **IAC:** Dr. Jack Frazier, Advisory Committee member, introduced the Inter-American Convention for the Protection and Conservation of Sea Turtles, a binding agreement that entered into force in 2001. Though it lagged behind IOSEA in many respects, the IAC had developed a strategic plan and had passed a number of resolutions aimed at promoting synergies among organisations, such as the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission, with which it was collaborating on by-catch reduction.

15. The IOSEA Co-ordinator agreed that the various regional instruments across the globe could learn from one another. He mentioned that CMS had undertaken a useful strategic planning exercise with funding from the United Kingdom, which IOSEA might consider replicating if funds were available. In the case of IOSEA and the Atlantic MoU, South Africa might eventually serve as a bridge for cross-fertilisation of ideas between the two instruments.

16. **FAO:** The observer from FAO explained the background to the Food and Agriculture Organisation's relatively recent involvement in turtle conservation issues, through its shifting emphasis towards ecosystem-based management. She outlined two major projects that were being conducted under FAO auspices, one relating to interactions between sea turtles and fisheries and the other concerned with reduction of environmental impacts from shrimp trawling. A series of workshops had been initiated. The next one was planned for Zanzibar at end of April 2006, and another for fisheries administrations and industry in Madagascar later in the year.

17. A number of interventions followed, questioning the efficacy of turtle excluder devices and drawing attention to the problem of habitat destruction by bottom trawls and vast numbers of ghost nets, mostly from artisanal fisheries. The representative of FAO stated that there were plans to organise similar workshops in other sub-regions of the Indian Ocean. The IOSEA Coordinator stressed the importance of informing and involving IOSEA focal points in the forthcoming meetings, to widen the FAO's perspective and information base.

18. **IATTC:** The representative of the United States described the extensive work on by-catch mitigation undertaken by the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission ([www.iattc.org](http://www.iattc.org)), including guidelines that were currently under review. The IATTC would meet in June 2006 and reduction of turtle by-catch would again be on the agenda.

19. **SEAFDEC:** Mr. Bundit Chokesanguan, Advisory Committee member and officer of SEAFDEC, described the work programme of the Southeast Asian Fisheries Development Center in relation to interactions between sea turtles and fishing operations. He mentioned in particular recent developments with respect to TED design, by-catch trials, and workshops on longline fishing interactions and use of TEDs held in several South-East Asian countries.

20. **PERSGA:** The representative of Jordan reported that all countries of the PERSGA (Regional Organisation for the Conservation of the Environment of the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden) area had produced strategic action plans, including a marine turtle component. However, the countries had not met for two years and actual implementation had been delayed as a consequence. It was suggested that IOSEA might help to expedite this process. The Coordinator undertook to communicate with his



PERSGA counterpart to explore how the two organisations might work together towards this end.

21. **ROPME:** The representative of Oman reported that although the Regional Organisation for the Protection of the Marine Environment did not deal specifically with marine turtles, in the past it had supported satellite tracking of hawksbill turtles and well as tagging projects in the region, and had worked closely with Yemen on beach restoration and training.

22. **IOTC:** The Co-ordinator reported that at its meeting in June 2005 the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission had adopted a non-binding recommendation on sea turtle by-catch, proposed jointly by Australia and Japan. IOTC lagged behind other fisheries management organisations in by-catch mitigation work, and was giving priority first to sharks, then sea birds and turtles. The IOSEA Secretariat was working to raise the profile of marine turtle by-catch in this instrument, the coverage of which overlapped to a large extent with IOSEA.

23. **WIO-MTTF:** The representative of South Africa introduced a proposal to create a Western Indian Ocean Marine Turtle Task force in collaboration with the Nairobi Convention, for the express purpose of facilitating IOSEA implementation in the sub-region. The idea had originated from a workshop organised in Kenya in 2004. In the intervening months, South Africa had collaborated with the Secretariat to draft terms of reference, contained in document MT-IOSEA/SS.4/Doc. 6.1. It was agreed that the Western Indian Ocean working group would review the draft paper (see also paragraph 52, below).

#### **(b) National (Governmental)**

24. The representative of Indonesia described in more detail the tri-national partnership for leatherback turtle conservation between Indonesia, Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands. A first meeting, chaired by Indonesia had taken place, and the second meeting would be held in Solomon Islands. Indonesia proposed that Solomon Islands be invited to join the IOSEA MoU. [*Secretariat note:* this matter was to have been considered by the SEA+ working group, but it was not revisited in plenary. It may be desirable to add it to the agenda of the next meeting.]

25. The representative of Pakistan reported on that country's achievements in relation to IOSEA objectives, including habitat protection, carried out in collaboration with WWF. Concern was expressed that there had been no olive ridley nesting for the past two years, and management assistance was requested.

26. The representative of the United States provided an update on the Marine Turtle Conservation Act, which had supported 25 projects around the world, including five in the IOSEA region (amounting to about one-fifth of the USD 630,000 allocated the previous year). The call for proposals for 2007 funding would be circulated around November 2006.

#### **(c) Nongovernmental**

27. The observer from World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) described a number regional initiatives in which WWF had been involved over the past year, including the 2005 'Smart Gear Competition' whose prize was awarded for a method of reduce interactions between turtles and deep-set longline hooks; training programmes for longline vessels in various Southeast Asian and South Pacific countries; a by-catch workshop in Malaysia; and research activities in East Africa.

28. The observer from the IUCN Marine Turtle Specialist Group reported on the Group's work to identify marine turtle populations requiring conservation and management actions as a top priority, as well as critical research needs. Several of these were directly relevant to the IOSEA region. IUCN-MTSG had co-hosted the multiple species by-catch workshop mentioned above, which developed a model to assess by-catch priorities using a matrix of mixed threats across multiple species groups.

29. The observer from TRAFFIC East/Southern Africa gave the background to the programme and requested information and ideas from Signatory States about trade issues related to marine turtles.

30. Concluding the discussion, the representative of the United States reported on the International Fishers Forum, which brought together fishers, managers and scientists to discuss various fisheries issues, particularly those related to by-catch. The third gathering, held in Yokohama, Japan, in July 2005, had produced a declaration on responsible tuna fisheries and their need to address by-catch issues.

### **Agenda Item 8: Review of 2006 Year of the Turtle Campaign preparations**

31. The Secretariat's consultant introduced document MT-IOSEA/SS.4/Doc. 7 concerning arrangements for the 2006 Year of the Turtle (YoT) campaign. The Secretariat had developed a special YoT section on the IOSEA website, which included an events calendar for keeping track of planned activities and a discussion forum. Participants were urged to make use of these tools for timely exchange of information. The Secretariat had produced various information materials that had been very well-received, and it intended to produce a DVD that could be used by countries to raise awareness of marine turtle conservation issues. Funding had been secured to support small-scale YoT activities; and about 20 applications for funding would be reviewed soon after the meeting.

32. The reports of the sub-regional working groups (Annexes 5.1, 5.2 and 5.3) outline the Year of the Turtle preparations underway in each country, in varying levels of detail. It was acknowledged that some activities and dates still needed to be finalised.

### **Agenda Item 9: Review of implementation of the Memorandum of Understanding, including the Conservation and Management Plan**

#### **(a) National reporting**

33. The Co-ordinator introduced document MT-IOSEA/SS.4/Doc. 8.1, describing the substantial improvements that had been made over the past year to the online reporting system, as well as future modifications still to be carried out. He noted that although the database now contained information for 21 of 24 Signatory States, about half of the Signatories had not updated their reports over the previous year and many of these still had not requested a password to enable online access. On the other hand, a good cross-section of Signatory States, including developing countries, had used the electronic reporting system and a number of exemplary reports had been submitted. During the meeting, a successful live demonstration of the system using a poor internet connection gave evidence that internet access speed was not necessarily a limiting factor for users.

34. The following points emerged from the plenary discussion and from two of the three working groups that reported on this issue. Several delegations expressed satisfaction with the improved reporting system, which provided clear guidance. It was acknowledged however that, at present, it was often difficult to differentiate between inadequate reporting and insufficient implementation; any evaluation of performance needed to draw attention to this inherent ambiguity. In some places in the reporting template, it would be helpful if space were given to contextualise responses and indicate the possible lack of relevance (i.e. applicability) of an issue.

35. For some countries with hundreds of potential nesting beaches, it was a huge task to document each site. However it was pointed out that even sites with little nesting were worth monitoring regularly, when taken as an aggregate. Recognizing that monitoring was a resource intensive activity, it was suggested that at least a small number of index beaches be monitored and reported on regularly, adding others as resources permitted. Also, involving properly trained local people in monitoring remote areas would be more cost-effective. It was important to list as many threats as were known in the national reports. It was proposed that the reporting template allow users to indicate the date when site-threat information was last updated for any given site.

36. Finally, it was suggested that those completing the reports give a more ample description of the process used to gather information. The importance of receiving input from NGOs and other research groups was emphasised; as was the need to objectively review the efficacy of conservation activities.

### **(b) Review of implementation progress**

37. Referring to document MT-IOSEA/SS.4/Doc 8.2, the Co-ordinator described the concerted efforts made over the past year to develop objective criteria for evaluating the national reports, a significant advance over the subjective assessments made in previous years. Covering each of the 80 activities contained in the national reports, the numerically-based criteria allowed the Secretariat to score responses systematically according to a rigorous standard. Whereas reporting tended still to focus on activities carried out (i.e. outputs), ultimately performance should be evaluated in terms of outcomes actually achieved (i.e. the results of conservation interventions). The Secretariat had produced an individual evaluation for each Signatory State, which it hoped would be carefully reviewed and used to improve the content of the national reports. The Secretariat also welcomed feedback on the proposed criteria, and invited Signatories to discuss their reports and evaluations bilaterally.

38. The representative of South Africa welcomed the new system as it provided an opportunity for Signatory States to view their own contributions in the context of the overall Memorandum of Understanding. The Advisory Committee suggested that the next iteration of the evaluation criteria address the issue of “not applicable” questions and that a weighting system be devised to deal with questions of differing importance. In response, the Co-ordinator indicated that a weighting scheme had already been foreseen when the system was developed, and technically would not be difficult to implement once agreement had been reached on the relative weightings assigned to each question.

39. Moving on to the more substantive review of implementation progress (Document MT-IOSEA/SS.4/Doc. 8.3), the Co-ordinator noted that the analysis was the most detailed and comprehensive made to date. A colour-coded matrix was a useful tool for identifying strengths and weaknesses in implementation of the 24 streams of activity across the whole of the IOSEA region. It remained a challenge to capture all of the work being carried by countless nongovernmental organisations and this was only partly compensated by the IOSEA Projects Database. Only two Signatory States had yet to submit a report. However information gaps in many reports made it difficult to differentiate between deficiencies in reporting versus insufficient implementation. The Co-ordinator indicated that it would be possible, in future, to generate similar analyses of implementation progress on a *sub-regional* level. If the reporting template did not change too much, it would also be possible to monitor progress over time by assessing and comparing performance at regular intervals.

40. Some general conclusions were drawn from the review, of which the Executive Summary has been reproduced in Annex 6 of this report for ease of reference. Particular reference was made to the key issues identified in the addendum. Over the past year, the focus of implementation appeared still to be largely driven by national agendas, with much less attention given to regional cooperation and exchange of information and technical assistance beyond national borders. Limited progress was reported in the area of reducing incidental capture and mortality. Levels of traditional consumption appeared to be an issue in need of further investigation. About a third of the Signatories had long-term monitoring programmes in place and even more had, or were developing, national action plans. Over 500 discrete sites of importance for marine turtles had been identified, including a subjective rating of intensity of threats. Few Signatories had reviewed the efficacy of their beach management programmes to ascertain whether or not management objectives were actually being met. Similarly, it was not clear that tagging and satellite tracking studies were being used effectively to try to elucidate the dispersal of turtles. The top six conservation and management priorities identified by Signatory States were: targeted studies on marine turtles and their habitats; education and information programmes; capacity-building, training and partnerships; habitat protection and conservation measures; incidental capture and mortality; and beach management programmes. Issues identified as

requiring *international* cooperation, with frequent mention included: training and capacity building; identification of turtle populations/migration routes; illegal fishing, poaching and illegal trade in turtle products; and tagging/satellite tracking.

41. The representative of the United States applauded the reporting system for its level of sophistication unmatched among comparable instruments. A number of useful points emerged from the general discussion that followed. A mechanism needed to be found to better integrate information on project activities undertaken by nongovernmental organisations and other agencies. One Signatory State mentioned that it was difficult to get timely information from other agencies unfamiliar with the MoU or the reporting process; or that did not wish to make their data publicly available. Solutions might involve establishing national committees that provided for participation of other relevant agencies and NGOs, as a number of Signatories had already done; circulating national reports for review, comment and incorporation of additional information, prior to their final submission; and requesting NGOs to proactively send reports on their activities to IOSEA Focal Points. Through the national committee structure, Focal Points might announce a deadline for receipt of contributions to the national report, and formally solicit input from NGOs and others.

42. It was pointed out also that there were region-wide activities of international NGOs and others that were not so amenable to reporting at national levels. It was suggested that structured reports be solicited from these bodies and reflected in the overall review of implementation. This might be done through a generic template or questionnaire circulated in advance of each Signatory State meeting. In response to a query, the Co-ordinator stated that fisheries experts were very welcome to attend the meetings of Signatory States and that invitations were routinely sent to a wide variety of organisations and individuals.

43. The Coordinator noted that Signatory States had the possibility of updating their reports with new information at any time and need not wait for the annual meeting to do so. It was suggested that the Secretariat send periodic reminders to Focal Points during the course of the year to encourage them to refresh their reports. The evaluation criteria had been drafted in such a way as to help Signatories assess what constituted an effective programme, and to improve their reporting and implementation accordingly. The Meeting agreed that Signatory States should re-examine and finalise their reports by the end of April. The Secretariat undertook to revise the colour-coded matrix once all of the updated reports had been received and reviewed.

44. The Secretariat outlined its plans over the coming year to develop analytical tools for the site-threat data; to incorporate additional questions pertaining to threats other than fishing; and to make other minor adjustments to the template based on the discussions in plenary and in the working groups.

### **(c) Region-wide review of Leatherback conservation status and tsunami impacts**

45. Dr. Mark Hamann, the main compiler of the draft leatherback turtle and tsunami assessment (Document MT-IOSEA/SS.4/Doc. 9), described the development of the report and summarised its main conclusions. The report identified important gaps in biological information and management that needed to be rectified through targeted research and monitoring, as well as basic data gathering. The study found that although the December 2004 tsunami had significant localised impacts on turtles, the long-term consequences needed to be seen in the light of previous natural disasters over many millennia and the historical presence of turtles in the region. On the other hand, communities that interacted with turtles and turtle conservation projects were particularly hard hit by the tsunami. The long recovery process – already well-rooted – would be challenging.

46. As part of the assessment process, a number of specific recommendations for follow-up work were drafted for consideration by each of the sub-regional working groups. The working groups' deliberations in this respect are contained in Annexes 5.1, 5.2 and 5.3. It was agreed that the recommendations would be amended, as appropriate, and included in the final report in order to help

guide and prioritise future endeavours. The Meeting further agreed that the leatherback and tsunami components should be split into two separate documents, which would be helpful if assessments were to be made on other species.

47. Indeed, in its session immediately prior to the Meeting of the Signatory States, the Advisory Committee had discussed the desirability of extending the assessment process to other species, as foreseen when the leatherback work was agreed at the Third Meeting of the Signatory States. The Secretariat had indicated that it appeared there would be funds left over from the leatherback study which might be put towards this activity. The Advisory Committee recommended that the next review should focus on loggerhead turtles, which it estimated would require 12 months to complete. It proposed that work on a review of green turtles, a more challenging exercise, should begin simultaneously, but with a view to having it completed 18 months hence. The compilers of the leatherback assessment who were present indicated that they would be amenable to carrying on this work. The Meeting agreed to proceed in this manner (subject to availability of resources).

#### **(d) Status reports on other CMS/IOSEA-funded projects**

48. Dr. Nyawira Muthiga, Advisory Committee member and Chair of KESCOM, gave a progress report on an ongoing marine turtle conservation project in Kenya, administered by the Convention on Migratory Species and funded by the United Kingdom (Document MT-IOSEA/SS.4/Doc. 8.4 Annex 1). The Secretariat proposed to discuss bilaterally the next steps required to finalise the project.

49. The Co-ordinator tabled a draft report "Monitoring and Networking for Sea Turtle Conservation in India", which reflected the conclusions of a project funded by the Convention on Migratory Species. The report was expected to be finalised in the coming weeks, after incorporating some additional commentary and a table of recommendations. The Meeting took note of the draft report and the Secretariat's plan to circulate and publish the report on the IOSEA website.

#### **(e) Issue-based priorities for concerted intervention**

50. As mentioned in paragraph 7, above, much of the meeting was conducted in smaller sub-regional working groups in order to facilitate discussion of specific issues. Each of the groups considered at length two major topics: (1) the identification and description of fisheries possibly interacting with marine turtles and (2) the identification of issues requiring more international cooperation. Details of those productive discussions are given in Annexes 5.1, 5.2 and 5.3. With the exception of the following significant outputs, those deliberations are not repeated here.

51. The representative of Saudi Arabia tabled a draft resolution that emerged from discussions in the joint Northwest and Northern Indian Ocean sub-regional working group. With specific reference to the Northwestern Indian Ocean sub-region, the draft resolution sought to promote and strengthen marine turtle conservation in a number of areas – especially in relation to the exchange of information and expertise, making use of existing institutions within the region. The Meeting of the Signatory States formally adopted the text of the resolution on the last day without further amendment, after incorporating the Secretariat's editorial revisions (Annex 7).

52. The Meeting took note of the deliberations of the Western Indian Ocean working group concerning the provisional terms of reference for a sub-regional Marine Turtle Task Force (MTTF). The group had endorsed the terms of reference with only minor amendments (Annex 8); and recommended that an interim committee chaired by Dr. Ronel Nel (South Africa) be set up to guide the development of the MTTF.

#### **(f) Network of sites of importance for marine turtles**

53. The Co-ordinator introduced document MT-IOSEA/SS.4/Doc. 10 on the proposed network of sites of importance for marine turtles, which had been discussed at the Third Meeting of the Signatory

States (Bangkok, March 2005). The development of criteria for the selection of sites remained an outstanding task that neither the Secretariat nor the Advisory Committee had had time to deal with. The Co-ordinator proposed that a consultant be engaged to develop the criteria for review by the Advisory Committee, so that the proposal could be finalised. He noted also that the Secretariat had approached UNEP/GEF to see whether the network of sites could be developed as a project under the Global Environment Facility; and this was under review. Evidently recent developments in GEF meant that regional projects were less likely to be funded, as GEF adopted a more country-based approach; for the proposal to be successful individual countries would need to identify conservation of marine turtle habitat as an important national priority. The observer from the IUCN-MTSG commented that the tri-lateral project spearheaded by Indonesia would be developing a network of sites which might be used as a step forward for the broader network or an example to follow.

## **Agenda Item 10: Advisory Committee**

### **(a) Report on members' IOSEA-related activities**

54. Speaking to document MT-IOSEA-SS.4/Inf. 10 (Report of the Fourth Meeting of the Advisory Committee, at Annex 9), the Chairman of the Advisory Committee, Dr. George Hughes, summarized the activities of each of the members, including those who were unable to attend the meeting. He requested nominations for the vacancy that had arisen with the end of Dr. Sejal Worah's term. He added that the Advisory Committee had identified a need for specialists with expertise in the areas of socio-economics, fund-raising, sustainable tourism and coastal development. It also noted a particular need for Arabic- and/or French-speaking members. The Chairman also requested support for the Advisory Committee's recommendation to continue the species assessments.

### **(b) Nomination of members and sub-regional observers**

55. In thanking the Advisory Committee for its work, the representative of the United States drew attention to the need for Signatory States to fulfil their responsibilities with respect to the Advisory Committee, particularly in terms of keeping track of the membership and submitting nominations in line with the needs identified. He also emphasised the responsibility of the Signatory States to nominate regional observers to complement the expertise on the Advisory Committee.

56. Referring to document MT-IOSEA-SS.4/Doc. 11, the Co-ordinator confirmed that two of the three Advisory Committee members whose regular term had come to an end – Dr. Hughes and Mr. Chokesanguan – had been proposed for re-nomination, by South Africa and Thailand, respectively. The representative of the United States proposed, and the Meeting agreed, that both re-nominations be accepted.

57. The Co-ordinator called attention to the new proposal in Doc. 11 that the Signatory States be invited henceforth to nominate candidates only from countries other than their own and/or that any nominations be endorsed by a second Signatory State prior to submission. Several delegations expressed support for the first approach.

58. The sub-regional working groups were invited to discuss and decide on who should serve as Advisory Committee observers from their respective sub-regions (except for the Northwestern Indian Ocean which had already agreed on the Islamic Republic of Iran at the Third Meeting).

59. When the working groups reported back to plenary, the Meeting took note of the following selections for sub-regional observers:

- Western Indian Ocean: Comoros
- Northwestern Indian Ocean: Islamic Republic of Iran
- Northern Indian Ocean: Sri Lanka
- South-East Asia+ : Philippines

60. With regard to additional expertise that may be required on the Advisory Committee, it was noted that the Committee's terms of reference provided a mechanism whereby appointments could be proposed intersessionally.

### **(c) Review of terms of reference**

61. The representative of South Africa suggested, and it was agreed, that the terms of reference of the Advisory Committee be amended to reflect the changes under discussion, particularly in order to reflect the responsibilities of the sub-regional observers. A small drafting group chaired by South Africa, and comprising Islamic Republic of Iran, Kenya, and the United States, prepared text that outlined the terms and responsibilities of the sub-regional observers. The duration of appointments was left to the discretion of each sub-region (the default being rotation every two years – i.e. at every other meeting of the Signatory States).

62. On 14 March 2006, the Meeting reviewed and formally adopted the proposed amendments to the Advisory Committee's terms of reference, introduced by the chair of the drafting group, and requested the Secretariat to incorporate the additions and circulate the revised ToR after the meeting (Annex 10).

### **(d) Identification of tasks for the coming year**

63. Based on the outcomes of the present meeting and the pre-session Advisory Committee meeting, the main tasks for the Committee over the coming year include: involvement in the preparation of the assessments for loggerhead and green turtles; finalisation of a paper on beach management practices; contributing to the further development of the IOSEA interactive mapping system (IMapS); commenting on/proposing adjustments to the IOSEA reporting template and evaluation criteria (including, in particular, questions pertaining to coastal development; characterisation of certain terms; and the issue of weighting within the rating system); commenting on proposed criteria for the selection of sites for the IOSEA network; and making suggestions for intersessional appointments to the Committee. The Meeting noted with appreciation that the members of the Advisory Committee worked on behalf of the MoU on a voluntary basis, for the most part without remuneration.

## **Agenda Item 11: Financial and administrative matters**

### **(a) Review of expenditure and status of voluntary contributions**

64. The Co-ordinator presented document MT-IOSEA/SS.4/Doc. 12, describing the financial status of the MoU, and acknowledging the donors who had made voluntary financial or in-kind contributions. Additional pledges were received from Australia, South Africa and the United Kingdom after the budget estimates were prepared in 2005, enabling additional activities to be carried out. He emphasised, however, that taking account of the pledges received so far in 2006, all of the available funds would be exhausted before the end of 2006. Although some contributions might be received later in the year, these would likely not cover the cost of holding a meeting in 2007. The Convention on Migratory Species, which had formerly subsidised a portion of the costs, would no longer be in a position to do so because of budgetary constraints, apart from a USD 5,000 contribution to the present meeting.

65. The Co-ordinator presented a number of options to enable the programme to continue into 2007, including: having existing donors increase their support, identifying new sources of funding, or eventually applying a minimum subscription level to all Signatory States. Consideration might also have to be given to dispensing with a Signatory State meeting in 2007, unless a member were to offer to host it and provide substantial funds for participation of official delegates. (See also Agenda item 13, below, for more discussion of this point.)

## **(b) Work programme and indicative budget for 2006-2007**

66. The Co-ordinator presented an indicative budget for 2006-2007 based on known and anticipated expenditures, with the assumption that Signatory States would wish to hold a meeting in 2007. The estimates were minimum values, intended to ensure that the secretariat would at least be operational through the end of 2007.

## **(c) Additional sources of funding for implementation**

67. The representative of the United Kingdom indicated that his Government continued to be very supportive and would endeavour to continue to contribute funds to the MoU. A proposal was pending with the United Kingdom treasury for Year of the Turtle and Secretariat support. The representative of Australia indicated that her Government had brought forward its 2007 contribution and would continue to seek funding for the MoU each year. The representative of the United States thanked the Secretariat for the transparent accounting of the resources and budget. The United States remained profoundly committed to the MoU, considered itself to be a Range State by virtue of the territory of Guam, and was pleased with the progress to date. While the United States' commitment was indefinite, the representative noted that funds available would be inconsistent from year to year. Funds for all programmes in 2007 had been reduced significantly and it could not be assured that the United States would be in a position to contribute more than in the past. He urged other Signatory States that were participating in the MoU to investigate options for sharing in the costs.

## **Agenda Item 12: Current use and further development of implementation tools**

68. The Co-ordinator introduced document MT-IOSEA/SS.4/Doc. 13 on current use and further development of the IOSEA website. Describing some of the features of the site, he noted that there had been a marked increase in interest since the launch of the Year of the Turtle campaign. Statistics on usage showed that the countries of origin represented a good cross-section of the IOSEA region, except for Africa. He encouraged Signatories to make links to the IOSEA website ([www.ioseaturtles.org](http://www.ioseaturtles.org)) from departmental/Ministerial websites, in order to further increase the visitations. Participants were urged to submit material for inclusion as news or other features on the site. The Secretariat circulated a questionnaire requesting feedback on usage of the site and suggestions for improvement.

## **Agenda Item 13: Any other business**

### **(a) Forthcoming meetings and events**

69. Linked to the discussion of the budget, the Meeting discussed at length the optimal frequency of meetings of the Signatory States. The United Kingdom preferred a longer interval between meetings, in line with comparable CMS instruments. The representative of Australia indicated that a less frequent meeting schedule was worthy of consideration. While not opposing a shift to a two-year interval, the representative of the United States sought assurance that this would not undermine the effectiveness of the MoU. The representative of South Africa, supported by several other delegations, expressed concern that momentum currently building in the regions could be lost if a biennial or triennial schedule were adopted at this time. South Africa favoured annual meetings for the time being, leaving open the possibility of considering bilateral meetings at later stage. The representative of the United Kingdom, noting a lack of consensus, proposed that the yearly interval be retained, and the issue discussed again the next meeting. The representatives of the United States and Australia supported this motion. Australia encouraged Signatory States to continue to develop their sub-regional frameworks, which might obviate the need for annual IOSEA-level meetings, and to bring core sub-regional issues for discussion at the next meeting. Finally, there was a suggestion that Signatory States be encouraged to maintain continuity in their representation from one year to the next.



70. Participants identified a number of other meetings of relevance to the IOSEA marine turtle conservation expected to be held over the coming year, and these were duly noted by the Secretariat.

**(b) Timetable for possible amendment of the legal character of the MoU**

71. The Co-ordinator introduced the agenda item, noting that it was traditionally kept on the agenda of each year's meeting at the request of the Signatory States. A question had been added to the reporting template which could eventually provide the basis for a more substantial discussion of this matter. Fourteen of 24 Signatory States responded to the question seeking their views on whether the MoU should be transformed into a legally-binding instrument. The findings (eight in favour and six opposed) were inconclusive. Only seven Signatory States had so far responded (inconclusively) to a similar question posed with a longer time horizon.

72. The representatives of the United States, Kenya and Australia indicated their Government's preference for the MoU to become a legally-binding instrument, but did not seek discussion of the issue at the present meeting, proposing instead that it be raised again at a future meeting. The Chairman concluded that there was a consensus to revisit the point at future meetings and he encouraged Signatory States to make their preferences known through their national reports in order to facilitate future discussion.

**Agenda Item 14: Closure of the meeting**

73. The Co-ordinator read out a statement on behalf of the meeting participants acknowledging the achievements of the Sultanate of Oman in the conservation of marine turtles, and expressing their deep appreciation to the Ministry of Regional Municipalities, Environment and Water Resources for the warm hospitality afforded to all participants (Annex 11).

74. There being no other business, the Chairman thanked the participants and the Secretariat for their valuable contributions and declared the meeting closed.

## ANNEX 1: OPENING ADDRESSES

### ADDRESS OF MOHAMMED BIN KHAMIS AL-AREIMI, UNDERSECRETARY FOR ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS, MRMEWR, ON THE OCCASION OF THE OPENING CEREMONY

*In the Name of Allah,  
the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful*

H.E. Dr. Rajah bint Abd Al Ameer bin Ali, Minister of Tourism, and Patron of the Ceremony

Your Excellency, Sheikh Abdulla bin Salem bin Amer Al Rawas, Minister of Regional Municipalities, Environment and Water Resources,

Your Excellencies,  
Distinguished Guests,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It gives me great pleasure to welcome you on this day of the opening of the Fourth meeting of the States that are signatory to the Memorandum of Understanding on the Conservation and Management of Marine Turtles and their Habitats of the Indian Ocean and South-East Asia, held in Muscat, the Capital of the Arab Culture for 2006, under the auspices of the Ministry of Regional Municipalities, Environment and Water Resources, in collaboration with the secretariat to the Signatory States of this Memorandum.

The States that are signatory to the Memorandum of Understanding on the Conservation and Management of Marine Turtles and their Habitats of the Indian Ocean and South-East Asia, are not only mindful that large populations of sea turtles in six areas in the region are listed as endangered species in the World Conservation Union's Red List, but also aware that intensive efforts are required to provide the necessary protection for such rare and vulnerable species.

You Excellency, Patron of the Ceremony,  
Your Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

In demonstration of the priority given to the protection of sea turtles, they are included in the provisions and annexes of the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals, the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Flora and Fauna, and other relevant conventions and protocols.

Furthermore, the States that are party to the Memorandum of Understanding on the Conservation of Marine Turtles recognize the importance of collaboration of efforts towards protecting turtles and their habitats, especially the regulation of socio-economic development in coastal areas and other marine activities. This meeting is therefore demonstrative of such collaborative spirit among the States, and it is hoped that deliberations will help enhance even wider cooperation among all the countries in the region, international and regional organisations and private sector establishments towards the protection and conservation of sea turtles and their habitats.

Your Excellency, Patron of the ceremony,  
Your Excellencies,  
Honorable Gathering,

This year was declared 'The Year of the Turtle' by the States that are signatory to the Memorandum of Understanding on the Conservation and Management of Marine Turtles and their Habitats of the Indian Ocean and South-East Asia during their second meeting in the Kingdom of Thailand in 2004. This fourth meeting in the Sultanate of Oman comes as an extension of the ongoing efforts to conserve these species in their habitats, bearing in mind that four species of sea turtles are known to nest in various coastal areas in the Sultanate. Within the context of the Sultanate's plan to protect these creatures, Daymaniyat Islands and Ras Al Hadd were proclaimed nature reserves by Royal Decrees No. 23/96 and (25/96) respectively.

In conclusion, I would like to extend my thanks to Her Excellency Dr. Rajah bint Abd Al Ameer, the Minister of Tourism, for accepting to be patron of this opening ceremony. I would also like to thank the secretariat of Signatory States to the Memorandum of Understanding on the Conservation and Management of Marine Turtles and their Habitats of the Indian Ocean and South-East Asia, as well as various international and regional organisations, programs and agencies and those here present for their active role in the organisation of this meeting.

Thank you all of for attending this meeting and I wish our distinguished guests an enjoyable stay in their second country, Oman. May Allah Almighty grant you all success.

\* \* \*

**ADDRESS OF DOUGLAS HYKLE, IOSEA MARINE TURTLE MoU COORDINATOR,  
ON THE OCCASION OF THE OPENING CEREMONY**

Your Excellency Dr Rajah bint Abd Al Amir bin Ali, Minister of Tourism, and Patron of this Opening Ceremony;

Your Excellency Sheikh Abdullah bin Salem bin Amer Al Rawas, Minister of Regional Municipalities, Environment and Water Resources;

Dr. Mohammed bin Khamis Al-Areimi, Undersecretary of Environment, Ministry of Regional Municipalities, Environment and Water Resources

Excellencies, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen

I must say from the outset, Your Excellency, that being Minister of Tourism in such a wonderful country, with so many natural assets to attract visitors, must make you the envy of your counterparts in other countries. I visited Oman briefly last December to discuss the arrangements for this meeting, and my first experience here was very much one of “love at first sight”.

Your Excellency, the Minister of Regional Municipalities, Environment and Water Resources, we also appreciate your attendance here today to mark the opening of the Fourth Meeting of the IOSEA Signatory States. This meeting is symbolically important as it is the first time it is being held in West Asia and, indeed, the first time it is taking place away from the Secretariat headquarters in Bangkok. Your presence allows you to witness firsthand, the considerable effort that your staff, under the leadership of the Director-General of Nature Conservation, have put into making this event a success.

The Sultanate of Oman is renowned for its Green and Loggerhead turtles, which nest in abundance on its shores. Indeed, a number of us will have the privilege of visiting an important nesting area at Ras-al-Hadd at the conclusion of the conference. Yet we know from research that has been conducted over the past decades that these turtle populations do not belong to Oman alone. Their mobility means that they are shared by many countries of this sub-region and beyond. This makes it imperative for countries to work together, more intensively than ever before, to help conserve them.

We find ourselves in a region that is blessed with many productive, yet fragile and vulnerable ecosystems – coastal marshes and mudflats, mangroves, sea grass pastures and coral reefs, to name but a few. We need to do our utmost to recognize and protect these natural treasures before they are irreversibly destroyed by careless development.

The IOSEA Marine Turtle Memorandum of Understanding, now with 24 Signatory States from across this vast region, is providing a framework for just that purpose. This week we will review the progress made towards implementing this truly international agreement. With the unparalleled monitoring systems we have put in place, we are now in a good position to identify where our strengths and weaknesses lie, and to make the necessary adjustments to our collective efforts.

It is pleasing to note that many countries have national action plans in place, or are working towards their completion. Several – including Oman – already have long-term beach management programmes that are addressing conservation issues along their coasts. Signatory States have made important progress, but there is still a long way to go, particularly in the area of reducing incidental capture and mortality of sea turtles in fisheries.

This week, our meeting will consider the results of a number of important studies that have been conducted over the last year or so. We can look forward, in particular, to receiving the conclusions and recommendations of a region-wide assessment of Leatherback conservation status, which will

also examine the impacts of the December 2004 tsunami. We will also have a chance to revisit a detailed proposal for the creation of a network of sites of importance for marine turtles.

We are joined this week by many intergovernmental and non-governmental bodies that share our concerns. Over the past year, I think we have made advances in our efforts to work together, and I hope that we can continue to strengthen these linkages over the coming year.

And what a special year this is. Just a couple of weeks ago, in Bangkok, on the 1<sup>st</sup> of March, we celebrated the official launch of the IOSEA Year of the Turtle campaign. This region-wide initiative will bring countries and communities together to celebrate the many cultural and socio-economic values that marine turtles represent.

For many of us in this room, this will be first -- and quite possibly the last -- time in our working careers that we have a chance to participate in such a monumental awareness campaign. Let that inspire us to make the most of this unique opportunity to promote the conservation of these incredible animals.

Thank you all so much for lending your support to the campaign by your presence here today. And let us make this Fourth Meeting of the Signatory States the most productive and memorable one to date.

\* \* \*

**ANNEX 2: LIST OF PARTICIPANTS****REPRESENTATIVES OF SIGNATORY STATES**

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### ANNEX 3: AGENDA

1. Welcoming remarks
2. Signature of the Memorandum of Understanding by additional States
3. Election of officers
4. Adoption of the agenda and schedule
5. Opening statements
6. Report of the Secretariat
7. Alliances, synergies and complementary activities
  - (a) Regional/sub-regional (including intergovernmental)
  - (b) National (Governmental)
  - (c) Nongovernmental
8. Review of 2006 Year of the Turtle Campaign preparations
9. Review of implementation of the Memorandum of Understanding, including the Conservation and Management Plan
  - (a) National reporting
  - (b) Review of implementation progress
  - (c) Region-wide review of Leatherback conservation status and tsunami impacts
  - (d) Status reports on other CMS/IOSEA-funded projects
  - (e) Issue-based priorities for concerted intervention:
    - Fisheries-turtle interactions in the IOSEA region
    - Coastal development mitigation in sensitive areas
    - Hatchery management policy paper
  - (f) Network of sites of importance for marine turtles
  - (g) Other priority site-specific interventions
10. Advisory Committee
  - (a) Report on members' IOSEA-related activities
  - (b) Review of terms of reference
  - (c) Nomination of members and sub-regional observers
  - (d) Identification of tasks for the coming year
  - (e) Any other matters
11. Financial and administrative matters
  - (a) Review of expenditure and status of voluntary contributions
  - (b) Work programme and indicative budget for 2005-2006
  - (c) Additional sources of funding for implementation

12. Current use and further development of implementation tools
  - (a) Projects database
  - (b) Electronic library
  - (c) Standardisation of flipper tag codes
  - (d) IOSEA Interactive Mapping System (IMapS)
13. Any other business
  - (a) Forthcoming meetings and events
  - (b) Timetable for possible amendment of the legal character of the MoU
14. Closure of the meeting

## ANNEX 4: STATEMENTS

### **Opening Statement of the Government of Australia, Department of Environment and Heritage 4th Meeting of the Signatory States of the Indian Ocean and South-East Asia Turtle MoU Muscat, Sultanate of Oman, 11-14 March 2006**

The Australian delegation is pleased to be in Oman for this important meeting.

Australia is eager to progress the issues on the agenda, and we are looking forward to working with other Signatory States and observers to help ensure the meeting is a productive one.

We welcome the new signatories - South Africa, Indonesia, Saudi Arabia and Eritrea - noting that the MoU has come into effect for each in time for each of them to play an active role in the 4th meeting. We are encouraged that further States may be signing the MoU at this meeting, or may be considering signing the MoU shortly. We strongly encourage those States considering signing the MoU to do so - your participation is important to the long-term success of the MoU; and to the effective conservation and management of marine turtles in the region.

Australia congratulates the secretariat for its excellent work in coordinating the successful launch of the '2006 Year of the Turtle' and the production of its associated calendar, IOSEA MoU booklet and press release.

One of the important issues to be discussed over the next few days is the continued implementation of the Conservation and Management Plan. We believe the meeting will develop helpful and productive ideas for implementation in addition to those identified at the third meeting last year.

We thank the Secretariat for reviewing the implementation of the Conservation and Management Plan, through reviewing the national reports. We note the hard work of Signatory States, and, encouragingly, we think that in some cases implementation may be even greater than that identified through last year's national report process. We look forward to working further on the plan over the coming days.

Australia, with support from New Zealand and Samoa, successfully called for the development of a regional conservation arrangement for marine turtles in the Pacific region at the latest meeting of the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS) held in Nairobi, Kenya, from 20-25 November 2005. It is expected that the inaugural meeting of Pacific states will start developing the text of the arrangement will take place in the first half of 2006.

Australia would like to highlight the extent of the ranges of southern hemisphere marine turtles and the subsequent overlap between IOSEA and Pacific populations. Australia forms an ecological link between the South Pacific and South-east Asian regions, as turtles nesting on Australian beaches migrate to both of these regions. We believe it is important to engage the Pacific Island States in turtle issues and encourage a continuation of the excellent work that the signatories to the MoU are doing, including conservation actions, research and education.

\* \* \*



**Statement of Mr Moulay Lahcen El Kabiri, Deputy Executive Secretary,  
Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS)  
UNEP/CMS Secretariat – Bonn, Germany**

**Fourth Meeting of the IOSEA Signatory States  
Muscat, Oman, 11-14 March 2006**

On the behalf of the CMS Secretariat I would like to express my gratitude for the invitation to the Fourth Meeting of the Signatory States to the IOSEA Marine Turtle Memorandum of Understanding (MoU). The CMS Secretariat strongly supports the MoU, and benefits from the valuable initiatives of the Coordinator, who also acts as Senior Advisor of CMS, to promote and represent the Convention on Migratory Species in major activities in the region.

I am here to share with the participants the big challenge and preoccupation of conserving marine turtles through their range as flag-species and a common heritage of present and future generations. Firstly, let me express my grateful feelings towards the Government of the Sultanate of Oman for the hospitality and the generous offer to organize this meeting, as a first unique initiative made by a Signatory State. I hope this gives an appropriate signal to potential hosts of future meetings.

That allows me also to affirm the excellence of the MoU's experience and model, due above all to the commitment of Range States, stakeholders and the huge coordination work undertaken by the IOSEA Secretariat for the conservation and management of marine turtles and their habitats in the Indian Ocean and South-East Asian region.

The meeting's rich agenda and important issues for discussion will certainly lead to debate with a view to improving the implementation of substantial activities within the Range States. Among other things, the Year of the Turtle campaign launched in Bangkok on the first of March 2006 by IOSEA, and the special address made by her Highness Princess Takamado of Japan, represent important messages and milestones for improvement in coming years.

A separate memorandum of understanding concerning the conservation of marine turtles in the Atlantic Coast of Africa has been the focus of attention for CMS, having recently reached agreement with NEPAD for its implementation. As a result of the importance given to it, the Eighth Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to CMS (Nairobi, 16-25 November 2005) endorsed the initiative, and the newly established Coordination Unit has already elaborated a work programme for 2006 with the support of UNEP/CMS (Bonn) and UNEP/DEC (Nairobi). The Coordinator is attending our present meeting; the technical assistant was unfortunately unable to participate at last minute for administrative reasons.

Furthermore, I am pleased to report that the African Marine Turtle MoU has now 21 Signatory States (Liberia signed at CoP8 in Nairobi, in November 2005; and Namibia in Bonn in February 2006). CMS is looking towards South Africa as a signatory to make the link between the two MoU's of Asia and Africa.

I would not finish without confirming the support of CMS to the Year of the Turtle campaign by contributing an amount of US\$ 5,000, and the expectation to launch a new effective cooperation with other Arabic-speaking countries to follow examples of their CMS-Party neighbours (Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Kingdom of Jordan, Lebanon, and Syria; and Yemen, in process of accession).

I am hopeful that the Sultanate of Oman will be counted among Parties to CMS soon, especially for the Ministry of Environment to take the steps and lead the accession to the Convention on Migratory Species and other related Agreement established under CMS auspices. We aspire, in particular, for the Sultanate to join the Asian Houbara Bustard Agreement being led by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, under negotiation by the Range States, with the support of the Convention on Migratory Species Secretariat.

## **ANNEX 5.1: SUMMARY OF THE WESTERN INDIAN OCEAN (WIO) WORKING GROUP DISCUSSIONS**

The Western Indian Ocean sub-group, comprising the following members, met in three sessions during the period 11 to 12 March.

Nyawira Muthiga	Advisory Committee (Sub-group Chair)
Tom Blasdale	United Kingdom (rapporteur)
Fatouma Abdallah	Comores
Mohamed Omar	Kenya
Mangar Vijay	Mauritius
Pierre Ravelonandro	Madagascar
Ronel Nel	South Africa
Makame Nassor	United Republic of Tanzania
Manjula Tiwari	United States (sessions 2 & 3 only)
George Hughes	Advisory Committee Chairman
Gabriella Bianchi	FAO (sessions 1 & 2 only)
Mohamed Mohamud Mohamed	RMCO - Somalia (sessions 2 & 3 only)
Claire Patterson	TRAFFIC South Africa
Jane Mbendo	WWF Tanzania

### **SESSION 1: 11/03/2006**

#### **Agenda Item 1. Year of the Turtle preparations**

Group members provided summaries of their planned national events relating to the Year of the Turtle. A matrix of proposed activities was also prepared for the group's consideration (not reproduced here).

##### Comoros

Since 1997, 10 March has been celebrated as the National Day of the Turtle. This year the event will take place at the end of March and will be linked to the Year of the Turtle. Events will include organisation of a meeting on turtle conservation, visits to schools and awareness-raising. The national day of the environment usually involves drawing and poetry competitions for schools: this year's event will include songs to be sung on turtle nesting beaches. Religious groups are closely involved in this event.

##### Madagascar

Year of the Turtle will be officially launched 14th March. Five activities are planned during the year:

- A National Day of the Turtle to be held in late March or early April.
- By-catch measurements to ensure turtle survival.
- Safeguarding habitat: this will be a permanent activity.
- Reduction of turtle mortality: this will be a permanent activity
- Research on turtles: Starting in June, a research group from Geneva will collaborate with the Institute for Marine Research.

##### Kenya

A secretariat for YoT has been formed involving many stakeholders. This group has been meeting since last year but will be officially launched on 16th March. The focus is on hotels that have nesting beaches – some now protect nests or have hatcheries on their beaches. It is planned that hotel guests will be able to adopt hatchlings and that some hatchlings may be available for release at the Year of

the Turtle launch. Adoption of beaches by hotels will continue long-term. These activities will be publicised through the press. An art competition linked to the Year of the Turtle is in progress in schools and will be used to make a calendar next year. There are plans for a “turtle walk” which will involve people walking from the north and south of the coastline and meeting at a central point, culminating in the celebrations of the Marine Environment Day which is celebrated annually in June. This is still in the early stages of planning. There is also a plan to clean up sites where garbage has been dumped off Mombasa Island and convert these into eco-tourism sites.

#### South Africa

Year of the Turtle will be launched on 30th March; this will be a high level meeting attended by deputy ministers etc. and will include a presentation on the history of South African turtle conservation and community plays. Government agencies and NGOs will be “challenged” on what they will do for the Year of the Turtle and they will announce their plans.

Planned YoT events include an adopt-a-turtle programme, participation in National Marine Week, satellite tagging of between 4 and 10 turtles, gazetting a draft national policy which will feed into a national Management Plan, a TV programme, posters, stickers, crafts and interpretive signage. The WWF eco-schools initiative will highlight turtles for the next couple of years.

#### Mauritius

Mauritius has no nesting beaches but killing of turtles caught at sea is banned. There are plans to increase awareness.

#### Somalia

Details of Year of the Turtle preparations were added in Session 2. Nesting sites and foraging places have not yet been identified but this could be done within 2006. Threats have not yet been documented, but are known about. Characterization of the genetic origin of turtles cannot be completed in 2006.

#### United Republic of Tanzania

Tanzania has three separate Year of the Turtle committees; one each for Zanzibar and the mainland and one national committee. Only the Zanzibar was represented at the SS4 meeting. Zanzibar will organise a coastal clean-up and have had discussions with TV and radio personnel about future programmes. Planned events include plays, performances etc. and there will be a small workshop bringing together the people of Pemba and Zanzibar to discuss common issues. No information is available for activities planned for mainland Tanzania but similar events are probably planned.

#### United Kingdom

Funding has been allocated for satellite tagging of one or two turtles from Chagos and, if these can be successfully tagged, live tracking of the turtles will be available on the internet. This will be well publicised as a Year of the Turtle activity. If tagging in Chagos is unsuccessful, the transmitters will be deployed in Sri-Lanka to tie in with a high profile BBC broadcast. This funding will also be used to collect and analyse genetic material from Chagos. Further funding may be available for a Flora and Fauna International project to eradicate rats from Eagle Island, doubling the amount of rat-free habitat in the archipelago.

#### United States

The representative will take information back from this meeting and pass it on to the relevant embassies which will then contact focal points for possible activities.

#### Regional initiatives

A number of suggestions were made for Year of the Turtle activities that could be carried out at a regional level. These include:

- An international coastal clean-up day; several countries already have international coastal clean-ups and these could be coordinated under the Year of the Turtle banner.
- The Southwest Indian Ocean Fisheries Project has plans for satellite tracking, which could be linked to the Year of the Turtle.
- The Western Indian Ocean Marine Science Association has small grants available, which might be used for turtle science project and has two travel grants which could be used to fund people to travel to centres of excellence for training.
- The observer from FAO, Gabrielle Bianchi, presented details of a workshop to be held in Zanzibar under the FAO project, “Interactions between Sea Turtles and Fisheries within an Ecosystem Approach to fisheries Management”. The purpose of this meeting, at the end of April 2006, would be to estimate the relative importance of sea turtle/ fisheries interactions through modelling. It was suggested that this workshop could be linked with the Year of the Turtle, and Dr Bianchi agreed to look into this possibility. A further suggestion was that the FAO could provide a number of TEDs to Zanzibar at the start of the meeting as a Year of the Turtle event.

All countries of the region were encouraged to upload their activities to the Online Events Calendar on the IOSEA website.

## **SESSION 2: 12/03/2006**

### **Agenda Item 2. National reporting**

The chair opened the discussion by explaining that national reports were meant to provide information that others can learn from. Signatory States should make use of the evaluation prepared by the Secretariat to make improvements and updates to their reports. Signatory States needed to develop or strengthen mechanisms for collaboration in reporting.

The sub-group discussed the scoring system used in the evaluation process. The chair stressed that scores were not intended to provide a comparison between Signatory States, but were a guide to individual countries to help identify areas in which improvement was needed. The representative of Madagascar pointed out that low scores did not necessarily reflect management. The representative of the United Kingdom commented that the scoring system could fail to distinguish between success/failure of management measures and adequate/inadequate reporting. The representative of South Africa noted that, in some cases, providing additional information had led to reduced scores (eg. South Africa had reported that they were failing to conserve mangroves, but added that mangroves were not relevant to turtles in their country; this was not reflected in the score). The Chairman of the Advisory Committee, George Hughes, commented that it would be necessary to make some questions more targeted so that they assessed genuine relevance to turtles (eg. first ask whether mangroves are important to turtles then whether they are being effectively conserved). Referring to the Advisory Committee’s discussion, he said that the second iteration of the evaluation procedure would be improved: questions would be weighted to reflect their importance and “not applicable” responses would not be counted towards the overall score.

The IOSEA Coordinator, Douglas Hykle, answered questions from the sub-group on national reporting. The Secretariat advised against making major changes to the reporting template that Signatories were getting familiar with, and also because of the intensive programming work required, but Signatory States with specific proposals for improvement were welcome to make suggestions in writing.

The representative of South Africa suggested that Signatory States could have the opportunity to “rate the rating system” (ie. to compare it to their own rating of their performance). The Secretariat was

amenable to discuss the ratings of any Signatory State bilaterally. Also, if countries were to improve their reports within the next month or so, the Secretariat would be prepared to update the evaluation matrix accordingly.

The representative of the United Republic of Tanzania commented that the evaluation should be able to show how Signatory States' management of turtles has progressed over time. The Coordinator responded that, as long as the format of the reporting template did not change too much, it should be possible to provide snapshots of different points in time and compare these to show how management had evolved. The Advisory Committee noted that some additional questions would be proposed for inclusion in the template to deal with other threats other than fishing.

Concluding the discussion of this item, it was agreed that the Signatory States would re-examine their reports and, if there were problems with the evaluation, discuss with the Secretariat and update their reports within a month.

### **Agenda Item 3. Identification/description of fisheries possibly interacting with marine turtles**

The present discussion related to the two new questions in the template – 1.4.1 and 1.4.2 – relating to fisheries. It was noted from the outset that discussions in this meeting would not be the final word on this matter as those present are not necessarily fisheries specialists. Any conclusions made here could be further revised by national fisheries specialists.

Signatory States gave their views on completion of question 1.4.1, which requested Signatories to indicate and describe in more detail the main fisheries occurring in the waters of their country, as well as any high seas fisheries in which flag vessels participated and interacted with marine turtles.

The representative of the United Kingdom indicated that there may be inaccuracies in its reporting of this topic, and would clarify this before the end of the meeting. The observer from RMCO described three types of fisheries that impacted turtles in Somali waters: fishing by foreign fleets, many operating illegally, which probably kills hundreds or thousands of turtles; artisanal drift net fishing; and spearing of turtles.

The representatives of Kenya and South Africa questioned whether the all possible fisheries were included in the template, and wondered if dynamite and poison fishing and directed hunting of turtles should also be mentioned. The observer from FAO confirmed that all the major fishing gears recognised by the FAO were covered, and that dynamite and poison were not considered as fishing gears. Directed hunting of turtles was covered by a separate question.

Question 1.4.2 required respondents to indicate the level of impact of each fishery on turtles. The sub-group discussed how the terms 'High, Medium and Low', as used in the question, might be interpreted. The representative of South Africa suggested that it was necessary to quantify the terms (eg. >100 is high, >10 medium etc.) There was considerable discussion of whether assessments should be based on absolute numbers or whether they should take into account the size of the impacted population. The group was unable to reach agreement on this point. The representative of South Africa also suggested that, when listing nesting sites, it may be helpful to list numbers of nesting turtles in order to give an idea of the relative importance of impacts for the species. This, she added, would help in interpreting fisheries mortality.

The sub-group recommended that responses should reflect the scale of impacts relative to their importance to turtle populations rather to the importance of the fisheries. The group felt that the terms 'High, Medium and Low', as used in the reporting template, were unclear and recommended that the Advisory Committee and Secretariat consider this point and provide advice on how these terms should be interpreted.

#### Agenda Item 4: Issues identified by the Signatory States as requiring more international cooperation

The sub-group discussed a paper submitted by South Africa that laid out proposed terms of reference for a marine turtle task force (acronym: MTTF) to be set up in collaboration with the Nairobi Convention (Signatory State meeting agenda item 7 (Document MT-IOSEA/SS.4/Doc. 6.1) refers. The group welcomed the proposal to set up the task force. The proposals for terms of reference were endorsed by the meeting with minor modifications. It was agreed that the proposed membership should not refer to specific countries and nongovernmental organisations etc., but only to general categories (eg current IOSEA Signatory States, NGOs, IGOs).

The group further recommended that an interim committee be set up to guide the development of the MTTF. It was agreed that Ronel Nel (South Africa) would chair the interim committee, and that the views of the sub-group would be conveyed to the secretariat of the Nairobi convention. These positive developments would facilitate the FAO workshop in Zanzibar.

#### SESSION 3, 12/03/2006

The sub-group used as a reference point, the five issues listed for consideration under this agenda item, and attempted to identify for each: needs, plans and opportunities.

##### (1) Training and capacity building

*Needs:* The group identified training and capacity building needs that can be met by other countries within the sub-region, namely: beach monitoring, science interpretation for management, population modelling, genetics, training of fisheries observers, socio-economics / indigenous knowledge. Sub-group members ranked these needs in order of priority for their country (Table 1)

	Kenya	South Africa	UK	Mauritius	Madagascar	Comores	Tanzania	Somalia
Beach monitoring	4		4	5	4	5	1	5
Science interpretation for management:	5	5	1	5	3	4	3	1
Population modelling	5	5	3	5			3	4
Genetics	3	5	2	2	2	2	4	1
Training of fisheries observers	4	5	5	2	1	5	2	5
Socio-economics	4			2	5	4	3	4

Table 1. Training and capacity building needs ranked in order of importance:  
5= top priority 1 =low priority

*Plans:* Participants did not identify any specific plans currently in place to meet these needs; however it was agreed that these needs should be flagged for consideration by Western Indian Ocean Marine Turtle Task Force (MTTF).

*Opportunities:* The group considered that the workshop to be held in Zanzibar under the FAO project, “Interactions between Sea Turtles and Fisheries within an Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries Management” would be good for capacity building. A second workshop, to take place in Madagascar later in 2006, aimed at fisheries managers etc. would also be very important for capacity building.

A number of other opportunities were noted:

- Duke University in the United States runs a summer course in sea turtle conservation.
- TRAFFIC has a course on the enforcement of CITES and other trade conventions. If funding were available, this could be taken into countries within the region.
- Western Indian Ocean Marine Science Association (WIOMSA) has travel grants to allow people to travel for study and internships, as well as to attend meetings and conferences. Details can be found on the website: [www.wiomsa.org](http://www.wiomsa.org)
- The Africa Sea Turtle listserve disseminates information on courses etc. The representative of the United States offered to add all members of the sub-group to this list.
- Several ongoing conservation projects around the world were known to accept internships, such as projects in Costa Rica, Orissa (India), and Ningaloo (Australia).
- Scholarships were available for East African women to be funded for MSc studies in certain topics including environmental courses. Canada’s Dalhousie University may have a scheme like this.

### (2) Identification of turtle populations/migration routes: tagging/satellite tracking

*Needs:* All countries in the sub-region except Somalia currently have tagging programmes. It was emphasised that tagging should have a clear scientific purpose and structured programme. Beach surveys were required to locate nesting areas in Madagascar, Comoros, and Somalia. A lack of expertise in satellite tracking was noted in most countries.

*Plans:* As noted above, there were plans to do some satellite tracking under the SWIOFP.

*Opportunities:* Funding may be available from the Agulhas-Somalia Current Large Marine Ecosystem Project (ASCLME) and Western Indian Ocean Land-Based Sources of Pollution (WIOLab).

### (3) Illegal fishing: poaching and illegal trade in turtle products

Among the countries present, Kenya, Madagascar and Mozambique had investigated the issue of illegal harvesting.

*Needs:* The sub-group identified three basic needs:

- A regional study of cultural beliefs and socio-economic incentives to harvest turtles.
- Improved cross-border collaboration, in particular, better communication between Signatory States within the sub-region. It was suggested that people find it easier to communicate with the IOSEA Secretariat than directly with their neighbours. The establishment of a Marine Turtle Task Force (MTTF) in collaboration with the Nairobi Convention should help improve

this situation. It was suggested that turtle conservation groups be set up close to international borders, with encouragement to interact.

- Greater international cooperation in patrolling. It should be possible to share information on IUU fishing vessels between neighbouring states. It was suggested there may be potential to work through the Regional Fisheries Management Organisations, eg. Indian Ocean Tuna Commission, to improve regulation on the high seas.

*Plans:* The sub-group agreed to facilitate local groups to collect samples from stranded turtles. The representative of the United States offered to send out tissue sampling protocols to regional Focal Points. The representative of South Africa offered to approach researchers in Réunion (France) to suggest that they coordinate this work.

*Opportunities:* It was acknowledged that the MTTF could be used to aid cross-border communication; and could also facilitate a common format for recording data.

#### **Agenda Item 5. Nomination of a sub-regional observer on the Advisory Committee**

Ms. Fatouma Abdallah, IOSEA Focal Point for Comoros, was proposed by Mauritius, seconded by Madagascar and unanimously approved by the sub-group to act as the Western Indian Ocean observer on the Advisory Committee.

#### **Agenda Item 6. Recommendations arising from the leatherback-tsunami assessment**

The sub-group approved the recommendations of the report with a number of small changes. In particular, it was considered that “create incentives to encourage community support...” and “create collaborative, community based projects to maintain adequate hatchling production...”, included in the draft as project aims, were of sufficient importance to be considered as separate issues. Additionally, the sub-group recommended the addition of a section on protected areas and legislation. Finally, the group stressed that the document should reflect the view that hatcheries should be used only as a last resort, with *in-situ* hatching being greatly preferable.

#### **Concluding remarks**

The sub-group concluded that, as a region, the Western Indian Ocean needed to be given more recognition from relevant organisations as a high priority for turtle conservation.

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## **ANNEX 5.2: SUMMARY OF THE JOINT NORTHWESTERN AND NORTHERN INDIAN OCEAN WORKING GROUP DISCUSSIONS**

The combined sub-group was the largest of the three working groups, comprising representatives from the Signatory States present from the Northern Indian Ocean (i.e. Bangladesh, Pakistan, Sri Lanka) and Northwestern Indian Ocean (i.e. Eritrea, Islamic Republic of Iran, Jordan, Oman, Saudi Arabia) sub-regions, as well as observers from several non-Signatories (Bahrain, United Arab Emirates, Yemen) and other organisations. The working group was chaired by Mr. Asghar Mobaraki (Islamic Republic of Iran)

### **Agenda point 1. Year of the Turtle preparations**

#### **Bahrain**

Very interested in research and conservation; carrying out an investigation on turtles and dugongs – with aerial surveys with the Ministry of Interior. Coincides with YoT timing; need to liaise with donor agencies to raise additional funds for studies; Friends of the Environment NGO launched a turtle project to increase public awareness on turtles and the marine ecosystems – ongoing.

#### **Bangladesh**

Thousands of km of coast, good opportunity to conserve turtles, but population density is not evenly distributed; development of a committee including Ministry and CARMD; marine park and ecotourism project development at St. Martin's Island; Coastal Wetland and Biodiversity project; Central Natural Resources Conservation Project; National seminar in Dhaka in Apr 2006 on conservation of turtles; a colourful rally / awareness projects will be organised at national and regional levels (10 coastal and 6 inland districts); posters and brochures; television clips will be made for public awareness; a photo / art competition among school children on a sea turtle conservation theme; celebration of the YoT among coastal districts; declare St. Martin as a critical ecological zone; ban the use of polythene.

#### **Eritrea**

Will adopt the IOSEA MoU as part of the YoT activities; have identified 5 turtle species, main habitats and main threats; increase public awareness through mass media, minimising threats by introduction of TEDs; increase tagging programme (Feb-May 2006); adoption of the draft NAP; declare Dissei island and Baras'ole as protected areas.

#### **Islamic Republic of Iran**

Distribution of posters among fishers and others along the coast on turtle issues, raise awareness; publishing four sea turtle stamps for national and international distribution; distribution of IOSEA brochures and calendars Feb 2006; tagging projects to continue/expand; interactions with newspapers and raising awareness for YoT, exploitation of eggs, etc; starting to prepare NAP for turtles in Iran; publish a journal issue specific to marine turtles with preliminary information for conducting research and raising public awareness.

#### **Jordan**

Raise awareness nationally; research proposals developed to study population size and structure of Gulf of Aqaba hawksbills; development of an "Eco-club" with schools and students and local NGOs, possibly as a travelling awareness activity; enlarge the aquarium at the Aqaba Marine laboratory to increase awareness; special event / celebration on turtle conservation including painting contest with prizes, films, video clips, media representation in April 2006; museum to highlight turtles and conservation issues in a special corner seen by 400,000 students; distributed IOSEA calendars and brochures February 2006.

**Kingdom of Saudi Arabia**

Will forward plans at a later time in the year. Protected areas exist which protect turtles (such as closed islands in the Gulf); have conducted research activities; laws and regulations protecting turtles established; signatory to a number of international instruments which address turtle conservation.

**Pakistan**

Federal government to organise a national-level workshop; public awareness components include newspaper articles weekly Jan/Feb 2006, competitions, posters, education materials for students, educating fishermen in turtle-friendly fishing practices; activities to be implemented under the GEF-funded Pakistan Wetland Project; development of an UW film focussing on turtles, and other documentaries on turtle activities; plan to celebrate YoT launch ceremony in collaboration with NGOs in Sindh and Baluchistan: symposiums and seminars on turtle conservation at national and provincial levels in Sep/Oct 2006, satellite tracking with 4 PTTs with help from Abu Dhabi (ERWDA), postage stamp on Olive Ridleys; Day of the Sea Turtle with schools of all levels up to University in collaboration with WWF Pakistan; plan to highlight Turtle Tagging Days (4 days during peak season on both coasts); photo exhibitions, and school competitions; sea turtle carnival with school children on different life stages of turtles with WWF and Sindh Government 12 Mar 2006; WWF, Marine Fisheries Department and Sindh government to print certificates for tag reports, for winners of the carnivals, and for training participants; declaring a protected area for turtles at Jiwani. Adventure Foundation of Pakistan to bring tourists to the beach and promote turtle tourism.

**Somalia**

Somalia not yet a signatory to IOSEA; long coastline, oceanic upwellings drive coastal ecology; three species of turtles; several NGOs interested in conserving turtles, increase awareness among local people.

**Sri Lanka**

Two protected areas declared; and drafted hatchery management guidelines; prepared turtle conservation strategy; tagging programme, public awareness programme; satellite tracking in May 2006.

**Sultanate of Oman**

Hosting IOSEA COP4; increased publicity; four postage stamps - competition among schoolchildren for the drawings of the four species in Oman in started in Jan/Feb 2006; posters to be distributed throughout the country; programmes on TV and radio to increase public awareness starting in Jan 2006; programmes to increase public awareness of the YoT in Masirah and Ras Al Hadd; collaboration with MTCA and ESO on satellite tracking Jun-Jul 2006; an MoU signed with Total and IPDEX regarding the YoT and possibly developing a museum / visitor center on Masirah for turtles before end 2006; constructing a visitor center in Ras Al Hadd in Jan 2006; school competitions / drawing contests; training workshop for Rangers and Managers on turtle biology and data management in May 2006; need to improve efforts to get return tag data; increase awareness at a scientific level of the value of Ras Al Hadd reserve as a natural laboratory; possibly establish a natural partition or a wall of some kind to protect nesting habitat from lights and fishery activities.

**United Arab Emirates**

Already has projects on turtles (such as that by ERWDA in the past); many islands are considered as protected areas; public awareness activities include a marathon held in cooperation with Shell; workshop to train teachers and students to raise awareness of environmental issues; laws (Article 28, 1999) forbids catch of turtles penalties include fines and imprisonment; small NGOs carrying out tagging projects at Ras Al Khaimah; fishermen using bags to carry bait, turtles ingest them and die – three clean-up campaigns with diving clubs to clean rubbish from beaches; Arabia and International clean-up days several times a year; newspaper and video awareness; turtle conservation to be included in the school curricula in 2006/'07; sharing resources with other countries for research/conservation.

**Yemen**

Cabinet agrees on signing CMS agreement, and also the IOSEA MoU – currently under discussion; ongoing monitoring on Socotra; finalising draft of the NAP for conservation of turtles in Yemen following which it will be implemented pending infrastructure and financial support; in the process of declaring Jethmun and Ras Sharmah (Hadramaut coast) as protected area; organise a workshop on the MoU and its objectives in Mar/Apr 2006 involving stakeholders and decision-makers.

**WWF Middle East**

Workshop on 10-13 September 2006 on turtles and coral reefs to share information and identify conservation gaps and opportunities and encourage multilateral cooperation.

**Agenda Item 2. National reporting** (No details provided)**Agenda Item 3. Identification/description of fisheries possibly interacting with marine turtles**

**Bahrain:** Extensive trawl fishing, overlapping with turtle habitats. A total of 2,171 boats of all types are present. Five years ago a project was intended to introduce by-catch reduction devices, with the expectation of reducing bycatch by 40%, but the project has not yet been implemented. Drift nets are also a major problem with respect to turtles. Boat strikes are also a potential problem.

**Bangladesh:** Shrimp and fishing trawls, drift nets and gill nets, are the main fisheries, all of which impact marine turtles. Illegal fishing vessels exist that may also impact marine turtles.

**Eritrea:** Industrial shrimp and fish trawl fishing (60-80 boats), traditional fishing (gill nets) and small-scale industrial fisheries owned by Eritreans, and licences given to foreign fishing companies. Sea cucumber fishery also impacts turtles, as fishing camps are established on nesting grounds and eggs and turtles are taken for food. An estimated 3,300 turtles were caught as bycatch over 10 years.

**Islamic Republic of Iran:** The main fisheries (10,680 boats of various sizes, in total) include gill and drift nets. Small motor boat strikes also impact turtles. There are about 76 shrimp trawlers, but they are usually not present during the nesting season, so the only impact is on foraging grounds. Also, fishermen use nesting sites as rest areas and take eggs opportunistically.

**Jordan:** With a shoreline of only 27,000m, there are no significant fishery-turtle interactions. The fishery is mostly artisanal, with a limited number of small boats. Preliminary surveys of stocks suggest only a small number of turtles, and small number of interactions. However, artificial lighting on the beach could be a major problem, along with industrial effluent.

**Oman:** No shrimp trawls, however set gill nets and drift nets are a threat to turtles. Pelagic trawling and longline fishing may also have impacts but no data are available on the magnitude, if any, of threats to turtles. Many foreign vessels are licenced in Oman, and all require an Omani observer. There is an unquantified threat from poaching; although laws prohibit all type of harvest or killing or taking of eggs in Oman. There is a need for a standardised, transparent, observer reporting process.

**Pakistan:** Large-scale commercial fishing (17,000 trawlers and boats of various sizes), upon which coastal communities rely. Pakistan is a major shrimp exporter, and use of TEDs is compulsory. Many TEDs are being used in shrimp fisheries today, but there are similarly many violations – due to limitations on enforcement – and in reporting. Foreign trawlers also fish in Pakistan waters. Drift nets and gill nets also impact marine turtles. There are onboard observers, but no data are available on percentage coverage. There is a lack of regular and complete bycatch reporting.

**Saudi Arabia:** No details available at present.

**Sri Lanka:** There are fishing trawls and boats, but the fishing industry is not well developed. Sri Lankan-owned longline fishing exists, but no data are available on turtle bycatch. A reporting system exists but does not operate well does not provide clear information on bycatch. Nesting grounds are impacted by fishing communities along the coast, from light and poaching, but a detailed study is required.

**United Arab Emirates:** There is no trawling in UAE. Plastic bags used by fishermen and beach seine nets are threats to turtles, but most fishermen adhere to laws and regulations; and little bycatch exists.

**Yemen:** There is no monitoring to date of fishery-turtle interactions. The main fisheries are gill nets, and hook and line. Many foreign vessels are fishing in Yemen waters without monitoring. Light fishing is also impacting turtles.

Key recommendation of the sub-group: There is a need for a standardised, transparent, observer reporting process which reports on marine turtle bycatch, along with suitable observer coverage.

#### **Agenda Item 4: Issues identified by the Signatory States as requiring more international cooperation**

##### (1) Exchange of information on existing and planned project activities

The sub-group identified insufficient exchange among member States of timely information about actual or planned activities, as an impediment to collaborative work in the sub-region. It was proposed that focal points and others be more proactive in informing the Secretariat about plans for projects or activities, so that these could be highlighted on the IOSEA website, allowing other countries to get involved if they wished, much like the CBD information-sharing “clearinghouse”.

It was noted that the website already has a Projects Database which, with some adjustment, may fulfil that role. It would be important to allow users to identify not only existing or current projects, but also upcoming projects in need of partners, even as the project concepts were being developed. The website might also include a new section highlighting “projects seeking funding”, where partly or completely developed project proposals in need of funding could be advertised to potential funding agencies.

It was recommended that the Secretariat circulate periodically to Signatory States and also non-Signatory States a printed newsletter of some kind, with regional highlights, since some focal points may not be checking updates by email regularly. It was acknowledged, however, that the Secretariat may be limited in manpower in terms of how much information exchange it can coordinate. (*Secretariat note:* the current practice of circulating a monthly newsletter by e-mail to a large subscription list is probably the most efficient vehicle for reaching a wide audience with the limited available resources.) NGOs might also be able to help facilitate information exchange and raise funds.

While some found it more convenient or useful to operate via the IOSEA website than at official levels sometimes, the group considered it important to enhance e-mail communication amongst the people on the ground in addition to maintaining the official communication protocol. It was emphasised that country representatives needed to be committed as to push for outcomes of this meeting rather than letting them fade away.

##### (2) Exchange of practical expertise

Beyond exchange of basic information, the sub-group considered it important to exchange practical expertise among countries of the region. A need to educate fishermen throughout the range, possibly

through exchange programmes, was identified. Eritrea, in particular, sought to increase awareness among local communities and fishermen. Details were given of a project planned in 2006 that would involve cross-cultural exchange between Eritrean fishermen and Omani rangers. Student exchange programmes might be another vehicle to explore. It was noted that, in any case, education strategies needed to be multi-tiered.

### (3) Potential use of existing sub-regional instruments

With particular reference to the Northwestern Indian Ocean, the sub-group considered the potential for using existing sub-regional instruments to develop cooperative efforts. Re-establishing communication among PERSGA member States was one avenue that could be explored. It was noted that the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) Conservation Agreement – the only binding agreement within the GCC – addressed joint work on transboundary protection, among other things, and that it may be a useful body through which to introduce turtle conservation, in addition to regional seas programmes. Links to UNESCO were also suggested.

The sub-group considered the possibility of a single project that might be able to link together all the institutional needs outlined in the issues for improved cooperation. One suggestion for stimulating more communication and strengthening practical cooperation would be to promote exchange of information on tag recoveries through the IOSEA website.

The sub-group explored a number of these ideas in more depth, some of which were eventually incorporated in a resolution from the meeting aimed at decision-makers with the sub-region. The ideas included:

- A specific multi-country project, such as satellite tracking, that could bring all countries together, taking account of the geographical break-up of seas and logistics of project development. A species-specific approach might be considered, that could link the sub-regions.
- Implementing tag recovery data sharing programmes, and improving tag recovery reporting among countries, possibly through PERSGA, ROPME, and/or UNESCO. This might entail developing a shared poster/pamphlet series for the NWIO region, along with other paraphernalia (posters, t-shirts, pencils, caps, mugs, rewards etc.)
- Developing exchange programmes among countries; possibly with education projects aimed at higher level-educated students, internship programmes, that would link into fishermen training and awareness raising.
- Creating turtle-specific working groups within existing regional agreements (e.g. GCC, ROPME, RECOFI, PERSGA)
- Holding a series of “Training the Trainer” workshops?

The group identified the following as being among the potential funding sources/facilitators: UNESCO, UNEP, WWF – UAE and GEF.

### **Agenda Item 5. Nomination of a sub-regional observer on the Advisory Committee**

The Islamic Republic of Iran had already been chosen, at the Third Meeting of the Signatory States, as the sub-regional observer for the Northwestern Indian Ocean, and would continue in that capacity for another year. Sri Lanka was selected as the sub-regional observer for the Northern Indian Ocean.

### **Agenda Item 6. Recommendations arising from the leatherback-tsunami assessment**

The sub-group made no further comments on the specific recommendations arising from the leatherback-tsunami assessment.

### **ANNEX 5.3: SUMMARY OF THE SOUTH-EAST ASIA (SEA+) WORKING GROUP DISCUSSIONS**

The sub-group comprised representatives of Signatory States and observers, and was facilitated by Colin Limpus, assisted by Mark Hamann.

#### **Agenda Item 1. Year of the Turtle preparations**

A calendar of Year of the Turtle activities being planned for the countries of the sub-region was finalised (Attachment 1)

#### **Agenda Item 2. National reporting**

It was proposed that from one to three index beaches be chosen for each country and these monitored and reported on regularly. Then, depending on resources, other sites could be added over time. It was suggested that countries review the existing information for as many beaches as possible, and as capacity allowed, add in beaches (beyond the index beaches) for which information may not have been gathered in a long time.

Members questioned whether small numbers of nestings made it worthwhile to monitor these kinds of beaches on a regular basis. The answer was yes – with the example given of the small number of nestings of leatherbacks at a large number of beaches along southern Indonesian archipelago. All added up to a significant proportion of the country's leatherback nesting. However, it was acknowledged that monitoring small, sporadic nesting populations was resource intensive, and that possibly local people needed to be involved more, rather than sending out government personnel all the time.

The sub-group supported the Advisory Committee recommendation that a “Not Applicable” category be added to the draft criteria for evaluation of IOSEA National Reports. Such a category would provide a separate weight for those programmes where the degree of implementation was not relevant due to effective mitigation or other factors.

The group also recommended that Focal Points distribute the National Reports to key agencies, institutions or NGOs involved in sea turtle conservation within countries to ensure a comprehensive report. It recognised that there was probably much more activity happening in the region than was being reported at present and that there was room for continual improvement in capturing all the activities in the region.

#### **Agenda Item 3. Identification/description of fisheries possibly interacting with marine turtles**

Fisheries bycatch, and the difficulties in measuring it, was recognised in the discussion by the Signatory States as one of the principal threats to marine turtles, and that the reporting format may need to be examined to facilitate better reporting and quantification. The sub-group supported treating an individual fishery like a site with a geographic reference, like a nesting beach or feeding site, to aid with reporting.

There was a discussion around the traditional use of turtles in the region. It was noted that the legal frameworks for such use vary within Signatory States, from strict prohibition to allowing for sustainable take. The group acknowledged the difficulty of establishing values for sustainability. There was no recommendation from this discussion point.

#### **Agenda Item 4: Issues identified by the Signatory States as requiring more international cooperation**

##### (1) Training and capacity building

The sub-group recommended that a “Research and Development” section be introduced to the IOSEA website, which could be a “library” for new information on gear trials, relevant research, contacts etc.

Attention was drawn to a program run by SPREP in the 1990s, where SPREP found funds to send managers from several Pacific Island nations to intensive training courses in Australia and Hawaii.

##### (2) Identification of turtle populations/migration routes: tagging/satellite tracking

The following countries reported having conducted satellite tracking with resources from various organisations (listed):

Australia – Federal government and WWF

Indonesia – NOAA and WWF

Philippines – WWF & Coastal Resource Management Program funded by USAID

Thailand – Kyoto University, SEASTAR 2000

Vietnam – WWF, NOAA & DANIDA

The Philippines had carried out satellite telemetry of Hawksbill and Green turtles into Indonesian, Philippines and Malaysia waters. Most telemetry in Australia had been done on animals that stayed within territorial waters; however tagging showed that linkages do occur between countries.

The SEA+ sub-group recommended that a map of all satellite transmitter routes be developed from published data sets and added to the IOSEA website; and that reporting mechanisms be sped up to allow timely production of summary information in this regard.

The group further recommended that the IOSEA (Year of the Turtle) website have a page that highlighted all international recaptures of marine turtles throughout the year, as a vehicle for promoting collaboration.

Dr Limpus, Advisory Committee member, agreed to work closely with researchers so that they would be better able to include their data in the IOSEA online mapping system, known as IMapS, and to retain ownership of data once included in the system.

It was noted that in the southern ocean there was a scheme whereby people can sponsor a satellite tag a bird. The representative of Australia posed the question of whether a similar scheme might be organised for sea turtles in the region.

The representative of Myanmar identified a need for help to identify nesting beaches beyond the islands for which data were already available.

##### (3) Genetic analysis

The sub-group identified the following programmes for genetic analyses:

- Australia – university facilities across the country. Australian turtle populations were now mostly known, however a genetic gap remained for the Northern Territories.
- SEAFDEC coordinated a project in ASEAN nations. Currently, only green turtle samples were being collected from two locations in the region and sent to Malaysia for analysis.

- Indonesia – analysis (of leatherback turtles only) was being done by NOAA (United States)
- Thailand – Department of Marine and Coastal Resources collaborated within the SEASTAR 2000 programme, and all species in Thailand were being sampled.
- WWF supported by-catch surveys, and would collect samples from by-caught turtles, in collaboration with NOAA.

Whereas work on Loggerhead turtles was mostly coordinated in Australia and Japan, a major gap remained for Olive ridley populations, for which data had mostly not been collected or analysed.

With regard to regional genetics programmes, the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS) had funded a regional genetic study for green turtles, for which genetic analyses had been carried out on different stocks – Philippines, Malaysia (Terengganu, Sabah, Sarawak) Indonesia (Pungumbahan, Aru Is), most sites in Micronesia and Papua New Guinea, New Caledonia and throughout Australia. The group requested that this 2002 report, which apparently had been circulated only within the CMS family, be made available more widely through the IOSEA website.

It was further suggested that the colour coding be introduced in the IOSEA Interactive Mapping System (IMapS) to show genetic stocks.

The representative of Thailand noted that his country had done substantial satellite tracking and genetic studies and that these results had been published in various SEASTAR documents. The SEA+ sub-group recommended that these documents also be made available through the IOSEA website.

Dr Limpus also noted that another genetic study had been conducted in the Indian Ocean with green and hawksbill turtles, from Africa to the eastern Pacific, but it did not include nations of the South China Sea. The researcher who had done the work had not yet published the findings.

#### (4) Illegal fishing activities and trade

The representative of the Philippines reported illegal hunting of turtles by foreign fishing vessels in national waters/beaches. Mostly the vessels come for fish, but turtles are harvested as a side-product. Similarly, Indonesia reported foreign fishing vessels taking turtles illegally in Indonesian waters at Derewan Island.

The observer from China said that records of illegal trade were not available. Although some information existed, it was difficult to obtain specific data. The observer from WWF reported that that organisation was hoping to fund a TRAFFIC project of markets and source countries.

#### **Agenda Item 5. Nomination of a sub-regional observer on the Advisory Committee**

Indonesia, seconded by the United States, proposed Mr. Renato Cruz (Philippines) as the Advisory Committee observer for South-East Asia + region, with rotation of the observer occurring every two years.

#### **Agenda Item 6. Recommendations arising from the leatherback-tsunami assessment**

The representative of Myanmar reported that his country has leatherback turtles and will help to update the assessment.

The SEA+ sub-group acknowledged that although reduction of mortality (i.e. bycatch or eggs) was the highest priority issue in need of addressing, because of cost constraints funding should be directed towards an achievable project in the short/medium term – namely, the determination of the stock and population size.



The group supported the initiation of an IOSEA project to help develop standard approaches and distribution of necropsy and stranding data, as well as assistance in the area of genetics (or other manuals on standard practice). An example was given of the need related to information where to look for the position of a PIT tag if a stranded animal came ashore.

### **Concluding remarks**

The SEA+ group recommended that sub-regional working group agendas be distributed prior to the Signatory State meeting, or at least a skeleton of issues that could be built upon if necessary.

### **Additional information about important activities/events in the South-East Asia + sub-region**

**SEAFDEC** has 11 member countries (ASEAN plus Japan). SEAFDEC cooperates with member countries in the project on “Environment of Sea Turtle Stock” which includes four areas of work (from 2006 onwards): DNA study; head-starting study; turtle tagging; and interactions between sea turtles and fisheries

In these activities (research, training and information, including meetings) SEAFDEC will work with member countries for carrying out project activities, which may include fellowships and in-kind support. In addition, the project on “Responsible Fishing Technologies and Practices” will also complement work on the issue of sea turtle by-catch and the reduction of turtle mortality. SEAFDEC is planning to organise a workshop on interaction of sea turtles and fisheries in 2006, in cooperation with FAO and the Government of Thailand.

**Australia** together with New Zealand and Samoa have put forward a proposal for a memorandum of understanding (similar to IOSEA) to be developed in the south Pacific region.

**Indonesian** initiatives for international collaboration:

- Sulu-Sulawesi Sea Marine Ecosystem (SSME), tri-national (Indonesia, Malaysia and Philippines) cooperation aimed at the conservation of migratory species (including marine turtles).
- Bismark Solomon Seas Ecoregion, a tri-national partnership (Papua New Guinea, Indonesia and Solomon Islands) to conserve (western Pacific) leatherback turtles at nesting sites, feeding areas and migratory pathways. The BSSE is the seascape stretching from Vogelkop (Birdhead) Peninsula of Papua, Indonesia, across the Admiralty and Bismark Archipelago of Papua New Guinea to the Makira Islands of Solomon Islands, covering approximately 2 million square kilometres.

**United States** international sea turtle conservation projects in fiscal year 2005: Guam, Northern Mariana Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Marshal Islands, Republic of Palau, Papua New Guinea, Indonesia, Melanesia, Solomon Islands, Viet Nam

### **Other points of interest**

**Philippines:** A van coming from the harbour of Zamboanga City was investigated and impounded at the north harbour, Manila, Philippines by a composite team of concerned agencies between November 2005 and January 2006. The van contained a large number of dried marine products allegedly intended for export to Viet Nam. The items contained dried porcupine fish, shark fins, fish gills, sea horses, sea cucumber, mother of pearl, and 10 sacks of marine turtle scutes. When the latter were inventoried, it was estimated that 640 marine turtles had been killed. Further assessment of the turtle items revealed that about 98% of the scutes were from hawksbill turtles and the rest were from green turtles. It was revealed also that the items were from the province of Mindanao, province of Palawan, based on the markings of the plastic wrapper used. The consigner or the owner of the product was never discovered up to this time since all documents used has been falsified.

**Philippines:** An Olive ridley tagged in the Philippines in 1970s was found in India – the longest migration of an olive ridley turtle that they are aware of in 25 years of data collection. The turtle was tagged by consultants during the construction of a nuclear power plant in the 1970s. The Philippines researchers do not have the raw data, and they are not sure where exactly the turtle was released, therefore the information has not yet been published. They were nonetheless encouraged to get the information in the public domain.

**Thailand:** Many green turtles -- comprising males, adults and young turtles -- washed ashore in Phang Nga province of Thailand after the December 2004 tsunami.

## Attachment 1

**SEA+ Calendar of Year of Turtle Activities**

Country/Org	Activity	Date
Philippines	National awareness – raising on-going through radio, press releases and distribution of information, education, and communication materials	On-going
	National Earth Day Festival for the Year of the Turtle launch, Concert and press releases in different languages, on Earth Day in Philippines,	Earth Day April 22 <sup>th</sup>
	With CI plan media conference on Ambassadors of the Sea Project and Year of the Turtle, and Sulu Sulawesi Seascape project for some embassies to donate satellite transmitters for turtle tracking.	Aim for April 20th
	Signing of Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) in Subic Bay between Ocean Adventure Marine Park and Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR)	March 3 <sup>rd</sup>
	Marine Turtle Conservation training in Balabac, Palawan, and Verde Island passage.	March 1 <sup>st</sup>
	Signing of Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) among Monteman Beach Resort, DENR, and Municipal Government of Bagac	
	Week long Panikan (marine turtle) festival in Morong, Bataan	3 <sup>rd</sup> Week in November
	Provincial resolution on declaring certain areas in Region 11 as Critical Habitats	
	Exhibit at the Ninoy Aquino Parks and Wildlife Center, Quezon City	Whole year
	Goal for once a month press release for marine turtle related news, and national TV/Radio spots.	
	Culturing Corporate sponsors through value-added cross-promotional programs	
	Marine Turtle Stamp series by Philippine postal office.	
	Photo exhibit, brochures, posters, T-shirts	
Adoption of turtle conservation guidelines	May	
CI and IUCN training on habitat survey, participated by representatives from Philippines, Malaysia and Indonesia.		

Thailand	<p>Year of the Turtle global Launch with IOSEA Secretariat in Bangkok</p> <p>Ongoing meetings for Sea Turtle National Action – planned to complete by the end of this year or next.</p> <p>Workshop on Hatchery management</p> <p>Release of posters and calendars</p> <p>Release of T-shirt on saving sea-turtles</p> <p>Media release and televised spots on sea turtle conservation</p> <p>Joint Workshop on bycatch reduction (with SEAFDEC) on reduction of impact of fishing activity on sea turtle through bycatch</p> <p>WWF Management strengthening and training at Had Tay Muang National Park (1 hour north of Phuket airport)</p>	<p>March 1<sup>st</sup></p> <p>March/April 2006</p> <p>Will be confirmed</p> <p>Ongoing</p>
Viet Nam	<p>Launching the partnership collaboration between MoF, IUCN, and WWF on Bycatch</p> <p>Bycatch and observer program training in pilot site (Ming Chau Island, Van Don, Quang Ninh Province)</p> <p>Print Sea Turtle calendar (special issue for 18 months) to support the YoT 2006</p> <p>Round table meeting among relevant stakeholders and relevant agencies on CMS accession</p> <p>Organize training on bycatch and observer program at leatherback turtle nesting site in Quang Tri Province</p> <p>Print the education materials and biological information on marine turtle and their habitats</p> <p>Survey, observer program on board, and vessel monitoring program on bycatch in place</p> <p>Translate and print the TEDs research report of Viet Nam</p> <p>Print posters, brochures, T-shirt, hats</p> <p>Building capacity training workshop on sea turtle tracking, and CITES raising awareness (national level)</p> <p>National steering committee meeting to support the implementation of marine turtle conservation action plan and YoT</p> <p>TV Program and round table discussion on sea turtle and their habitats, conservation and YoT</p>	<p>Feb 2006</p> <p>March</p> <p>Feb</p> <p>May</p> <p>May</p> <p>June</p> <p>April 2006 to May 2007</p> <p>July 2006</p> <p>June – July</p> <p>April – May</p> <p>May 06 – Jan 07</p> <p>July 06</p>

Viet Nam	<p>Continue research and conservation activities in pilot sites of Con Dao, Nui Chua</p> <p>Clean-up beach in Nha Trang on Environment day (raising awareness on Sea Turtle)</p> <p>Organise training and extra curricular activities for teachers (primary and secondary school) in some sea turtle nesting beach sites</p> <p>Awareness raising for general public (tourists, divers, media)</p> <p>Conduct competition in school about the sea turtle and their habitats including painting competition, sea turtle releases etc</p> <p>Habitat survey training in Quang Ninh, Quang Tri and Da Nang</p> <p>All activities are partnership between government and NGO including Ministry of Fisheries, IUCN, WWF, TRAFFIC and local community at nesting sites.</p>	<p>Jan 06 – Jun 07</p> <p>June 06</p> <p>Aug-Dec 06</p> <p>Feb and July 06</p>
Myanmar	<p>Event around release of hatchlings in the month of Feb</p> <p>Started a Beach cleaning program, location at Diamond island, in collaboration with navy and Forest personnel</p> <p>Article on Sea Turtle Conservation in English newspaper in English and Myanmar language.</p> <p>Production of Posters with IOSEA logo to be set-up distributed at jettys, ports and fish landing sites, with IOSEA logo.</p> <p>Workshop on Sea Turtle Conservation to be organized at Yangon</p> <p>DoF and concerned agencies have been initiated and some are already in progress</p> <p>Constraints difficult to educate and control in remote areas, including preventing poaching. Infrastructure and technologies, need for more collaboration with other agencies.</p>	<p>Feb</p> <p>Feb</p> <p>March 6, 2006</p> <p>May 15th</p>
Indonesia	<p>Reprinting of existing Marine Turtle promotional materials such as WWF material on Indonesia marine turtles.</p> <p>Plan to consult with partners including WCS, CI, WWF, TNC to plan for new events</p> <p>Launch of YoT on 5<sup>th</sup> June, Jakarta.</p> <p>Event for signing MOU between Indonesia, Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands for Bismarck Solomon Seas Ecoregion.</p> <p>Celebration of designation of new habitat protection area in Berau Islands, Derawan critical for green turtles (install 3-4 transmitters)</p> <p>IUCN training on habitat surveys</p> <p>Indonesia celebration day for turtles “Hari cinta puspa dan cinta Satwa”</p>	<p>May ?</p> <p>June 5<sup>th</sup></p> <p>July</p> <p>June</p> <p>Nov</p>

Malaysia	<p>Plans to sit down with stakeholders and plan activities</p> <p>Exhibition of awareness raising material planned for Terengganu to be launched by chief minister,</p> <p>Expansion of protected area to include additional important or critical habitats</p> <p>Launch of a book on tagging guidelines on sea turtles, developed with SEAFDEC,</p> <p>Event celebrating the signing of the IOSEA MOU.</p> <p>Workshops or trainings associated with SEAFDEC ? project or other projects ?</p> <p>IUCN training on habitat surveys</p>	<p>July 2<sup>nd</sup> to September</p> <p>?</p> <p>?</p> <p>?</p> <p>?</p>
Australia	<p>Federal Minister press release to celebrate launch</p> <p>Queensland State minister press release</p> <p>Regional art gallery having an exposition on Sea Turtles,</p> <p>Release of Education products</p> <p>Targeted media releases planned throughout the year by individual groups eg scientific reports, first occasion of a re-nesting turtle population, reports on marine debris, international events of relevant to turtle conservation,</p>	<p>March 2<sup>nd</sup></p> <p>Feb 2006</p> <p>April 7-8</p>
United States of America	<p>Will report back from this meeting to embassies to work with focal points on possible activities as appropriate.</p>	
SEAFDEC	<p>MFRDMD (Malaysia) - Stock enhancement research project is ongoing including i) DNA study, ii) Head Starting, iii) Tagging</p> <p>TD (Thailand) Responsible fishing technologies and practices project, including interaction between sea turtles and fisheries (Circle hook experiment), and TEDs implementation and evaluation.</p> <p>Events and announcements around sub-projects including genetic, tagging and tracking, and will bring promotion material on YoT into every meeting</p>	
WWF	<p>Workshops on Bycatch training in several countries</p> <p>Trialing of circle hooks at several countries</p> <p>Targeted media releases at regional levels</p>	

Theme	National activities - China	Remarks
1. General Awareness	B.1.1 Promote the YoT campaign, or specific aspects of it, through content and/or links on existing national (departmental, ministerial) websites	
	B.1.2 Produce printed materials bearing the YoT logo, in local language(s), targeted specifically for national audiences - such as leaflets, posters, turtle identification brochures, and postcards	
	B.1.3 Supplement or adapt the generic YoT information / media kit for national audience (e.g. with details of turtle biology, folklore, photos and maps)	
	B.1.4 Solicit politicians or celebrities to announce the national launch of YoT and/or participate in high-profile activities (e.g. tagging events)	May 23, 2006: Guangdong, China, Welcome IOSEA Secretariat, member country international organization and NGO to participate
	B.1.5 Organise major public events, such as rallies, marches, festivals etc.	May23, 2006, Guangdong,China, Sea turtle yacht start navigation from Guangdong and navigate along Chinese coastal to a few cities in China
	B.1.9 Issue marine turtle postage stamp(s) to celebrate YoT, if possible to coincide with the week of the official launch	As soon as possible
	B.1.11 Encourage sponsors (donors) to support YoT on their merchandise by using the approved YoT logo	
B.1.12 Produce merchandise such as T-shirts, caps, drink holders and fridge magnets reflecting national themes and languages (also can be used for reward purposes)		

2. Targeted education, training and capacity-building	B.2.1 Organise a special workshop or symposium dedicated to marine turtle conservation	International workshop on marine turtle conservation in China Sep 8-10, 2006 (date pending)
	B.2.3 Conduct training seminars for fishers	Jun-July
	B.2.5 Introduce turtle biology and conservation into school teaching curricula, and promote more active involvement of students in turtle conservation (e.g. make available school teaching aids, using available materials where possible – such as colouring books, blank illustrative material prepared for national electronic distribution)	June 2006
	B.2.6 Organise student summer campus	July 2006 in National Sea turtle Reserve, (Huidong, China)
	B.2.8 Establish an in-situ turtle observatory for tourists	
	B.2.11 Organise hatchling releases	May 23, 2006
	3. Research	B.3.1 Undertake a national census of nesting populations
B.3.2 Conduct national tagging projects (flipper tags, PIT tags and/or satellite tags) to develop current information on migration and habitat usage and contribute to international sharing of population data		May 23, 2006
4. Conservation	B.4.1 Each country to develop one new significant conservation action	Enforcement on illegal sea turtle trade and fishing
5. Institutional	B.5.1 Develop National Action Plans for marine turtle conservation	



## **ANNEX 6: REVIEW OF IMPLEMENTATION PROGRESS – EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

### **Introduction**

Signatory States to the *Memorandum of Understanding on the Conservation and Management of Marine Turtles and their Habitats of the Indian Ocean and South-East Asia* are required to submit an annual report describing their implementation of the MoU. A standard template and an online reporting facility were developed to enable Signatory States to submit their reports through the internet and to revise them whenever necessary.

The present document builds on the comprehensive analysis prepared in 2005 of the measures put in place by governments to conserve marine turtles and their habitats of the Indian Ocean and South-East Asia region. Almost all of the 24 IOSEA Signatory States have supplied information to contribute to the analysis. Though these reports are not all complete, and the quality of the information provided varies from one country to another, one can nevertheless gain a fairly broad understanding of strengths and weaknesses in reporting and implementation across this vast region.

The inherent value of such a detailed analysis is that it allows one to go well beyond the typical exercise of reporting, simply for the sake of reporting. It sets a benchmark against which to measure future progress. It points to areas in which little progress in implementation has been made and where more attention may need to be focussed, in a prioritised manner. Equally important, it describes exemplary practices that might be extended and replicated in other countries, given the necessary resources and appropriate circumstances. The report also fulfils a basic need to exchange information on what has been and is being done in a number of areas, hopefully with a view to avoiding unnecessary duplication of effort.

Above all, this document aims to move beyond simply reporting activities (outputs), and instead to focus more attention on the results (outcomes) of any interventions made. This requires a detailed line of questioning, for it is only with exhaustive probing that one can assess the real efficacy of the efforts that are being undertaken. In the end, managers will be judged not only on the actions they have taken, but on whether or not these actions have made a real difference to the long-term survival of marine turtles and the habitats on which they depend.

The conservation and management of marine turtles is clearly not only within the domain of governmental responsibility. Indeed, much of the work on the ground is being conducted by countless nongovernmental organisations scattered across the region. While these efforts are captured, to some extent, in some of the national reports there is likely a considerable volume of important activity that is not adequately reflected in this reporting process.

To partially compensate for this deficiency, the IOSEA Projects Database, which can be viewed through the IOSEA website ([www.ioseaturtles.org](http://www.ioseaturtles.org)) contains a wealth of information on some 64 projects carried out in over 20 countries of the IOSEA region. A powerful upgrade of the IOSEA website in 2005 makes it even easier to search for information in the Projects Database using keywords. While no attempt has been made to integrate the project information, from both non-governmental and governmental sources, in this report, even a cursory review of the database gives a clear impression of the scope of these other activities. Over time, it is hoped that the IOSEA Marine Turtle MoU will serve as a vehicle for better integration of all of these valuable efforts.

## Executive Summary

### *General Conclusions*

1. The quality of reporting varies considerably across the Signatory States, with a handful of countries reporting extensively and in considerable detail, whereas a few countries have so far provided only limited information. The majority of countries fall between these two extremes. At least some information is available for all Signatory States except three that have yet to submit a report: Indonesia, Eritrea, and Saudi Arabia.

2. In terms of implementation, the predominant picture that emerges is that of some progress, albeit limited in scope, across the whole spectrum of the Conservation and Management Plan. A colour-coded matrix (Document MT-IOSEA/SS.4/Doc. 8.3, Annex 1) gives a visual representation of the extent of this progress. The most substantial advances have been made in the areas of identification and documentation of threats; application of best practice to minimise those threats; studies to correct adverse economic incentives; nesting beach management programmes; and education, awareness and information programmes.

3. Substantial gaps remain for several crucial programmes, notably in the areas of: reduction of incidental capture and mortality; review and enforcement of domestic legislation; securing of resources for implementation; *collaborative* research and monitoring; standardisation of data collection and application of research results to improve conservation practices; *cooperative* management and information exchange; and *cooperative* deterrence of illegal trade. Though there is certain to be under-reporting of actual progress in each of these programmes, real weaknesses in implementation likely exist. A common thread running through a number of these programmes is the need to strengthen cooperation among Signatory States which, of course, is the *raison d'être* of the Memorandum of Understanding.

### *Objective I: Reducing direct and indirect causes of marine turtle mortality*

4. Signatory States have made good progress in identifying over 500 discrete sites of relevance to marine turtles, and to categorise them as nesting, feeding and developmental habitats. Improvements made to the online reporting system now allow users to make associations between species and particular habitat types at a given site, to define a site's relative importance, and to indicate a greater number of threat mitigation measures in place at each site. While only a few Signatories have as yet taken advantage of these new features to enhance their data, most have attempted to give a subjective rating of the intensity of about 15 potential threats at each site.

5. The most prevalent threats of "moderate to strong" intensity appear to be: incidental capture in fisheries, natural threats/predation, egg collection, boat strikes, plastics at sea, artificial lighting, exploitation of live animals at sea, and exploitation of nesting females. Over the coming year, more sophisticated queries of the information in the database are planned. This part of the Online Reporting Facility will be an extremely versatile analytical tool for management purposes as the underlying data are supplemented and refined over time.

6. Some noteworthy examples of best practice approaches for minimising threats include: Australia's comprehensive National Recovery Plan; Cambodia's programme to foster cooperation with coastal fishing communities; Kenya's inclusive national sea turtle conservation programme; the Philippines' community-based conservation agreements and data-gathering system; Seychelles' stakeholder involvement in nation-wide monitoring programmes; United Republic of Tanzania's conservation education and community involvement approach; and the United States' standardised index site monitoring protocols.

7. About a third of the Signatory States report on socio-economic studies or activities that have been conducted among communities that interact with marine turtles and their habitats. Signatory

States identify a number of adverse economic incentives that contribute to turtle mortality, including lack of affordable alternatives to turtle products and low penalties against illegal harvesting. Among the initiatives being taken to correct them are: Australia's partnership with indigenous communities to address the sustainable harvest of marine turtles; Iran's efforts to use religious edicts to dissuade consumption of turtle eggs and meat; income-generating schemes in key coastal areas of Pakistan; turtle-based tourism in Seychelles; and South Africa's sustainable livelihoods programme. Further investigation is needed by all Signatories to elicit more information on the underlying causes of threats to and mortality of marine turtles arising from adverse economic incentives.

8. There is very limited progress reported in the area of reducing incidental capture and mortality, however this is partly explained by a change in the reporting template. The fisheries described in some detail include: shrimp trawls, set gill nets, and anchored fish aggregating devices (FADs). A cross-section of Signatories from all regions report on specific gear types that are thought to have moderate to high impacts on turtles. While the data are presently incomplete, it is expected that useful information will be gleaned from a more complete set of reports in due course. This can serve as a regional contribution towards monitoring implementation of the FAO Guidelines to Reduce Sea Turtle Mortality in Fishing Operations.

9. Although illegal fishing was identified as a serious problem by the Third Meeting of the Signatory States, only a half-dozen Signatories have so far cited specific examples of illegal fishing impacting marine turtles. While little information has so far been provided on methods used to minimize incidental capture/mortality of marine turtles, ten Signatories do report using devices that allow the escape of marine turtles. Australia also provides a detailed account of its programme to introduce dehookers and line-cutting kits, as well as training on the release of caught turtles, one of the only Signatories to have done so. Given the paramount importance of minimizing incidental capture and mortality in fisheries, this is another area in which reporting needs to be markedly improved.

10. About half of the Signatory States report on initiatives undertaken with fisheries industries and management organisations to implement by-catch mitigation measures. The extent to which these initiatives have been undertaken varies among countries. Only a few Signatories are reported to have onboard observer programmes or vessel monitoring systems (VMS) and to carry out inspections. More have conducted training for fishers and/or have produced a variety of educational information materials. With some exceptions, the information provided in relation to this activity is rather superficial and likely under-reports the measures that have actually been undertaken. Only Australia periodically reviews and evaluates these programmes for their efficacy.

11. A number of Signatory States report on interesting research and development activities in support of bycatch reduction. Australia is continuing its research on more effective TEDs; French and Spanish fleets operating around Seychelles are working on new drifting FAD designs to reduce bycatch. South Africa is experimenting with drumlines to replace bather protection nets and with circle hooks on some longline vessels, and is reviewing prawn trawl bycatch impacts. Studies in United Republic of Tanzania confirm that gillnets, particularly bottom set nets, pose a significant threat to turtles.

12. With a few exceptions, there appears to be rather little international exchange of information and technical assistance in the area of bycatch mitigation. The United States does have an active programme to exchange TED technical information with all interested countries, and has started programmes to collaborate and share information on longline sea turtle bycatch. In about half of the Signatory States, large scale drift nets are prohibited or not used within national waters.

13. Almost all of the 20 Signatory States responding have already enacted some legislation to prohibit direct harvest and domestic trade in marine turtles, their eggs, parts and products. Notwithstanding these legislative provisions, about 70% of the Signatory States responding have traditional consumption of turtle meat and eggs. Six Signatory States report a moderate to high level

of harvest, with comparable levels of impact. About two-thirds of the Signatory States have established management programmes that include limits on levels of intentional harvest, and several provide specific details. Only a few Signatories have management agreements already in place, or being negotiated, with other concerned States in relation to sustainable levels of traditional harvest.

14. Most Signatory States identify a number of economic uses and cultural values of marine turtles, the most prevalent being meat and egg consumption, followed closely by eco-tourism benefits. Cultural/traditional significance also ranked highly in several Signatories. Consumptive use of turtles for shell, traditional medicine and fat also occurs, but is less common. A more sophisticated analysis of these values may be possible once more complete information is provided.

15. Almost all of the Signatory States report on one or several measures in place to minimise or reduce the mortality of eggs, hatchlings and nesting females. Two-thirds have regulations on the location and design of buildings, aimed at protecting nesting beaches. About half of them have programmes to clean up beaches and remove debris that could impede nesting, and are re-vegetating frontal dunes and working to reduce light pollution. Slightly fewer use education and awareness programmes to try to minimise mortality of eggs, hatchlings and nesting females. Restricting vehicle access and predator control are also practiced, but only by about a third of those reporting. Interestingly, only six Signatory States report using egg relocation and hatcheries as a management tool, though this probably understates the real world situation.

16. Only about one-third of the Signatory States indicate that they have undertaken a recent evaluation of the effectiveness of their nest and beach management programmes, and few provide any details of these reviews. In general, it is unclear that programmes are being critically examined, according to certain measurable success criteria, to determine whether or not they are achieving conservation objectives.

#### *Objective II: Protecting, conserving and rehabilitating marine turtle habitats*

17. Only a few Signatory States appear to have measures in place to protect critical habitat outside of established protected areas, and not all of these are fully implemented. About two-thirds of the Signatory States responding carry out assessments, to varying degrees, of the environmental impact of marine and coastal development and other human activities. A similar number monitor water quality, either generally or in localised areas. Only a few appear to have carried out impact assessments specifically addressing marine turtles. More generally, it is less clear whether or what steps are taken to protect water quality near turtle habitats, including from marine debris. In almost all of the Signatory States, some measure is in place to prohibit the use of poisonous chemicals and explosives, and most provide details of the legislation or regulations and inspection regimes.

18. About two-thirds of the Signatory States are monitoring their coral reefs and/or are making an effort at some level to recover degraded coral reefs. Most Signatory States describe their activities in this regard, at least superficially. Activities mentioned include monitoring and rehabilitation actions, upgrading of legal protection status, development of recovery plans, relocation of sewage outfalls, reduction of specific threats, and conduct of education and awareness activities. Most of the Signatory States are making some effort to recover degraded mangrove habitats, and about half of them describe these programmes in more detail. Sea grass habitat recovery is apparently being undertaken in very few countries, for example through regular monitoring, as well as regulation of dredging activities and coastal development.

#### *Objective III: Improving understanding of marine turtle ecology and populations*

19. About two-thirds of Signatory States reporting have conducted baseline studies on marine turtle populations and their habitats. Most respondents cite the relevant literature, ranging from peer-

reviewed journals to proceedings and workshops. Almost all Signatory States are reported to have long-monitoring programmes in place or planned for priority marine turtle populations (only Cambodia, Madagascar, and Mauritius do not) and provide varying levels of detail. About half of these (Australia, Oman, Philippines, Seychelles, South Africa, United States, Viet Nam) have programmes of 10 years or longer.

20. Only Australia, Seychelles, United Kingdom and United States have at some point carried out analyses to characterise the genetic identity of their marine turtle populations, while several other Signatories have collected or contributed samples for eventual use in such research.

21. Almost all Signatory States have employed tagging to identify migration routes; most provide some details of this work including, in a few cases, information on tag recoveries. About half have carried out genetic studies; most elaborate on the nature of these studies and a few give indications of additional sampling needs. Just under half of the Signatory States reporting have carried out satellite tracking studies, for the most part opportunistically, but the numbers of turtles tracked are relatively small. The level of detail provided about past activities is generally insufficient to assess the extent to which tagging, satellite tracking and genetic sampling has actually helped to identify migration routes.

22. Very few Signatory States report having carried out studies of marine turtle population dynamics and/or survival rates; more have carried out some research on the frequency and pathology of diseases of marine turtles. Under half of the Signatory States indicate that they are promoting the use of traditional ecological knowledge in research studies. Most of these countries provide some additional information on the nature of this work, though it tends to be limited. Only Australia has indicated supporting publications.

23. About half of the Signatory States report having conducted studies on genetic identity that involved *international* collaboration. Slightly more Signatories report having undertaken collaborative studies on conservation status, migration, and other biological and ecological aspects. However, the extent to which these studies can be characterised as involving international collaboration is often unclear.

24. Several Signatory States are participating in other regional or sub-regional action plans that identify priority research and monitoring needs. These include a memorandum of understanding between the Islamic Republic of Iran and the United Arab Emirates with recommendations on collaborative marine turtle work; a regional action plan being implemented under PERSGA; the Philippines-Malaysia Turtle Islands Heritage Protected Area initiative; a Marine Turtle Conservation Strategy and Action Plan for the Western Indian Ocean; the ASEAN Marine Turtle MoU; cooperative research under SEAFDEC; and the SEASTAR2000 project in South-East Asia.

25. Signatory States were requested to list in order of priority their marine turtle populations in need of conservation actions and to indicate for each of them population trends. Loggerhead turtles figure high on the lists of three Signatories: Australia, Madagascar and Viet Nam. Green turtles figure high on the lists of 5 Signatories: Islamic Republic of Iran, Jordan, Philippines, Seychelles (some islands), and United Kingdom. Hawksbill turtles figure high in the lists of 5 Signatories: Islamic Republic of Iran, Jordan, Seychelles (some islands), Sri Lanka, and United Kingdom; Leatherback turtles figure high in the lists of South Africa, Sri Lanka and Viet Nam.

26. About one-third of the Signatory States are reportedly reviewing research and monitoring results periodically and evaluating them for their efficacy. Signatory States were also asked to describe how research results are being applied to improve management practices and mitigation of threats; though the question is a valid one, it may be challenging for many Signatories to answer at this time.

27. About two-thirds of the Signatory States have taken some initiative to standardise methods and levels of data collection – mostly at national, rather than sub-regional levels. Very few indicate that they often exchange scientific and technical information and expertise with other Range States; more typically, such exchanges are characterised as occasional. The most common means of disseminating data to other Range States are publications (scientific journals, websites, brochures, newsletters etc), followed by international meetings, workshops and training courses.

*Objective IV: Increasing public awareness and enhancing public participation*

28. Virtually all of the Signatory States reporting have to some extent collected, developed, and/or disseminated diverse educational materials, and many have developed and implemented mass media information programmes through television, radio, documentaries, and/or newspapers. Australia, Kenya, Pakistan, Philippines, Seychelles, Sri Lanka, and Viet Nam appear to have been especially active in this area. Among the target groups: students, teachers and local/fishing communities appear to have received the most attention; followed by the media, policy makers and tourists. The fishing industry, military and policy, and scientists received the least attention. Over half of the Signatory States reporting have some form of community learning establishment.

29. Nearly two-thirds of the Signatory States have undertaken initiatives to identify and facilitate alternative livelihoods, including income-generating activities, for local communities. The initiatives include: aquaculture, seaweed culture and apiculture; handicraft production; artisan re-training and compensation; work as rangers and marine park staff; beach monitoring/nest protection; tourism activities; mangrove rehabilitation; and provision of soft loans.

30. Most Signatory States have undertaken some initiative to involve stakeholders and local communities in the planning and/or implementation of conservation and management measures. This is achieved through active collaboration, participation in research and conservation programmes, as well as in planning processes. Almost all of the Signatory States that responded report some participation in marine turtle conservation efforts from Government institutions, NGOs, and the private sector – through funding of activities, involvement in workshops, and/or research and conservation activities.

*Objective V: Enhancing national, regional and international cooperation*

31. About two-thirds of the Signatory States have mechanisms in place and cooperate with other States to try to deter international illegal trade. Collaborators include CITES Management Authorities/CITES Secretariat, Interpol, domestic or foreign customs services, airport and port authorities, wildlife agencies, and various NGOs. Similar numbers have undertaken a national review of compliance with CITES obligations in relation to marine turtles, and have their own CITES training programmes for relevant authorities or participate in those of other bodies.

32. Almost all Signatory States have some measure in place to prevent, deter and eliminate domestic illegal trade in marine turtle products. Seychelles provides the most detail in this regard, referring to legislation, public partnerships, interagency collaboration, training, and education and awareness programmes. Among the measures mentioned by other Signatories are beach patrols and regular monitoring, education and awareness programmes aimed at coastal communities, and prosecution of cases and imposition of fines. Very few Signatory States appear to have exchanged information or raised certain compliance and/or trade issues in bilateral discussions or international forums. None mentioned any particular impediments to identifying illegal trade routes or deterring illegal trade, although such illegal trade is known to occur.

33. Just over half of the Signatory States that responded have taken steps towards developing a set of key management measures to be used as a basis for more specific national action plans. Five Signatory States already have national action plans in place, and a similar number are working to finalise such plans. Three Signatories do not have a national action plan *per se*, but have incorporated measures through specific project activities or at particular sites. Overall, progress is being made in this area though there is still limited information available on the extent to which the provisions of the IOSEA Conservation and Management Plan have been transformed into key management measures at the national level. Only a few Signatories appear to have regular reviews of their national plans for turtle conservation.

34. All of the Signatory States reporting have listed one or more local management issues for which international cooperation is considered necessary to some extent. Several issues were identified in more or less equal number: training and capacity building; identification of turtle populations and

migration routes; illegal fishing, poaching and illegal trade in turtle products; and tagging/satellite tracking. Enforcement/patrolling of territorial waters and hunting/harvest by neighbouring countries, though not identified by as many Signatory States, were rated as having relatively high urgency in terms of a need for international cooperation.

35. Most of the Signatory States note some mechanism that is, or might potentially be, used to enhance cooperation in marine turtle conservation and management at the sub-regional level, including for example: ASEAN-SEAFDEC, CBD, CITES, FAO, ROPME, and WIOMSA, as well as specific working groups, exchange programmes, memoranda of understanding, and collaborative forums.

36. Five Signatory States report having developed or are participating in networks for cooperative management of shared populations. Australia is collaborating with Indonesia, Papua New Guinea, Timor-Leste and SPREP, through various instruments. Only Australia, Oman and Philippines have indicated involvement in the establishment of transboundary marine protected areas.

37. The most common capacity-building need identified is for trained personnel, followed by equipment and infrastructure, and programmatic support. It would be useful for Signatory States for which this question is relevant to indicate what their existing capacity is, both in terms of human resources and equipment available for marine turtle conservation activities, and to give a clearer picture of the extent to which progress is impeded in specific areas for lack of such resources.

38. About two-thirds of the Signatory States have carried out some training in marine turtle conservation and management techniques. Australia, Seychelles, and Viet Nam describe rather extensive activities undertaken in this area. A similar number have established one or several partnerships with universities, relevant organisations, and research institutions nationally and/or internationally.

39. About one-third of the Signatory States comment on the effectiveness of national policies and laws concerning the conservation of marine turtles and their habitats. Australia reports that a large majority of actions from its national recovery plan have been completed or are under way, accompanied by major shifts in public perception. High fines and information gathering systems contribute to the effectiveness of Iranian laws, however logistical challenges remain. Mauritius notes the difficulty of protecting turtle habitats on remote islets. Philippines reports that effectiveness of national laws is good in some areas, where there is support from NGOs and grassroots 'people's organisations'. Seychelles notes that penalties for offences were increased significantly under amended legislation introduced in 2001. In South Africa and Sri Lanka, the regulatory systems in place are reported to be effective. United Republic of Tanzania notes a number of legislative deficiencies, as well as insufficient capacity for enforcement.

40. About two-thirds of the Signatory States have conducted or are conducting a review of policies and laws to address gaps or impediments in relation to marine turtle conservation. However, only a few Signatories elaborate on what this entails. Six Signatory States report having encountered specific problems in relation to cooperation in law enforcement to ensure compatible application of laws across and between jurisdictions (national and international).

#### *Objective VI: Promoting and supporting implementation*

41. Six Signatories are reported to have encouraged other States to sign the Memorandum of Understanding. Eight of the existing Signatory States indicated they are currently favourable to amending the MoU to make it a legally-binding instrument; while six were not in favour.

42. Australia, United Kingdom and United States have provided substantial funds to the Secretariat for its operations, for organising meetings and for project implementation including Year of the Turtle activities. Australia documents its contributions in detail. The United States has indicated that its Marine Turtle Conservation Act would in future provide a mechanism to support implementation of specific projects. Only Australia, Islamic Republic of Iran, and Sri Lanka make some reference to

domestic sources of funding for implementation of marine turtle conservation activities at national levels. All Signatory States are encouraged to document the resources that have been mobilised for implementation of marine turtle conservation activities. About two-thirds of the Signatory States responding have solicited funds from, or have sought partnerships with, other Governments, major donors, industry, private sector etc for marine turtle conservation activities. The sponsors/partners include, among others: UNDP, World Bank, GEF, WWF, WCS, Conservation International, and various other corporate donors and private foundations (including petroleum and gas industries, hotels, private companies etc).

43. Signatory States were requested to identify the conservation and management activities that they consider to be among the highest priorities for action. Almost all responded, listing between 5 and 10 priorities fitting into one of the Conservation and Management Plan's 24 programmatic areas. Ranked in order of frequency of mention (in parentheses), the six highest priorities identified by the Signatory States are: conducting targeted studies on marine turtles and their habitats (14); establishing or strengthening education and information programmes (12); capacity-building, training and partnerships (11); establishing habitat protection and conservation measures (9); reducing incidental capture and mortality (8); and developing beach management programmes (7). Many other programmes were mentioned, but with less frequency (see also Document MT-IOSEA/SS.4/Doc. 8.3, Annex 2).

44. Seven Signatory States have explored the use of economic instruments for the conservation of marine turtles and their habitats. Few details are provided, but eco-tourism is cited as common theme. Examples include: eco-certification of tourism operations; turtle and nest adoption programmes; revenue-generating eco-tourism activities; soft loans to affected families; and promotion of alternative livelihoods, such as aquaculture.

45. Most of the Signatory States reporting have designated a lead agency responsible for coordinating national marine turtle conservation and management policy. However, only a few indicate that the roles and responsibilities of government agencies related to marine turtle conservation and management are clearly defined. A similar number report having conducted a review of the roles and responsibilities of government agencies, but few details are provided.



## **REVIEW OF IMPLEMENTATION PROGRESS: ADDENDUM**

### Key Issues Identified in the Review of Implementation Progress

1. Over 500 discrete sites of importance for marine turtles identified, including for many a subjective rating of intensity of threats. Most prevalent threats: incidental capture in fisheries, natural threats, egg collection
2. Very limited information on incidental capture/mortality, and little international exchange of information/technical assistance in this area. However, some R&D activities are reported: TEDs (Australia), drifting FADs (France, Spain), circle hooks (South Africa); gillnet monitoring (Tanzania)
3. Direct harvest/trade prohibited by legislation, but traditional consumption still prevalent (with moderate to high impacts in at least 6 Signatories)
4. Seven Signatories (Australia, Oman, Philippines, Seychelles, South Africa, United States, Viet Nam) reported to have long-term (> 10 years) sea turtle monitoring programmes in place  
National action plans in place/close to finalisation in at least 10 Signatories.
5. Fairly comprehensive beach management programmes, but insufficient evaluation of their effectiveness. Most Signatories engaged in monitoring/recovery of coral reefs, mangroves, but rather limited work on sea grass habitat
6. Insufficient information available to judge whether tagging, satellite tracking, genetic sampling etc have helped to elucidate migration routes. Only occasional exchanges of scientific and technical information and expertise among Signatories.
7. Alternative livelihoods identified for income-generation include: aquaculture, seaweed culture, apiculture; handicraft production, artisan retraining/compensation; beach monitoring/nest protection; tourism; habitat rehabilitation.
8. Top six conservation/management priorities identified by Signatories (ranked):  
targeted studies on marine turtles and their habitats; education and information programmes; capacity-building, training and partnerships; habitat protection and conservation measures; incidental capture and mortality; and beach management programmes.
9. Issues requiring *international* cooperation: Frequent mention: training and capacity building; identification of turtle populations/migration routes; illegal fishing, poaching and illegal trade in turtle products; and tagging/satellite tracking. Relatively high urgency: Enforcement/ patrolling of territorial waters and hunting/harvest by neighbouring countries
10. Resource and capacity building needs are identified, but not to the extent of demonstrating impediments to progress
11. The extent of policy and legislative reviews, with a view to addressing gaps/impediments in implementation, is unclear.

## **ANNEX 7: RESOLUTION TO PROMOTE AND STRENGTHEN MARINE TURTLE CONSERVATION IN THE NORTHWESTERN INDIAN OCEAN SUB-REGION**

*Adopted by the Meeting of the Signatory States on 14 March 2006*

*Acknowledging* that all Range States of the Northwestern Indian Ocean sub-region<sup>1</sup> share important traditional, cultural, economic and ecological relations with marine and coastal resources, and accrue benefits from their conservation;

*Considering* that marine turtles constitute an important component of the biological diversity of marine and coastal ecosystems in the sub-region which, in keeping with the spirit of the Convention on Biological Diversity, 1992, and Agenda 21, should be conserved for the benefit of present and future generations;

*Stressing* the importance of co-operation among States, regional economic integration organizations, intergovernmental organizations and the non-governmental sector in order to stabilise and increase marine turtle populations throughout the area covered by the Indian Ocean - South-East Asian Marine Turtle Memorandum of Understanding;

*Recognizing* the importance of other global and regional instruments to the conservation of marine turtles, notably the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora, 1973, and the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals, 1979, as well as initiatives of, *inter alia*, IUCN - The World Conservation Union;

*Observing* that marine resources, particularly marine turtles, are highly migratory and as such are shared by Range States of the Northwestern Indian Ocean sub-region and beyond;

*Acknowledging* that technical and scientific cooperation among Range States of the sub-region will be essential for the long-term prosperity of its people and their resource base;

*Congratulating* the Range States of the Northwestern Indian Ocean sub-region for their advances in the management of marine and coastal resources;

*Commending* regional organisations, notably the Regional Organization for the Conservation of the Environment of the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden (PERSGA), the United Nations Environment Programme Regional Office for West Asia (UNEP/ROWA), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) - East Africa office, and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) - Doha office, for their marked contribution to the conservation of marine biodiversity;

*Further commending* the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) Member States for the conclusion of the Convention for the Conservation of Wildlife and its Natural Habitats in the GCC Countries, approved by the Supreme Council Summit convened in Muscat, Sultanate of Oman, in 2001; and

*Recognizing* the importance of achieving the 2010 target adopted by several international instruments and its relationship with, and emphasis given to, migratory species as indicators, while measuring the IOSEA Memorandum of Understanding's overall effectiveness in achieving the objectives expressed in its Conservation and Management Plan (CMP);

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<sup>1</sup> Bahrain, Djibouti, Egypt, Eritrea, Islamic Republic of Iran, Jordan, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, United Arab Emirates, and Yemen

*Participants to the Fourth Meeting of the IOSEA Signatory States respectfully request that:*

1. **Signatory States of the Northwestern Indian Ocean Sub-region** increase efforts to cooperate among themselves and with other Range States for better implementation of the IOSEA MoU/CMP, by facilitating the exchange information and expertise, particularly in relation to tag recoveries.
2. The **GCC Wildlife Convention Standing Committee** establish and support a marine turtle specialist working group under the Convention's Standing Committee, entrusted with the coordination of marine turtle conservation in the Member States, and to develop and sustain linkages with other Range States.
3. **PERSGA** establish a marine turtle specialist component under its Biodiversity and Habitats Working Group; and develop a campaign in the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden region to increase awareness about the need to conserve marine turtles and their habitats and to recover information on tags, and to promote the exchange of information and expertise.
4. **UNEP/ROWA, UNESCO (Doha office) and UNDP (East Africa office)** assist the Range States in developing an effective regional campaign aimed at increasing awareness about the importance of conserving marine turtles and their habitats as valuable flagship species in the region; and develop a campaign among the IOSEA Northwestern Indian Ocean sub-region Signatory States to recover information on tags, and promote the exchange of information and expertise.
5. The **IOSEA MoU Secretariat** assist Northwestern Indian Ocean sub-region Signatory States to achieve the aims of this resolution by liaising with Range and Signatory States and intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, as appropriate, involved in its execution and follow-up; and to report on progress in the implementation of this resolution to the Fifth Meeting of the Signatory States.

## **ANNEX 8: PROVISIONAL TERMS OF REFERENCE OF THE WIO-IOSEA MARINE TURTLE MOU TASK FORCE (WIO-IOSEA MTTF)**

### ***Proposed membership***

Current Signatory States and non-Signatory States to the IOSEA Marine Turtle MoU from the Western Indian Ocean region, selected international nongovernmental organizations, and observers from other relevant organizations contributing to or affecting marine turtle conservation.

### ***Objectives***

The objective of the IOSEA Memorandum of Understanding is to protect, conserve, replenish and recover marine turtles and their habitats, based on the best scientific evidence, taking into account the environmental, socio-economic and cultural characteristics of the signatory States.

The Nairobi Convention sets a framework in which UNEP, in close collaboration with the relevant components of the United Nations system; assists Governments in formulating and implementing a programme for proper management and conservation of the resources of the region. It calls specifically on contracting parties to manage all forms of pollution impacting on marine and coastal environments, as well limiting damage to the coast through the proclaiming of protected areas, following EIA procedures and restricting engineering activities that can be harmful to the environment. Article 14 of the Convention further calls for scientific and technical cooperation through *inter alia* a regional network of national research centres and institutes.

The objectives of the Nairobi Convention and the IOSEA MoU are compatible and the Terms of Reference for the WIO Marine Turtle Task Force should therefore integrate both. The proposed objective of the Task Force is thus *to serve explicitly to facilitate implementation of the IOSEA Marine Turtle MoU in the sub-region, at the same time fulfilling the general programme of work of the Nairobi Convention in its broader scope of management of East Africa's coastal and marine environment.*

The MTTF will therefore be a technical committee spanning both scientific and management expertise.

### ***Nomination and Appointment***

The WIO-IOSEA Marine Turtle MoU Task Force will be comprised of:

- Nominated country representatives, who can be the IOSEA Focal Point (where one has been appointed) or an alternate (otherwise), and officials from those countries that have yet to sign the IOSEA MoU;
- *Ex-officio* members from selected international nongovernmental organizations (e.g. IUCN, WIOMSA, WCS, WWF);
- Observers from other relevant organizations contributing to or affecting marine turtle conservation (e.g. SWIOFC, IOTC, ASCLME).

The Task Force will organise its own business and will elect its own Chair and Vice-Chair on a three-year rotational basis. The Chair and Vice-Chair should be the principal point of contact between the Task Force, IOSEA Secretariat and the National Committees.

The Task Force members should serve for two years (i.e. through two regular Meetings of the Task Force and Signatory States), and should be eligible for re-nomination and reappointment at subsequent Meetings.

### *Meetings*

To minimise costs, the Task Force should conduct as much of its activity as possible through electronic communication on a regular basis.

At least once a year the Task Force can meet in conjunction with the Meeting of IOSEA Signatory States to review progress, confirm funding and decide on a regional work plan. Where possible the task force may meet unofficially at the meeting of Nairobi Convention Focal Points, held every two years.

Meetings will be held in different venues and will communicate, as appropriate, with the IOSEA Marine Turtle MoU, the Nairobi Convention, and other related instruments, such as CITES, EAME, NEPAD, SWIOFC and other regional and international networks.

The Chair should participate in the meetings of the IOSEA Signatory States and the Nairobi Convention, and may also participate in the meetings of related and associated agreements and organisations. Wherever possible, the other members of the Task Force should also participate in the meetings of the IOSEA Signatory States and Nairobi Convention.

### *Mandate and Tasks*

#### *Strengthen regional cooperation and coordination*

- Serve as the **WIO coordinating and advisory committee** for marine turtle conservation in the sub-region, to provide a regional framework to channel technical expertise and resources.
- **Strengthen the legal and institutional framework of the Nairobi Convention** to support the implementation of the goals of both the Nairobi Convention and the IOSEA Marine Turtle MoU.
- **Advocate and direct** collaborative efforts for marine turtle conservation among stakeholders, including governments, management authorities, the private sector, coastal communities and non-governmental organisations.
- **Ensure good relations** are maintained among Governments, NGOs, regional, national and local groups and individuals interested in marine turtle conservation, by conveying information to support ideas, goals, achievements and lessons learned.
- **Develop linkages and dialogue** between the conservation sector and other sectors and industries, such as development, tourism, planning, economy, fisheries, protected areas etc., and encourage National Committees to make these linkages.

### Review and Reporting

- Develop methods to **regionally review** the collective implementation of national commitments to the IOSEA Marine Turtle MoU, making use of the standardised IOSEA National Report template.
- Review and **recommend best practice principles** for activities requiring the interaction with turtles such as monitoring, education facilities (aquaria) and hatcheries, filming and ecotourism ventures.
- Promote both **biophysical and socio-economic monitoring** and more effective coordination with regional and international monitoring programmes.
- **Develop and standardize protocols** for data collection and data sharing for research and monitoring programmes.

### Planning, Conservation and Management

- Encourage signatories and non-signatories to the MoU to **develop national marine turtle conservation action plans or strategies** within the context of the regional framework of the Nairobi Convention and IOSEA CMP.
- Work with National Committees to ensure **national planning is compatible** with marine turtle conservation planning across the region.
- Collaborate with National Committees, NGO's, regional, national and local groups and individuals interested in marine turtle conservation to **develop a coherent sub-regional vision and strategy** (or action plan) for marine turtle conservation, acknowledging the framework provided by the wider regional IOSEA Marine Turtle MoU.
- Obtain government and convention endorsement for a regional strategy.
- Collaborate with National Committees to **prioritise future work** for the implementation of the IOSEA MoU with individual respect given to each countries situation.
- **Solicit funds** for activities to be undertaken by the WIO-IOSEA Marine Turtle MoU Task Force and assist in fundraising for other marine turtle conservation activities/projects that will benefit the region and individual countries.
- Assist **National Committees to solicit funding** for national conservation activities.

### Capacity Building

- **Support the development of local capacity** in research, management and governance by identifying capacity needs, implementing exchange programmes or (where possible) provide resources to initiate research and monitoring programmes.
- **Facilitate the creation or strengthening of National Committees** in all countries.
- Encourage National Governments to **recognise local issues** and establish national legislation or enforcement to further protect marine turtles.

Facilitate Communication

- **Provide and facilitate access to technical advice.** Act as a **reference body** and provide advice on proposals for marine turtle conservation projects in the region. Encourage proposals to have a regional perspective and provide linkages between local, national and regional networks where possible.
- Facilitate communication and the **dissemination of information** for the purposes of scientific and public awareness.
- Facilitate and **support communication at the national level** and serve as a platform to coordinate local initiatives (where required in the absence of national committees).
- Encourage **active participation in sub-/regional meetings** by institutions and relevant parties in order to **raise awareness** about priority and emerging issues concerning marine turtles.
- **Facilitate linkages and dialogue** between potential collaborators such as IUCN, WIOMSA, WCS, WWF, SWIOFC, and IOTC.

*The main activities of the Marine Turtle Task Force*Once-off Responsibilities

- 1 Finalize a detailed ToR for the committee.
- 2 In conjunction with the IOSEA MoU Secretariat, identify a list of stakeholders and establish a communication network / website.
- 3 Use the IOSEA reporting system to provide feedback on the implementation of the IOSEA MoU
- 4 Draft a protocol for data collection and sharing.
- 5 Establish a regional database.
- 6 Identify issues that require best practice guidelines and tailor make these for the sub-region.
- 7 Review existing national action plans
- 8 Draft an action plan for the region that prioritises aspects of the IOSEA MoU for implementation.

Annual Responsibilities

*Each Task force member should attend annual meetings of the IOSEA.*

- 9 Each Task Force member should provide an outline of progress on national responsibilities.
- 10 The coordinator of each project/study will provide detailed feedback on the progress of the particular study until the final report is to be submitted.
- 11 Review gaps and priorities in the region.
- 12 The chair and vice-chair will provide a list of project proposals prepared and received.
- 13 The chair and vice-chair will provide detailed financial statements.

Ongoing Responsibilities

- 14 Provide technical advice to national committees on the compatibility of actions with the regional strategy.
- 15 Provide technical advice to new projects and initiatives developing in the sub-region.
- 16 Provide scientific advice to national committees on data analysis, research findings, population analysis etc.
- 17 Write grant proposals to funders.
- 18 Disseminate information for education, awareness or conservation management.

Considering the current level of implementation, it is clear that the sub-region has very limited resources for implementation. It is therefore expected that the responsibilities and activities should not be reliant on many additional resources from governments. All of the WIO-IOSEA MTTF activities will take place in consultation with the IOSEA and Nairobi Convention Secretariats, and will use the existing resources, opportunities and framework provided by these instruments.

## **ANNEX 9: REPORT OF THE FOURTH MEETING OF THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE, 9-10 MARCH 2006 (and addendum)**

**Present:** George Hughes (Chair), Bundit Chokesanguan (10 March only), Jack Frazier, Colin Limpus, Nyawira Muthiga; Douglas Hykle (IOSEA Secretariat), Mark Hamann (observer), Suppachai Ananpongsuk (observer: 10 March).

### **Agenda item 1: Welcoming remarks**

1. Dr. Hughes, the Chairman, opened the meeting at 1130, welcoming the members of the Advisory Committee (AC) and expressing apologies on behalf of Jeanne Mortimer and Sejah Woral.

### **Agenda item 2: Adoption of Agenda**

2. The agenda (attached hereto) was adopted without amendment. The Committee proposed to meet for the remainder of the day and for the full day of 10 March. Dr. Frazier agreed to serve as rapporteur.

3. The Chairman extended congratulations to Dr. Muthiga for having received the National Geographic Society-Buffer award, and to Dr. Limpus and the Queensland Marine Turtle Project, who had been nominated for the Eureka Award. In their absence, he commented on the achievements of Sejal Woral and Bundit Chokesanguan; and congratulated the Secretariat for the production of the 2006 Year of the Turtle (YoT) Calendar.

### **Agenda item 3: Secretariat overview of the Fourth Meeting of the Signatory States**

4. Mr. Hykle, Secretariat, summarised the preparations for the forthcoming meeting of the Signatory States (SS4). All Signatories except Cambodia were expected to attend, together with observers from China, Malaysia, Yemen and the United Arab Emirates, as well as a major NGO working in Somalia. A large number of participants were expected for the opening ceremony, including two ministers and several other senior Omani officials; some 60-70 participants were expected for the substantive portion of the meeting. The Omani hosts had assumed many organisational tasks, greatly relieving Secretariat's responsibilities in those areas. An overnight excursion would be organised from the afternoon of 14 March.

### **Agenda item 4: Summary of Committee members' marine turtle activities since SS3**

5. Each member of the Committee provided a summary of their recent activities in relation to the IOSEA Marine Turtle MoU. Dr. Frazier mentioned the publication of a multi-authored special edition of MAST on marine turtles as flagship species, the organization of a panel for the upcoming meeting of the International Association for the Study of Common Property. Dr. Limpus described various activities including: long-term monitoring various stocks of green, loggerhead, hawksbill, and flatback turtles; administering a dynamic tag recovery programme; co-supervising a graduate student from Viet Nam; training of Sabah Parks and MTSG staff; production of a DVD for children; working on the problem of ghost nets in Arafura sea and capacity building; examining management options for directed take; re-election at the Eight Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Migratory Species as marine turtle advisor; and work on climate change implications for marine turtles. Dr. Muthiga had collaborated in the finalisation of the proceedings from a Western Indian Ocean marine turtle meeting which she had co-organized in 2004; was organizing a coastal ecology workshop in May 2006 that would include aspects of turtle conservation; was preparing proposals for research on fisheries and economic aspects of turtle conservation for various agencies; continued to chair KESCOM (the Kenyan sea turtle conservation programme); was helping to fund and promote the Year of the Turtle (YoT) in Kenya; and was promoting the IOSEA Marine Turtle Task Force



concept with the Nairobi Convention. The Chair summarised that Dr. Woral had been active in marine turtle training and awareness programs in Orissa, India. Dr. Hughes mentioned that his activities had been mainly administrative: promoting South Africa's leatherback program, helping with planning of a new turtle resource centre in Reunion, France, and evaluating a mass mortality of turtles in Angola evidently a red tide event.

#### **Agenda item 5: SS4 agenda items possibly requiring Advisory Committee advice**

6. The Secretariat introduced a number of topics dealing with the national reporting, each of which was followed by discussion.

##### (a) National reporting

7. The template and online system for reporting information from the Signatory States had been updated, adding a number of useful innovations (Doc 8.1). Many countries had not updated their reports; and in many cases there was likely significant under-reporting of activities actually undertaken. A lengthy discussion considered points that needed consideration for future reporting procedures.

##### (b) Review of implementation progress

8. Criteria for evaluation of IOSEA national reports had been introduced for the first time, setting a clear standard for reporting (Doc. 8.2). It was important to differentiate between plans and activities on the one hand and actual outcomes (results) on the other. There was also a fundamental need to go beyond reporting and to evaluate effectiveness of measures on the basis of trends in marine turtle populations.

9. In addition to a very comprehensive review of implementation (Doc. 8.3), the Secretariat had produced a synthesis of 11 key points (Doc 8.3 – Addendum) which it would circulate during the meeting. A lengthy discussion ensued with recommendations on basic points that need consideration for future work. It was fundamental to emphasize that the reporting exercise undertaken to date had focused mainly on the actions being taken by Signatory States, and that the just completed leatherback assessment would complement that reporting with information on population status and trends. It was considered important to extend this work to other species, and to analysis the rest of the data on sites and threats contained in the national reports.

10. Important issues related to implementation progress were discussed with particular attention to the major points that need to be discussed in the working groups. Guidelines were produced for the working group facilitators, covering the range of topics expected to be covered in the sub-regional groups.

##### (c) Region-wide review of Leatherback conservation status and tsunami impacts

11. Dr. Hamann described the work involved in the production of the report, soliciting suggestions for dealing with certain points needed for its finalization, and pointing out steps that could be improved for future reports on other species. In many cases, national specialists were not able to provide the required information. The Committee suggested a number of steps for finalizing the report, and agreed to propose to the Signatory States that the next step should be to produce a report on the Loggerhead *Caretta caretta* within 12 months and a report on the Green turtle *Chelonia mydas* within 24 months, with much of the initial information collection done simultaneously.

##### (d) Status reports on other CMS/IOSEA-funded projects (Doc. 8.4)

12. Two reports that would be presented to the SS4 meeting were briefly mentioned, covering conservation work in Kenya and India.

(e) Issue-based priorities

13. Fisheries-turtle interactions in the IOSEA region were discussed briefly. SEAFDEC has been very active in South-East Asia, offering a programme that was worthy of emulation elsewhere. It was noted that a representative of FAO fisheries department would participate in the meeting, and that the IOTC was gradually progressing with the consideration of bycatch, though turtle bycatch had not been accorded very high priority.

14. It was agreed that the issue of coastal development had not been given adequate importance in the national reporting, and that it would be useful to construct a new question that could be inserted into the existing template.

15. Dr. Limpus described the beach management policy paper that he was producing, including discussion of the ramifications of climate change, and estimated that it would be available around August 2006.

(f) Network of sites of importance for marine turtles (Doc 10)

16. It was agreed that there was a need for clear and objective criteria for assigning importance value of nesting beaches. Dr Limpus reported on a current initiative in Australia in this area. The Secretariat would continue the development of the site network initiative, which was presently under review by colleagues in UNEP/GEF.

(h) Other priority site-specific interventions

17. The massive bycatch and mortality at Orissa, India, continued to be a major concern. Dr Limpus reported an increase in tortoise-shell trade in Papua and Papua New Guinea. The Advisory Committee expressed concern, signalling the pressing need to obtain basic information on compliance with national and international measures regulating exploitation and trade in this critically endangered species.

### **Agenda item 6: Advisory Committee**

18. The possibility of slightly modifying the Committee's terms of reference was discussed to avoid misunderstanding in the process of national nominations to the committee. With regard to the nomination or re-nomination of AC members, all of the serving members (including those subject to renomination) agreed to continue for the coming year. It was agreed that there was a lack representation on the Committee from two geographic areas, notably: Arabic-speaking and French-speaking countries. A need for strengthening certain specialist capacities, particularly in the social sciences (e.g., social economist) was also expressed.

### **Agenda item 7: Other matters**

19. Dr. Limpus described his activities in relation to the IOSEA Interactive Mapping System (IMapS). The Secretariat emphasised the importance of building into the system a protocol that would enable others to provide data in the future, to create a sense of ownership among contributors and users. Progress made in this area at the Third Meeting of the Advisory Committee needed to be followed up with UNEP-WCMC.

20. With regard to the use and promotion of IOSEA information management tools, the Secretariat summarised use of the website, explaining that 14 of top 20 user groups were countries from the region.

#### **Agenda item 8: Oral report of Chair to the Meeting of the Signatory States**

21. The Chair briefed the Committee on the report that he would be making to the Signatory States during plenary, summarise the work of Advisory Committee members and the main issues covered in the present meeting.

#### **Agenda item 9: Other business**

There being no additional matters of business, the Chair thanked the members and Secretariat for their work and the meeting adjourned at 17:00.

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### **ADDENDUM: 14 MARCH 2006 SESSION**

1. As planned, the Advisory Committee reconvened briefly immediately following the close of the Fourth Meeting of the Signatory States, at 1345 on 14 March 2006, for the main purpose of discussing arrangements for the chairmanship. All five Committee members present in Muscat were in attendance.
2. Dr. Hughes announced his intention to step down from the chair, as foreseen when he took up the post in March 2005; but indicated that he would continue to serve on the Committee for one more year. Dr. Jack Frazier was the unanimous choice of his peers to take over as Advisory Committee chair, which he agreed.
3. Members then revisited the issue of additional expertise required for the Committee to function effectively, bearing in mind that Dr. Sejal Worah's term had come to an end. In accordance with paragraph 4 of the Committee's terms of reference, members proposed that Mr. Ali Al-Kiyumi (Oman) be put forward to the Signatory States for consideration. [*Secretariat note: supporting documents to accompany the nomination will be secured as soon as possible.*]
4. The Committee expressed its enthusiasm to move forward with the species reviews for Loggerhead and Green turtles as soon as possible, with a similar assignment of responsibilities as for the Leatherback assessment (i.e. Dr. Limpus working closely with Dr. Hamann on the compilation of information from a variety of sources, and Dr. Hughes involved in the editing of the final product). The Secretariat cautioned that the necessary administrative arrangements would take at least until May 2006 to process, once the Leatherback project had been completely wrapped up.
5. There being no other business, following the customary exchange of courtesies the meeting concluded at 1405.

## ANNEX 10: REVISED TERMS OF REFERENCE OF THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

*Adopted on 14 March 2006*

### *Nomination and Appointment*

1. Each Signatory State may nominate one or more individuals from a country other than their own to serve as members of the Advisory Committee. The Secretariat should inform the Signatory States of any vacancies arising from the end of a term or other reasons, such as voluntary resignation. Nominations for any vacancies should be provided in writing to the Secretariat at least 60 days in advance of the Meeting of Signatory States, and should include detailed and complete curriculum vitae. The Secretariat should circulate such nominations to all Signatory States. At their meetings, the Signatory States should appoint the members of the Advisory Committee from among the individuals nominated.
2. If there are more nominees than necessary to constitute the Advisory Committee, the Signatory States shall make every effort to appoint members by consensus following close consultation. If every effort to appoint members of the Advisory Committee by consensus fails, the Signatory States shall appoint members of the Advisory Committee by election (voting).
3. Advisory Committee members should serve for two years (i.e. through two regular Meetings of the Signatory States), and should be eligible for re-nomination and reappointment at subsequent Meetings of Signatory States.
4. Should a vacancy arise intersessionally, the Advisory Committee may propose a replacement for consideration by the Signatory States. The proposal shall be communicated to Signatory States via the Secretariat, and shall be accompanied by the same supporting documents as would be required for a regular nomination. In the absence of an objection of any Signatory State, received within 30 days of the communication from the Secretariat, the interim appointment will be considered as having been accepted, and will become effective immediately. If an objection is raised by a Signatory State, the procedure may be repeated, as appropriate, until an acceptable nominee is identified. The term of appointment of the provisional nominee shall expire at the end of the next meeting of Signatory States. The provisional nominee should be eligible for nomination and appointment to the Advisory Committee, as a full member, at that meeting.

### *Size and Composition*

5. The Advisory Committee should have up to 10 members. In appointing the Advisory Committee, Signatory States should strive to achieve a balance among the areas of expertise set forth in the Memorandum of Understanding (marine turtle biology, marine resource management, coastal development, socio-economics, law, fisheries technology, and other relevant disciplines), as well as an equitable representation of sub-regions and gender, to the extent possible.
6. The Advisory Committee should select a chair, who should be the principal point of contact between the Advisory Committee and the Secretariat.
7. The Advisory Committee may benefit from additional participation in the form of observers from each of the IOSEA sub-regions<sup>1</sup>. The sub-regional observers should attend meetings of the Advisory

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<sup>1</sup> **South-East Asia +:** Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Malaysia, Myanmar, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Viet Nam + Australia, China, Japan, Republic of Korea, United States; **Northern Indian Ocean:** Bangladesh, India, Maldives, Pakistan, Sri Lanka; **Northwestern Indian Ocean:** Bahrain, Djibouti, Egypt, Eritrea, Islamic Republic of Iran, Jordan, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, United Arab Emirates, Yemen; **Western Indian Ocean:** Comoros, France, Kenya, Madagascar, Mauritius, Mozambique, Seychelles, Somalia, South Africa, United Kingdom, United Republic of Tanzania.

Committee and receive intersessional correspondence and documents of the Committee. In addition to observing the work of the Advisory Committee, sub-regional observers may provide input, views and comments to the Committee as appropriate.

8. Each sub-regional observer shall be decided by consensus of the Signatory States of each sub-region, and that decision shall be communicated to the IOSEA Secretariat. The designated individual may be a Focal Point from a Signatory State of the sub-region or another competent person working on marine turtle conservation who would be in a position to: (1) attend meetings of the Advisory Committee and Signatory States (using their own resources to support their attendance/participation), (2) effectively communicate to the Advisory Committee and the Secretariat the views and the issues of concern of the countries of the sub-region they represent, and (3) report back to the other members of their sub-region.

#### *Meetings*

9. To minimize costs, the Advisory Committee should conduct as much of its activity as possible through electronic communication. Regular meetings of the Advisory Committee should occur immediately prior to the regular meetings of the Signatory States, also to minimize travel and meeting costs. At the direction or approval of the Signatory States, the Advisory Committee may hold additional meetings.

10. The Advisory Committee Chair should participate in the meetings of the Signatory States, and may also participate in the meetings of related and associated agreements and organisations that the Signatory States deem relevant to the work of the MoU. The other members of the Advisory Committee are encouraged to participate as observers in the meetings of the Signatory States.

#### *Mandate and Tasks*

11. The purpose of the Advisory Committee is to serve and assist the Signatory States in the implementation of the Memorandum of Understanding. Members of the Advisory Committee serve in their individual capacities, rather than as representatives of Governments or organisations with which they also may be affiliated.

12. The Secretariat should serve as a clearinghouse of requests from the Signatory States for advice from the Advisory Committee.

13. As set forth in the Memorandum of Understanding, the mandate of the Advisory Committee is to "provide scientific, technical and legal advice to the Signatory States, individually and collectively, on the conservation and management of marine turtles and their habitats in the Region." The Signatory States may request the Advisory Committee to give priority to certain activities and tasks, which may include, but are not limited to, actions to:

- Evaluate and provide advice, at the request of any Signatory State, on any conservation and management programme proposed or implemented within the State;
- Provide advice to the meetings of Signatory States on the adoption of additional conservation and management actions and on revisions to the Conservation and Management Plan;
- Evaluate, at the request of any Signatory State, the efficiency of different measures proposed or implemented to reduce the capture and incidental mortality of marine turtles in fishing operations;
- Promote the use of standardised marine turtle research techniques, monitoring programme data collection, and data storage and reporting;
- Review scientific reports, annual reports of the Signatory States, and other appropriate

documents to assist the Secretariat in assessing progress in the implementation of the Conservation and Management Plan;

- Bring to the attention of the Signatory States significant new information relating to the conservation and management of marine turtles;
- Respond to requests for advice from Signatory States in the fields of socio-economics and law related to the implementation of the Memorandum of Understanding;
- Seek input from other individuals and bodies, as appropriate, in responding to requests for advice, e.g., from the Marine Turtle Specialist Group of the World Conservation Union (IUCN), the Southeast Asian Fisheries Development Centre (SEAFDEC), etc;
- Assist Signatory States in the development of projects and initiatives so that regional, sub-regional and local concerns and interests are taken into account;
- Provide such other scientific, technical and legal advice relating to the implementation of the Memorandum of Understanding as the Signatory States may request, individually or collectively;
- Make recommendations regarding other fields of expertise needed within the Advisory Committee to assist with its work; and
- Provide a report on its activities, prior to scheduled Meetings of the Signatory States.

## **ANNEX 11: STATEMENT OF APPRECIATION TO THE MINISTRY OF REGIONAL MUNICIPALITIES, ENVIRONMENT AND WATER RESOURCES**

*on behalf of*

the participants of the Fourth Meeting of the Signatory States to the Memorandum of Understanding on the Conservation and Management of Marine Turtles and their Habitats of the Indian Ocean and South-East Asia

The Fourth Meeting of the Signatory States to the Memorandum of Understanding on the Conservation and Management of Marine Turtles and their Habitats of the Indian Ocean and South-East Asia (IOSEA) was held in Muscat, Oman, from 11-14 March 2006. Organised for the first time outside the Bangkok headquarters of the IOSEA Secretariat, the conference was attended by over 60 participants from 30 States across the region.

The Meeting reviewed progress made toward implementation of the Memorandum of Understanding, identifying specific strengths and weaknesses in the conservation of the region's marine turtles and their habitats. Delegates learned of the importance of the Sultanate of Oman, both regionally and globally, for its nesting populations of Green and Loggerhead turtles, in particular; and commended the Government of Oman for its long-running programme to conserve turtles and their coastal habitats.

The Meeting welcomed the initiative of the Ministry of Regional Municipalities, Environment and Water Resources to inaugurate the 2006 Year of the Turtle campaign in the Sultanate of Oman on 14 March 2006, complementing similar initiatives being organised across the IOSEA region. It noted also the timeliness of the gathering, taking place in the city designated as the Capital of Arab Culture for 2006.

The Meeting wishes to express its deep gratitude to the Sultanate of Oman, Ministry of Regional Municipalities, Environment and Water Resources, for the wonderful hospitality afforded to the participants, who leave the Sultanate of Oman with a very favourable impression of its rich natural resources and of their careful management for the benefit of present and future generations.