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Second Regional Coordination Workshop – South Asia MCPA Project

Workshop Report

Colombo, Sri Lanka.
25–27th July 2007

South Asia Co-operative Environment Programme



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INTRODUCTION

Sustainable use of coastal resources requires that some coastal areas be retained in their natural state or as near to natural as possible. Marine and Coastal Protected Areas (MCPAs) are such areas which we wish to protect for any one or a combination of reasons viz. for its high species diversity, biological activity, as an important ecosystem or habitat, as a sanctuary for sustaining/replenishing fish stocks, for its aesthetic value, for the coastal protection they offer and for the communities exclusively dependant on the resources.

The 2003 United Nations List of Protected Areas ranked the South Asia region lowest in the world in terms of declared Marine and Coastal Protected Areas (MCPAs), making the Indian Ocean with its wealth of coral reefs, sea grasses, and mangrove forests, one of the worlds most poorly protected coastlines. Only 0.1% of the EEZ and coastal areas of South Asia have been assigned protected area status. As a result, despite current protection measures, the degradation of coastal and marine resources continues at an unprecedented rate.

The EU funded South Asia MCPA project has been designed to respond to this situation and the main objectives of the project are **to develop management capacity and training tools** for staff at marine and coastal protected areas; **to improve communications and data management**; **to strengthen cooperation** in marine and coastal management efforts; and **to develop a systematic approach to livelihood diversification** and enhancement in coastal communities.

To advance cooperation and coordination for the management of coral reefs and associated ecosystems in South Asia, one of the major anticipated outputs of the project is the establishment of the South Asia Coral Reef Task Force (SACRTF). The SACRTF will help participating countries to work together more effectively to safeguard their marine and coastal resources. The project team has been working alongside Governments, key stakeholders and experts from across the region to prepare the constitution and role of the SACRTF.

Comprised of a representative group of regional experts and stakeholders, the task force will become the regional driving force relaying site-based realities to policy makers and facilitating policy changes in line with identified needs and national priorities. As a focal body for coral reef conservation, the task force will advise on strategies in response to the growing global environmental crisis and coordinate the implementation of policy and its adherence to the objectives of Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs). Strategies will be developed to guide donors and ensure national and international assistance is directed to strategic priorities. One key action promoted by the South Asia Coral Reef Task Force will be the establishment of a coordinated network of MCPAs encompassing coral reefs.

The second regional coordination workshop of the project was conducted on **25 - 27th July 2007** in Colombo, Sri Lanka. The workshop brought together marine and coastal experts and representatives from government and scientific institutions from the 5 participating countries, providing an opportunity for the targeted exchange of information and experiences relating to the management and conservation of marine and coastal resources in the region, and the identification of collaborative opportunities in support of effective management. The workshop dialogues assisted in further understanding of the present status of MCPAs in the region and assist in the identification of priority issues for consideration in the SACRTF work plan.

**2ND REGIONAL COORDINATION WORKSHOP FOR THE LONG TERM MANAGEMENT AND
CONSERVATION OF MCPAS IN SOUTH ASIA
COLOMBO, SRI LANKA,
25th -27th July 2007**

**DAY 1: WEDNESDAY July 25th, 2007
INAUGURATION CEREMONY**

- Mr. M.A.R.D. Jayathilake, Secretary, Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources, Sri Lanka was the Chief Guest of the ceremony and inaugurated the ceremony in the traditional way by lighting the oil lamp
- The Opening Remarks were delivered by Dr. Arvind Boaz, Director General, South Asia Cooperative Environment Program, stressing the environmental initiatives undertaken by SACEP in the region and highlighting the progress made to date in the official endorsement and establishment of the South Asia Coral Reef Task Force (SACRTF)
- Dr. Kristian Teleki, Director of ICRAN welcomed participants and encouraged an inclusive, and participatory workshop, and maximisation of the regional networking opportunity to develop essential links in support of this project and region wide issues
- Mr. M.A.R.D. Jayathilake, Secretary, Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources, Sri Lanka, gave a brief speech, describing the South Asia MCPA project as a timely initiative, appreciating the foresight, cooperation and coordination of the member countries in the establishment of the SACRTF
- Dr. Naveen Namboodiri, Project Officer, ICRAN-SACEP South Asia MCPA project delivered a vote of thanks to all concerned

Session 1: Review of the progress of the South Asia MCPA Project and future opportunities

Nicola Barnard provided an overview of the objectives of the South Asia MCPA project, and the progress made to date, to familiarise stakeholders with the aims of the project and the activities implemented by partners. It was noted that the project would be referred to in a more familiar manner as the South Asia MCPA Project for the duration of the workshop and in future communications.

The role of the project in enhancing management practices and staff capacity at existing MCPA sites was highlighted, along with its importance in developing solid foundations for a future network, and generating capacity and resources that can be transferred between sites.

To focus efforts and maximise the potential impact from the project, it was reiterated that five sites, one from each participating country, were selected at the first regional coordination workshop as focal sites to participate in project activities. It was noted that the development of a managers exchange programme has been initiated to encourage the exchange of knowledge and good practices between MCPA sites within the region, which will commence with the 5 participating sites. SACEP are currently seeking focal point contacts at the ground level for each site to advance this programme.

The need to standardise basic training and encourage consistency in management capacity at MCPA sites in the region was emphasised, and participants were informed of the progress made in adapting the highly successful modular toolkit for MPA managers originally developed by IUCN for the Western Indian Ocean. The inclusion of case studies in the toolkit to showcase effective management actions within the region was highlighted and any parties interested in contributing a

case study requested to contact the project coordinator at SACEP. It was noted that materials will be allocated to marine and coastal experts for review in the coming months.

The implementation of project activities started in July 2006, and while efforts have to date, focused on building momentum under the regional coordination elements of the project, the implementation of ground level capacity building training will be the future focus of the project.

The strategic partnership formed with Reef Check under the project was noted, which seeks to facilitate the provision of opportunities for biological monitoring training with marine and coastal resource managers.

The comprehensive consultations undertaken to advance the establishment of the SACRTF were noted, and participants reminded that as a group they have been charged and nominated to work together to build on the consultations that have already taken place, to as far as possible finalise the role, structure and operation of the SACRTF in advance of the official launch.

Participants were encouraged to use the workshop as a further opportunity for networking and information exchanges between countries. The specific objectives of the workshop were set out as following:

- To provide an update on project progress
- Consideration of the applicability and value of the Coral Reef CSI programme to the region, and as a mechanism to advance training under the capacity building component
- Further understanding of MCPA management status in the region and highlight priority actions for uptake by the SACRTF
- Identification of existing and new opportunities to build stakeholder linkages in support of regional cooperation
- Finalisation of the SACRTF constitution
- Finalisation of priority actions for consideration by the SACRTF
- Official Press Launch of the SACRTF

Ben Cattermoul provided an overview of the excellent progress being made in the Sustainable Livelihood Diversification and Enhancement (SLED) component, through activities with field teams and coastal communities in the participating countries. He outlined the collaboration with IUCN to form the Coral Reef and Livelihoods Initiative (CORALI). The aim of activities to develop and test a globally appropriate approach to sustainable livelihood enhancement, diversification and change in the context of coral reef management was explained. Two workshops have been conducted with regional stakeholders to develop the approach and use the experiences of field teams and coastal communities to validate the methods and produce guidance and training materials.

The importance of integrating sustainable livelihood development as a core component of coral reef management strategies and programmes was emphasised, alongside the critical importance of using the methodology to inform and influence policy makers and other stakeholders in the region to ensure uptake of the guidance when finalised. Presenting the outputs and achievements of the SLED activities to the SACRTF was identified as an excellent mechanism to raise awareness of the tools, guidance and materials generated through this initiative.

Professor Patricia Ramirez made a presentation on a new and exciting opportunity that could be applied in the South Asia region as a mechanism to advance capacity building training under the project. Patricia introduced a comprehensive training and toolkit programme being implemented in other coral reef areas of the world, designed to enhance the investigation skills of managers in support of improved enforcement.

The relevance of the CSI training programme in responding to the national and regional situation, specifically the inadequacy of existing prosecuting systems, and the lack of capacity and equipment for investigation and surveillance, was discussed.

The role of a regional CSI workshop in enhancing cooperation and communication between multi-sector enforcement and management agencies was also emphasised, providing opportunity for countries to learn from each other. The use of regional instructors was highlighted to ensure the training could be tailored to the most pressing issues within the region. It was also recognised that participants of the regional workshop could go on to lead further national level trainings which would consider in detail the existing agencies and organisations involved in investigation and enforcement at a national and local level to ensure effective participation and transfer of skills.

SESSION 2: Furthering the understanding of the current MCPA status in participating countries and identification of priority issues

Representatives of the participating countries were invited to give presentations on the existing status of MCPA management in their countries, focussing on the five sites selected for inclusion in project activities. The presentations were prepared based on guidelines provided prior to the workshop, which sought to highlight to participants the following:

- Current status of MCPA management in the countries (with emphasis on the five selected sites)
- Agencies and organisations directly/indirectly involved in influencing management
- Existing policies, legislations and management plans that are still relevant in the current MCPA management scenario
- Ongoing and planned efforts towards marine and coastal resource management
- Constraints in the proper implementation/execution of the action plans, policies and legislations

The presentations were used to identify the baseline situation in each country, showcase successful initiatives, and the progress made towards effective MCPA management in order to identify, prioritise and discuss possible mechanisms and solutions to MCPA conservation and management challenges. Further, the exercise helped in identifying key issues pertaining to MCPA management, which were common to the region and could be taken up as priority actions for the SACRTF.

Bangladesh:

Mr. Md. Jafar Siddique, National Project Director, Coastal and Wetland Biodiversity Management Project (MoEF), provided a brief outline of the existing scenario in coastal resource management in the country, highlighting the importance of the St. Martin's Island as the only MCPA in Bangladesh encompassing coral reefs.

Mr. Siddique introduced the action plans, infrastructure and equipment available at the St. Martin's Island and provided an update on the existing activities being implemented in the region, highlighting the range of organisations (governmental and non-governmental) and departments involved both directly and indirectly in different activities at the St. Martin's Island.

Bangladesh identified lack of interdepartmental co-ordination at various levels, unplanned tourism, reluctance of law enforcing agencies and inadequacy and complexity of the prosecuting system, lack of expertise, funds and equipment as some of the major constraints in MCPA management activities.

India

Dr. Saxena provided a brief and comprehensive presentation on the current scenario of MCPA management in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands (with special reference to the Mahatma Gandhi

Marine National Park, Wandoor), highlighting the threats, current management practices and constraints in the implementation of the existing management plans, legislations and laws, and putting forward a proposal to map and monitor the coral reef resources of the islands to generate a database for information generation, access and sharing.

Dr. Venkataraman, provided a detailed presentation on the wide suite of existing policies, law and legislations in the country, and the existing and future activities being implemented in support of coral reef management. The presentation provided an excellent overview of the organizations, departments and ministries that directly or indirectly influence the management and conservation of coral reef resources. The role of the National Committee for Coral Reefs in supporting regional coordination efforts undertaken through the South Asia MCPA project was highlighted.

Dr. Senthil Vel provided a brief overview of the Integrated Coastal Zone Management programme, stressing and the application of CMZ's to coastal resource management, the development and enforcement of building regulations, and vulnerability mapping. The role of National Coastal Zone Management authorities in informing management processes with the latest science was highlighted.

Constraints in the implementation of existing legislation, policies and management plans were identified, and included: poor linkages and overlap of policies between and within organisations, departments and the private sector; lack of information sharing and cooperation among organisations and departments; inadequate information on the resources available; limitations in regular monitoring and enforcement; lack of motivation and skill among the field level implementation staff and a lack of proper infrastructure, funds and equipment. It was noted that multisector training approach of the coral reef CSI programme could help to link and coordinate the efforts of the numerous agencies and organizations involved in the enforcement of regulations within India.

Maldives:

Mr. Naeem of the Maldives presented a short report on the existing scenario of MCPA management in the country, describing existing laws/legislations, current status of MCPAs, the process of MCPA establishment and management in the country, and highlighting the obstacles and constraints. A case study of the Maldives Protected Areas System Project was provided, highlighting lessons learnt.

In Maldives, the overlap of laws, regulations and mandates between ministries and responsible organisations and departments was noted, and the need for improved linkages identified. Other important constraints identified were improper enforcement, lack of skilled human resources and lack of allocated funds. It was noted that effort should also be focused towards raising public awareness of the importance and value of coral reef ecosystems to build political will for coral reef management.

Pakistan

Mr. Tahir Qureshi gave a brief outline of the existing scenario of MCPA management in Pakistan, and the available natural resources (coral reefs), their status and threats, legislations and laws for their protection and the departments and organizations linked to their management. The presentation stressed the poor documentation of coral reef resources and highlighted the need for inclusion of coral reef ecosystems in management plans.

Currently there is: no spatial mapping of the reef resources; a lack of participatory management efforts; lack of technical capacity; funding constraints; and a lack of coordination between the departments, government and non-governmental organizations and research academia which is impeding coastal resource management activities in Pakistan.

Sri Lanka

Mr. Arjan Rajasuriya, stressed the importance of building on the existing efforts in MCPA management in Sri Lanka to maximise outputs, and highlighted the need to ensure legislation is more effectively implemented at the ground level. Arjan recommended the identification of shortcomings and gaps in legislation, and management efforts to promote targeted progress and to guide national coordination efforts and the engagement of the SACRTF in each of the five participating countries.

Some of the major obstacles pertaining to effective coral reef management in the country were found to be poor management of reef fisheries leading to unsustainable exploitation of the resources, lack of MCPA management capacity, inadequate trained personnel, improper enforcement of laws and rules and inadequate awareness of sustainable exploitation.

The individual country presentations helped in identifying their strengths and weaknesses in MCPA management and also to identify issues with a regional significance. The following MCPA management issues were found to be common to the countries:

- Lack of a cooperative and coordinated response from the various organisations (both governmental and non-governmental, departments and ministries) to addressing the issues in MCPA management
- Lack of capacity (field personnel) in field level implementation of management activities
- Lack of capacity in enforcement of existing laws and
- Poor infrastructural facilities and equipments
- Lack of awareness of the importance and value of coral reefs at both the ground level and policy levels

The need for national governments to prioritise the constraints and challenges of coral reef management and conservation was discussed. It was noted that raising awareness of the value and importance of coral reefs is a key challenge within the South Asia region and the role of a coral reef champion discussed.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Work alongside existing bodies to encourage the adaptation and implementation of the coral reef CSI programme within the South Asia region
- Build awareness of coral reefs at the ground level as a priority issue to ensure that training can be applied
- Use the SACRTF as a champion for coral reefs among country governments, and to raise general public awareness of the need for sustainable use and conservation

Session 3: Understanding obstacles to effective regional coordination

Participants from each country were divided into working groups and given the task of building on the previous presentations and discussions to prioritise the most important challenges in MCPA management, and discuss possible solutions, and ways in which the SACRTF could support and address the challenges in:

- MCPA policy, planning and administration
- Implementation
- Networking and linkages

Working groups relayed their discussions to all participants. The following table documents the outcomes of the working group discussions.

Regional challenges, possible solutions and recommendations to the SACRTF

	MCPA management (policies, planning and administration)	Implementation	Networking and linkages
Challenges	Lack of harmony among departments organisations and the other stakeholders influencing MCPA management, leading to overlap of mandates	Lack of capacity at field level and inadequacy in implementing/enforcement of laws	Sharing of existing information and technology
	Baseline data insufficient, long-term monitoring and institutional and infrastructural strengthening	Conflicts between reef dependent communities and management activities	Lack of coordination among departments, organisations and ministries involved in marine resource conservation/management
	Lack of political will and low-priority to MCPA management	Lack of indicators to monitor progress of the management efforts	Lack of collaborative management efforts involving multi-sectoral stakeholder representation
	Characterisation and understanding of reef dependency of the coastal community needs strengthening	Technical expertise and equipment availability poor	
Solutions	Raise the profile of MCPA and marine resource conservation/management, especially at policy and decision making levels	Improve capacity of the staff at the field level, directly involved in day-to-day field management activities	Establish a country task force with mult-sectoral stakeholder representation
	Identify gaps in data/information requirements, analyze existing data	More focussed approaches to train reef dependent communities to explore and adopt alternate livelihood options	Identify mechanisms to improve relationships and cooperation within and between various departments, organisations and other stakeholders
		Identify and monitor indicators of effective management interventions	Sharing of information, data experiences, lessons learnt and skills within and between countries
			Initiate a reporting mechanism of all ongoing management activities and ensure a regularly updated national and regional database
Where and how SACRTF can involve and assist	Encourage political will and raise awareness and regularly update the policy and decision makers about marine resource management status in the region/ raise the profile of marine resources and MCPA's of the region at a national, regional and international level	Encourage CTF's to identify and prioritise areas that need strengthening (capacity, institutional, infrastructural etc) and facilitate exchange of best management practices between them	Keep the various ministries, departments and organisations informed and updated about the issues and activities, ensuring their sustained interest in the activities
	Monitoring effectiveness/progress of ongoing management activities and ensure timely deliverables	Facilitate in providing law-enforcement training to field level managers	Promote collaborative management efforts (involving multi-sectoral stakeholders)
	Assist individual country task forces in identifying and prioritising management issues to be considered for high-priority action	Assist in sharing new, effective alternate livelihood practices on a regional basis	Create and coordinate a mechanism to share information, experiences and lessons learnt (an e-discussion forum) and ensure a vertical and horizontal flow of information

DAY 2: THURSDAY 26 JULY 2007

Session 1: South Asia Coral Reef Task Force

Ben Cattermoul presented the progress made and lessons learned of the Global Coral Reef Monitoring Network in advancing regional cooperation in South Asia between 1997 - 2002. The focus of the GCRMN South Asia in facilitating the production and dissemination of information, through the maintenance of regional and national networks and to provide human and institutional strengthening for better collection, analysis, and storage of information relating to coral reefs and coral reef stakeholders was highlighted. The key advances of the GCRMN SA in identifying the complexity of organisations and communities involved in coral reef management and policy processes, and in understanding the information needs of the different stakeholders groups was noted. Building on this assessment to map legislation, update key organisations and information needs of stakeholders was noted as a critical starting point to guide SACRTF efforts. The successes of the GCRMN South Asia in providing a common platform to bring together different bodies, organisations and individuals who would not otherwise interact was celebrated, alongside the role of the GCRMN SA in encouraging individual coral reef projects, organisations and programmes to become a part of the wider process of coral reef development.

Participants noted that the SACRTF could provide a regional platform for raising coral reef issues among government leaders and policy makers, and should seek to garner support among country governments for the implementation and management of MCPAs. The development of linkages to ICRI, and attendance of a SACRTF representative at ICRI general meetings was also noted as a key opportunity to feed information into government and policy processes, alongside raising the profile of South Asia among the international donor community.

The role of CORDIO in continuing the work of GCRMN SA was discussed, and it was recognised that some GCRMN activities are still ongoing, coordinated with support from voluntary coordinators, and national funding. It was suggested that the profile of existing activities should be raised to more effectively demonstrate the coral reef conservation and management efforts within the region. The need to reinvigorate the processes and momentum initiated through the GCRMN SA was noted, and recommendation made that the efforts of the SACRTF build on the previous advances in regional cooperation for a sustained and effective future.

The role of the GCRMN in building ground level biological monitoring skills was celebrated. Further training in conflict resolution, enforcement and implementation of management plans at MCPA sites was recognised a new, and much needed skill set to build capacity for management, and the coral reef CSI programme identified by participants as one such mechanism to advance this type of skill training in the region.

The importance of country government financial support to regional coordination mechanisms was highlighted as a key to success and sustainability and noted as a key consideration for the SACRTF.

Nicola Barnard provided an overview of the SACRTF in the context of the South Asia MCPA project, under which the SACRTF will be established. The establishment of the SACRTF in response to the limited inter-agency and government cooperation in the region, and the need for more holistic and coordinated efforts in the protection and conservation of coral reefs for an effective regional response to shared challenges was noted.

The focus of the South Asia MCPA project in establishing a structured regional mechanism for coordination was noted. The future development of national Coral Reef Task Forces, in line with the structure of the East African Coral Reef Task Force, was identified as desirable for the region, but outside the scope of the South Asia MCPA project. To prevent the dilution of effort and impact of the SACRTF, stakeholders requested a focus on establishing the regional structure as a priority.

It was noted that all discussions related to national CRTFs would be driven from the national level in line with the available capacity, resources, and needs.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Using the GCRMN SA information needs analysis as a basis, map legislation, policy and decision makers to guide the efforts of the SACRTF from the inception
- Recognise the progress made towards regional coordination through the existing frameworks of GCRMN, ICRMN, CORDIO and others, in the establishment of the SACRTF
- Develop an inventory of GCRMN activities from feedback of national coordinators
- Establish and implement the regional structure and operating mechanisms of the SACRTF as a priority
- Establish the SACRTF with a key strategic objective to promote the implementation of MCPAs, and to advance the concept and discussions of a network of MCPAs in the South Asia region
- Develop an activity implementation timeframe for the SACRTF in line with the deliverables of the South Asia MCPA Project
- Identify a SACRTF representative to participate in ICRI

Session 2: Finalisation of the South Asia Coral Reef Task Force constitution

Dr Boaz provided the context of the official endorsement of the SACRTF received from participating country governments at the SACEP governing council meeting in January 2007.

The composition of the SACRTF was discussed and the inclusion of the Secretary of the relevant ministry in each country was agreed to give necessary force and international representation to the SACRTF.

All participants echoed the importance of representation by designation, through the institutionalisation of the SACRTF, as an essential step to generate continuity within the SACRTF. SACEP will lead this process among participating country governments.

To focus the efforts of the SACRTF for greater impact over the course of the South Asia MCPA project, and to demonstrate success in the short term and garner support for future activities, it was suggested that the SACRTF focus action on the five MCPA sites selected for inclusion in the South Asia MCPA project activities. To facilitate this, participants requested the inclusion of a representative from each of the five MCPA sites on the SACRTF. The constitution was amended accordingly.

The constitution document was agreed and recognised as an organic framework that should be revisited and revised periodically to ensure the effective operation of the SACRTF (See Annex 4).

Participants worked in groups to build out priority actions for implementation by the SACRTF, and to develop action statements for inclusion in the work plan of the SACRTF. It was noted that the International Coral Reef Initiative has designated 2008 as the International Year of the Reef (IYOR 2008). Forming a regional response to IYOR 2008 was recognised by participants as an excellent mechanism to raise mass awareness on the importance of coral reefs, and to generate political will for their conservation and management – a need identified in the previous days discussions for all countries. It was recommended that the SACRTF assist countries to identify and coordinate actions for a regional celebration of IYOR 2008. It was noted that an IYOR 2008 response does not have to be resource intensive, and that existing and ongoing activities occurring in countries can be re-branded in support of IYOR. SACEP will provide further information to participants and the SACRTF on IYOR.

Participants recognised the key importance of raising awareness of coral reefs among the general public and at the senior bureaucrat level to facilitate the allocation of more resources to coral reef management and conservation activities. The need to identify a sustainable financing mechanism for the SACRTF was emphasised to ensure its continuation. To facilitate consultation with country governments on the sustainability of the SACRTF, participants recommended the development of a projected budget for the annual operation of the SACRTF. SACEP highlighted a trust fund facility into which country governments make contributions to support conservation activities and suggested a similar mechanism could be developed to support the SACRTF.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Request the Secretary of the concerned ministry in each country to participate in the SACRTF
- Ensure representation by designation, and the institutionalisation of the SACRTF. SACEP to lead
- Build linkages with the EACRTF for the exchange of effective lessons and successes
- Focus action of the SACRTF on the five MCPA sites selected for inclusion in the South Asia MCPA project
- Develop a budget projection for annual operating costs of the SACRTF
- The SACRTF will lead a regional response to the International Year of the Reef 2008 (IYOR 2008)
- Generate further design options for the SACRTF logo

DAY 3: FRIDAY 27 JULY 2007

Launch Ceremony of the South Asia Coral Reef Task Force

- The launch ceremony of the SACRTF was inaugurated by the Chief Guest, H.E., Mr. Ahmed Abdullah, Minister for Environment, Energy and Water, Republic of Maldives and the Guest of Honour, Justice C.G. Weeramantry, formal Vice Chairman, International Court of Justice by lighting the oil-lamp.
- Dr. Arvind Boaz, Director General, SACEP, welcomed participants and provided a brief on the past and ongoing environmental initiatives of SACEP in the region. Dr Boaz outlined the background and rationale of the South Asia MCPA project, and highlighted the strategic significance of the South Asia Coral Reef Task Force in marine resource conservation in South Asia.
- Dr. Kristian Teleki, Director, ICRAN, thanked the dignitaries and all the participants for their active participation in finalising the SACRTF structure and documents, and stressed the valuable role the SACRTF could play to enhance regional coordination and cooperation in the management and conservation of marine resources, identifying the project as a milestone achievement for the South Asia Region.
- Guest of Honour, Judge C.G. Weeramantry, provided an inspiring speech on the need to conserve the natural resources for the younger generation, by finding a balance between natural resource conservation and development. He also pointed out the low-priority given to natural resources conservation at a legal and judiciary level, and the need create awareness.
- The Chief Guest, H.E., Mr. Ahmed Abdullah, Minister for Environment, Energy and Water, Republic of Maldives, spoke on the depletion of the Ozone Layer and the mounting evidence of the impending disaster of rising sea level. He congratulated SACEP on their efforts for the betterment of the environment in the region, highlighting the significant role the SACRTF could

play in helping to mitigate the major environmental issues pertaining to marine resource conservation.

➤ The official launch of the South Asia Coral Reef Task Force was carried out by signing of the launch documents.

➤ Dr. Naveen Namboodiri, Project Officer, SACEP, presented a vote of thanks to the Hon' Minister, Hon' Judge, the participants from the five maritime nations, international participants, the European Union for funding the project, other project partners and all the SACEP staff involved in the successful conduct of the workshop.

See Annex 2 for the agenda of the SACRTF launch event.

Press Conference:

A press conference was held to celebrate the launch of the SACRTF to which many national media reporters (press and television) were invited and attended. Printed materials were distributed to the press to raise awareness of the South Asia MCPA project, and the SACRTF launched under the project. The project management team were on hand to field questions from the audience. Dr. Boaz reiterated the significance of the initiative for the region, also highlighting the role of SACEP as a coordinating body for environmental efforts in the region. Dr. Kristian Teleki, and Ms. Nicola Barnard provided the background and rationale behind the South Asia MCPA project, and its significance to the region as a milestone project, and presented information on the importance of the South Asia Coral Reef Task Force in enhancing cooperation and collaboration among stakeholders in the region, and as a mechanism to drive regional coral reef conservation efforts.

See Annex 5 for press releases.

**SOUTH ASIA MCPA PROJECT
SECOND REGIONAL COORDINATION WORKSHOP
25th – 27th JULY 2007
Colombo, Sri Lanka**

Agenda**Background:**

The South Asia Cooperative Environment Programme (SACEP) in collaboration with the International Coral Reef Action Network (ICRAN) and other partners, is tasked with the implementation of the European Union (EU) funded project 'Institutional Strengthening and capacity development for the long-term management of MCPAs encompassing coral reefs in South Asia' (South Asia MCPA Project), which commenced in 2006, in the 5 maritime nations of South Asia (Bangladesh, India, Maldives, Pakistan, Sri Lanka).

Second regional coordination workshop:

The second regional coordination workshop aims to bring stakeholders together to provide an update on the progress of the regional project, to identify priority action areas for MCPA management in the region, and to work together to finalize the constitution of the South Asia Coral Reef Task Force (SACRTF), building on the consultations that have already taken place, to define the role, structure, organization and administration, and create a basic framework under which the SACRTF will operate. The workshop provides additional opportunities for peer-to-peer networking and knowledge exchanges among the regional participants.

Workshop Objectives

Through the workshop participants will seek to:

1. Guide the project, through consideration of opportunities for the advancement of project components;
2. Understand the current status of existing MCPAs in the region, identify and prioritize issues/problems pertaining to MCPA management to inform the action plan of the SACRTF;
3. Highlight existing and new opportunities to build stakeholder linkages within and between countries to advance regional cooperation and inform the constitution and administration of the SACRTF;
4. Finalize the SACRTF constitution documents; and
5. Participate in the official launch of the SACRTF.

Wednesday 25th July 2007	
0930 – 1015 Pearl Hall, Ceylon Intercontinental Hotel	Inauguration Ceremony : Welcoming remarks – Dr Arvind Boaz, SACEP & Dr. Kristian Teleki, ICRAN, Inaugural speech by the Chief Guest
1015 – 1030	Coffee Break
SESSION 1: Review of the progress of the South Asia MCPA Project and future opportunities. Co-Chair: Dr. Arvind Boaz, SACEP and Dr. Kristian Teleki, ICRAN – Garnet Hall, Ceylon Continental	
1030-1100	Workshop objectives and review of EU project progress – Nicola Barnard, ICRAN
1100 – 1130	Sustainable Livelihood Enhancement and Diversification (SLED) activities – Ben Cattermoul, IMM Ltd.
1130 – 1200	Coral Reef Crime Scene Investigation – Relevance and application to the South Asia region – Patricia Ramírez Romero

1200 -1300	Lunch
SESSION 2: Furthering the understanding of the current MCPA status in participating countries and identification of priority issues. Chair: Dr Arvind Boaz, SACEP & Naveen Namboodiri, SACEP	
1300 – 1530	Presentation by Bangladesh (1300-1320)
	Presentation by India (1320 – 1340)
	Presentation by Maldives (1340 – 1400)
	Presentation by Pakistan (1400-1420)
	Presentation by Sri Lanka (1420 – 1440)
	Brief discussion to review and pin-down some of the important issues pertaining to MCPA management in the countries.
1530 – 1600	Coffee Break
SESSION 3: Understanding obstacles to effective regional cooperation	
1600 – 1800	Working group activity and discussion lead by Dr Boaz, SACEP & Dr. Naveen Namboodiri, SACEP
Meeting Review and Close	

Thursday 26th July 2007	
SESSION 1: First Meeting of the South Asian Coral Reef Task Force. Co-Chairs: Dr. Naveen Namboodiri SACEP and Dr. Kristian Teleki, ICRAN	
0900 – 0915	Opening and welcoming remarks – Dr. Kristian Teleki, ICRAN & Dr. Naveen Namboodiri, SACEP
0915 – 0945	Regional Coordination: Experiences of the GCRMN in South Asia – Ben Cattermoul, IMM Ltd.
0945 – 1015	The SACRTF and the South Asia MCPA Project – Nicola Barnard, ICRAN
1015 – 1045	Coffee Break
SESSION 2: Finalisation of SACRTF constitution and description document. Review of comments and feedback received from the SACRTF Regional Review Group	
1045 – 1200	Composition and Organization – Chair : Dr. Arvind Boaz, SACEP
1200 – 1300	Lunch
1300 – 1530	Plan for implementation – Working groups
1530 – 1600	Coffee Break
1600 – 1700	Sustainability of the SACRTF – Chair : Dr. Arvind Boaz, SACEP
1700 – 1730 Meeting Review and Close	

Friday 27th July 2007	
South Asia Coral Reef Task Force Launch Event	
0945 – 1215	Please see separate enclosed agenda for the South Asia Coral Reef Task Force launch event.
1215	Lunch
Workshop Close	

**Launch of the
South Asia Coral Reef Task Force
South Asia MCPA Project**

Friday 27th July 2007

09.45Hrs	Participants & Guests take their seats
10.00 Hrs	Arrival of Chief Guest Hon Mr. Ahmed Abdullah, Minister of Environment Energy & Water, Republic of Maldives and Guest of Honour Judge C. G. Weeramantry, Former Vice Chairman, International Court of Justice. Inauguration with Lighting of Lamp
10.05 Hrs	Welcome Address by Dr. Arvind Boaz, Director General, South Asia Co-operative Environment Programme (SACEP)
10.15 Hrs	Address by Dr. Kristian Teleki, Director, International Coral Reef Action Network (ICRAN)
10.35 Hrs	Address by Guest of Honour Judge C. G. Weeramantry, Former Vice Chairman, International Court of Justice
10.45 Hrs	Address by Chief Guest Hon Mr. Ahmed Abdullah, Minister of Environment Energy & Water, Republic of Maldives
11.00 Hrs	Launch of the South Asia Coral Reef Task Force
11.15 Hrs	Vote of Thanks by Dr. Naveen Namboodri, SACEP – ICRAN Project Officer
11.20 Hrs	Tea
11.30 Hrs	Press Briefing
12.15 Hrs	Lunch

Participants list for the second MCPA workshop

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SOUTH ASIAN CORAL REEF TASK FORCE

Constitution

Rationale

The South Asia region was ranked the lowest in the world in terms of declared marine and coastal protected areas in the 2003 United Nations List of Protected Areas. In addition, the inclusion of essential coral reef habitat in MCPA provisions is minimal, making the Indian Ocean, with its wealth of coral reefs, seagrasses, and mangrove forests, perhaps the most poorly protected ocean. As a result, the degradation of coastal and marine resources continues at an unprecedented rate, and despite current protection measures, one third to half of the coral reefs of South Asia are now effectively dead, and a further 30% threatened.

The 2004 Status of Coral Reefs of the World report identified the major factors contributing to the continued resource degradation at MCPA sites encompassing coral reef habitats, prior to the Indian Ocean Tsunami event. This report specified limited interagency and governmental cooperation as an inhibitor to effective resource management across the South Asia region and recommended the introduction of overlapping and complementary mandates.

To improve marine and coastal resource management effectiveness in the South Asia region, stronger institutional links are needed across sectors, between policy developers and grassroots communities, for improved information exchanges, greater representation of stakeholders in management decision-making processes, and the effective implementation of identified national and regional priorities.

The establishment of a regional coordinating body to facilitate the implementation of regional and international initiatives in the management of coral reefs and associated ecosystems, and to promote collaborative action, and transboundary responses to shared environmental challenges, was endorsed by South Asia Caucus participants at the 3rd International Tropical Marine Ecosystems Management Symposium, in Cozumel, Mexico, October 2006.

Response

The South Asia Cooperative Environment Programme (SACEP), in collaboration with the International Coral Reef Action Network (ICRAN) and other partners, is tasked with the implementation of the European Union (EU) funded project 'Institutional Strengthening and capacity development for the long-term management of MCPAs encompassing coral reefs in South Asia'. This project commenced implementation in 2006, in the 5 maritime nations of South Asia (Bangladesh, India, Maldives, Pakistan, Sri Lanka). In response to the regionally identified needs, the project will support the establishment of the South Asia Coral Reef Task Force (SACRTF). Official endorsement of the South Asia Coral Reef Task Force was received from each of the 5 country governments participating in the project, at the SACEP Governing Council Meeting in January 2007.

Following extensive consultation with key regional stakeholders, Terms of Reference (TOR) for the operation of the SACRTF, and supporting documentation to finalise the role, purpose and structure of the SACRTF has been developed. The SACRTF constitution and description, outlined below, will be presented for endorsement by the participants of the first meeting of the SACRTF to be held on the 26th July 2007, in Colombo, Sri Lanka.

South Asia Coral Reef Task Force (SACRTF)

A suite of management plans, policies, and national and international strategies exist to support the management of marine and coastal resources in the South Asia region. However, the realisation of policy and strategies at the ground level is often poor. The SACRTF will build upon the existing initiatives, forums, and coordination mechanisms in the region to enhance linkages between agencies and governments for the effective implementation of laws and regulations relating to the management of coral reefs and associated ecosystems.

The SACRTF will formulate an action plan within existing management frameworks to improve the cooperative management of critical marine habitats. The inclusion of key coral reef stakeholders in the SACRTF will facilitate the exchange of site-based realities to governments, donor organisations, and other relevant forums alike, and will provide environmental information to support policy makers and politicians on a national and regional level, in the development or review of policy. The SACRTF will undertake focused action to assist countries in transboundary matters and in the attainment of commitments to Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs).

SACRTF Mission Statement

To actively participate in, and support, the effective implementation of existing national regulations, action plans and strategies for the management of coral reefs and associated ecosystems, and to promote the development of strategic linkages for enhanced regional cooperation, and the establishment of an effective, networked system of marine and coastal protected areas in the South Asia region.

Role of the SACRTF

- Actively participate and support the formulation and implementation of a regional action strategy, within existing frameworks, to improve cooperative management of coral reefs and associated ecosystems;
- Assist in the joint management of transboundary coral reef resources (e.g. GOM large marine ecosystem) through the development of strategic national (private sector, industry NGO), and regional agency linkages;
- Assist in the development of science based plans to manage coral reefs, which includes the identification and implementation of MCPAs, and the active advancement of concepts and discussions relating to networks of MCPAs and their potential benefits to South Asia;
- Identify existing forums, committees and networks engaged in coral reef management action for the development of strategic partnerships, and in order to commence work from present levels of implementation;
- Actively participate and support policy makers and decision makers to develop and implement national coral reef action plans or strategies, through the identification of needs, and capacity gaps in the implementation of existing laws and regulations;
- Encourage the establishment of national Coral Reef Task Forces (CRTF), with multi-sector representation, to support the development of local capacity in research, management and government, coordinate communication at the national level, and serve as a platform to share information with regional initiatives;
- Provide scientific input and strategic leadership to inform and influence policies, encouraging appropriate planning, the exchange of best practices, and demonstrating effective models within the region and across national boundaries;
- Identify funding and other support needed for management, equipment, and capacity building training through national, regional and global contacts, and assist, through the provision of technical advice, in fundraising for coral reefs activities and projects that will benefit the region and individual countries;
- Monitor progress of coral reef management actions, to facilitate reporting to governments of SA countries, donors, and other relevant forums. Garner ministerial and governmental

support to address issues that arise with the implementation of existing management plans and future management needs;

- Actively participate in relevant international fora to raise the profile of the South Asia region within the international community;
- Facilitate communication and the dissemination of information for scientific purposes, and support regional and national public awareness raising campaigns to highlight the plight of coral reefs;
- Actively support community and gender balance activities and partnerships for sustainable and equitable use of coral resources for increased livelihood security.
- Actively support, and advance, where appropriate, the deliverables of the South Asia MCPA Project, funded by the European Union, under which the SACRT was established.

Plan for Implementation

The SACRTF will build on existing national and regional efforts and [will focus on a limited number of priority areas each year in order to maximise the impacts]. Actions under the following broad headings will be refined according to feedback from CRTFs, and used to build out the annual SACRTF work plan.

Priority Actions

Coordination

1. Lead and facilitate the development of strong multilateral linkages for all aspects of coral reef management within and between countries by engaging strategic stakeholders in SACRTF activities, and providing a focal representation for coral reef management.
2. Work alongside key national stakeholders to establish national Coral Reef Task Forces (CRTF), with multi-sector representation, to support the development of local capacity in research, management and government, coordinate communication at the national level, and serve as a platform to share information with regional initiatives.
3. Examine capacity needs, evaluate and review existing mechanisms for coral reef conservation and management, and where appropriate encourage each country to design national action plans or equivalent strategies, under the umbrella of the regional action strategy.
4. Prepare a regional coral reef action strategy, incorporating the key findings on the development and implementation of a networked system of MCPAs across the South Asia region, and identify supporting frameworks for effective implementation.
5. Initiate discussions regarding the development of a coordinated regional mandate or mechanism to more effectively respond to natural and man made disasters that affect coral reefs and associated ecosystems.
6. Designate focal points for coral reefs within the region to increase coordination potential.

Communication

1. Improve, and better coordinate reporting mechanisms nationally and within the region on all coral reef work with the aid of the South Asia MCPA Project website and other media.
2. Encourage, and support the development of capacity building and training opportunities, materials, and manuals for groups involved in coral reef programmes through skills transfer and exchange programmes.
3. Increase awareness of environmental conservation and management among decision and policy makers through lobbying and exposure visits.

Research and Monitoring

1. Identify the strengths in each country in all aspects of research and monitoring related to coral reefs. Develop a mechanism to ensure knowledge and training is shared and exchanged among the participating countries in accordance with needs.

2. Encourage each country to effectively establish national monitoring programmes for coral reefs and associated ecosystems, and recommend better coordination within and between countries in the region in the design and implementation of monitoring programmes.

3. Promote both biophysical and socio economic assessment/monitoring and more effective coordination with regional and international monitoring programmes.

Policy

1. Undertake a review of existing policy related to coral reef management and conservation in the region, in collaboration with the SACRTF Patron, and present the findings to authorities to influence the review of existing legislation and policy change at the national level as appropriate.

2. Elevate the South Asia experience to the international level by engagement in ICRI. The SACRTF will select a representative to participate in ICRI General Meetings.

3. Raise awareness of the need for political engagement in coral reef management through high-level political segment meetings. The SACRTF will present specific agenda items at each SACEP Governing Council meeting to raise awareness of needs, and develop political will in support the SACRTF.

4. Identify strategic partnerships and linkages at the regional and international level (e.g. ICRI), and review recommendations and other relevant information from regional and international initiatives, in order to develop responsive and informed action plans.

Fundraising

1. Raise the profile of coral reefs issues, and successful initiatives in the region in order to garner support from donor community and attract funds.

2. Identify and package existing or new activities to create a regional effort in support of the International Year of the Reef 2008, and other mass awareness raising campaigns (e.g. Earth Day, World Environment Day).

3. Develop a budget projection for the annual maintenance of the SACRTF to present to country governments, to advance the identification of a sustainable structure and funding mechanism to ensure the continuation of the SACRTF.

4. Map a meeting calendar of coral reef forums, venues and meetings, against the movements of SACRTF representatives to maximise representation of the SACRTF regionally and internationally, and facilitate linked meetings of the SACRTF where the quorum of representatives will be reached.

5. Review existing national budget allocations for coral reef conservation and management and to explore potential financial support and funding opportunities for the SACRTF.

Structure of the SACRTF

The SACRTF will be formed of a representative group of policy makers, regional experts and stakeholders. Through a consultative process, participating country governments and key regional stakeholders were requested to nominate a representative to participate in the SACRTF.

Composition

1. Government Representative(s) from each country* (12)
2. Coral Reef Ecosystem Expert, one from each country** (5)
3. CRTF Representative, one from each country*** (5)
4. [International NGO or Agency (e.g. UNEP)]
5. Member Secretary (1)
6. Patron (1)

To compensate for unforeseen changes in administration, representatives may, at any time, designate or nominate an appropriate substitute to act on their behalf, ensuring that an appropriate hand over is conducted with the incoming representative, and that other SACRTF representatives are informed in advance. To insulate the SACRTF from changes in administration, government representation should be institutionalised so that responsibilities become a function of the post and not an individual.

Organisation

1. There will be two government representatives from each country*:

- Secretary/nominee of the concerned ministry
- One nominated government representative

A Chairperson will be selected, by consensus of the SACRTF, from among the country government representatives, who will serve on a rotational basis. The Chairperson will serve for a period of one year. A full TOR will be developed to reflect the suggested role.

2. One coral reef ecosystem expert, by name, will be nominated by each country government to participate in the regional meetings and discussions of the SACRTF. The term will be a maximum of two-years. No consecutive nominations of the same representative can be made**.

3. One representative will be nominated by each CRTF to participate in the regional meetings and discussions of the SACRTF. The terms and conditions of representation will be decided at the country level. A temporary representative from the selected MCPA project site in each country may participate in the SACRTF while the CRTF is established***.

5. The Director General, SACEP will serve as the Member Secretary to provide continuity and administrative support to the SACRTF. A full TOR will be developed to reflect the suggested role.

6. Justice Weeramanry will act as the patron of the SACRTF.

Special Provisions

The SACRTF can invite national and international experts as technical advisors to the SACRTF on a case-by-case basis. The SACRTF may also invite other stakeholders of strategic importance to participate in regional meetings.

Where appropriate, and with SACRTF general agreement, special committees may be formed to address critical, emerging issues which may be region wide (e.g. social/livelihoods, coral

bleaching, natural disasters, etc.), or location specific (e.g. oil spills, point source pollution, coastal development, etc.).

Selection of SACRTF Representatives

SACRTF representatives have, or will be, nominated by governments and key regional stakeholders. Representatives should have adequate skills to provide policy, management, capacity training, or scientific advice related to marine and coastal ecosystems. Representatives should demonstrate enthusiasm for the SACRTF and its role, and must be able to participate in accordance with the identified TOR, operating procedures and SACRTF work plan. SACRTF representatives will be allocated tasks in light of their existing work commitments and their area of expertise. While a limited budget is available to support the initial establishment process of the SACRTF, defining a sustainable model is critical, as will be the in-kind support of participating institutions and individuals while the model is defined.

Administration of the SACRTF

Meetings

1. Representatives of the SACRTF will meet at least once annually. A minimum quorum of 50% of representatives should be present for each meeting.
2. Any SACRTF representative, combination of representatives, or CRTF Focal Point representative may submit agenda items, such as funding proposals or information documents, for consideration and discussion by the SACRTF representatives at meetings. Agenda items must be submitted to the Member Secretary at least 30 days prior to formal SACRTF meetings, for compilation and distribution.
3. Meetings of the SACRTF shall be conducted in each participating country on a rotational basis in consultation with SACEP.
4. The decisions of the SACRTF shall be through a consensus-based process.

Funding

Funds to support the initial establishment of the SACRTF have been generously provided by the European Union. The development of a sustainable financing strategy, by the SACRTF, will be critical to ensure the continuation of the SACRTF, and the expansion of the network to incorporate CRTFs in each participating country. SACEP currently administer the budget of the SACRTF, and will provide support in the organisation and coordination of meetings, reporting to the European Union, through UNEP and ICRAN, on progress of the SACRTF, and the dissemination of outputs.

Annex 4. 1:

South Asia Coral Reef Task Force

Terms of Reference

- Actively participate and support policy makers and decision makers to develop and implement national coral reef action plans or strategies, through the identification of needs, and capacity gaps in the implementation of existing laws and regulations;
- Actively participate and support the formulation and implementation of a regional plans, within existing frameworks, to improve cooperative management of coral reefs and associated ecosystems;
- Identify regional coral reef resource use and management needs that have an impact regionally, building on the inputs of national CRTFs, and develop collaborative management strategies to control them for the sustainable use of resources;
- Assist in the joint management of transboundary coral reef resources (e.g. GOM large marine ecosystem) through the development of strategic national (private sector, industry NGO), and regional agency linkages;
- Provide scientific input and strategic leadership to inform and influence policies, encouraging appropriate planning, the exchange of best practices, and demonstrating effective models within the region and across national boundaries;
- Identify funding and other support needed for management, equipment, and capacity building training through national, regional and global contacts, and assist, through the provision of technical advice, in fundraising for coral reefs activities and projects that will benefit the region and individual countries;
- Monitor progress of coral reef management actions, to facilitate reporting to governments of South Asian countries, donors, and other relevant forums. Garner ministerial and governmental support to address issues that arise with the implementation of existing management plans and future management needs.
- Actively participate in relevant regional and international fora to raise the profile of the South Asia region within the international community, and to highlight the achievements of the SACRTF.
- Facilitate communication and the dissemination of information for scientific purposes, and support local, regional and international public awareness raising campaigns to highlight the plight of coral reefs;
- Actively support community based and gender balance activities and partnerships for sustainable and equitable use of coral resources for increased livelihood security;
- Assist in the construction of an identity and presence of the SACRTF in the region;
- Support representatives of CRTFs in the elaboration and implementation of CRTF structure and participation;
- Work alongside SACRTF and CRTF representatives and principal stakeholders to define and implement an annual work plan, mindful of commitments of representatives, the goals of the EU project under which the SACRTF has been established, the available budget, and wider regional needs;
- Advance the work plan of the SACRTF through collaborative efforts in line with the identified priority actions;
- Participate in meetings of SACRTF; and
- Provide regular reports to donors and project partners, through the Member Secretary, compiling reports and feedback from CRTFs for the duration of the EU Project.

The Chairperson will perform the following supporting roles:

- Foster relationships and strategic partnerships to advance the work programme and financial sustainability of the SACRTF;
- Provide leadership to the SACRTF representatives, and assist in providing appropriate input into the formulation of frameworks, strategies and work plans;
- Assist in the identification of focal areas of strategic importance for the SACRTF, in collaboration with CRTFs, and in line with regional and international agreements and strategies;
- Monitor the implementation and impact of the SACRTF and CRTF work plans, and communicate with representatives to ensure the timely delivery of planned actions;
- Represent the SACRTF at appropriate functions and meetings, and work alongside representatives and the Member Secretary to promote the SACRTF at the regional and international level; and
- Attend and chair SACRTF meetings.

The Member Secretary will perform the following supporting roles:

- Convene and coordinate each regional meeting of the SACRTF, in consultation with SACRTF representatives and host country;
- Act as a focal point for SACRTF representatives and administer the budget, facilitating travel arrangements, and regional/international meeting participation;
- Administer and coordinate the SACRTF MCPA Manager Exchange Programme in collaboration with key SACRTF representatives;
- Assist in the collation of minutes, and the dissemination and coordination of the outcomes of the SACRTF meetings, and activities;
- Work alongside regional governments and SACRTF representatives to promote the SACRTF at the regional and international level, and to fundraise for the sustainable continuation of the SACRTF;
- Report to the SACRTF on a [quarterly] [semi annual] basis, to provide programmatic and financial updates to representatives; and
- Feed progress reports to partners and donors as appropriate.

In line with the role of the SACRTF described above, representatives of the SACRTF will be required to:

- Assist in the development and presence of the SACRTF in the region;
- Assist in establishing a legitimacy and sustainable financing structure to support the continuation of the SACRTF;
- Work alongside other SACRTF and CRTF representatives and principal stakeholders to define and implement an annual work plan, in line with the TOR, taking into account the commitments of representatives, the goals of the EU project under which the SACRTF has been established, the available budget, and wider regional needs;
- Identify and establish strategic linkages with international (E.g. ICRI) and regional (E.g. SAARC/SAS) processes related to coral reef ecosystem management;
- Support representatives of national CRTFs in the elaboration and implementation of CRTF structure and participation;
- Actively participate in meetings of SACRTF, and the implementation of identified actions;

- Represent the SACRTF at appropriate functions and meetings, and work alongside representatives and the Member Secretary to promote the SACRTF at the regional and international level
- Monitor the progress and impact of the SACRTF against the defined work plan, and feed information to relevant partners and donors, through the Member Secretary; and
- Facilitate linkages and dialogue between sectors, institutions, organisations and communities to maximise synergies at all levels of work on coral reefs.

Annex 4. 2:

National CRTF Constitution

Building on the constitution of the SACRTF, a simple CRTF constitution has been developed for consideration by national agencies, organisations and stakeholders, in support of the establishment of a CRTF.

CRTF – National Structure

Each participating country will establish a national Coral Reef Task Force (CRTF). Recognising that economies of scale exist between countries of the South Asia region, each country will be encouraged to define the structure and operation of their CRTF based on identified national needs, and the available capacity. It is recognised that the constitution may vary between countries. To facilitate continuity and the inclusion of critical stakeholders, it is encouraged that each CRTF consider the inclusion of representatives from the following groups:

1. CRTF Focal Point Representatives
2. National Marine and Coastal Experts
3. Government Organisations
4. Scientific Community
5. Non-Governmental Organisations
6. Resource Managers
7. Private Sector

Ideally, representation will be secured from each of the stakeholder groups listed. Some countries may wish to seek greater representation in one or more stakeholder group area depending on the local situation. Each CRTF should seek to include those people actively involved in coral reef and associated ecosystem management and conservation activities.

A CRTF Focal point should be appointed in each country, who will liaise with, and participate in, SACRTF meetings and discussions feeding national priorities and issues to the regional level.

Role of CRTF

In support of the SACRTF, each CRTF will:

- Identify priority management actions for coral reefs and associated ecosystems as listed in existing national and local management plans, and management frameworks etc.;
- Identify existing forums, committees and networks engaged in coral reef management action for the development of strategic partnerships, and in order to commence work from present levels of implementation;
- Identify shortcomings, gaps and possible causes for the lack of implementation of recommendations and stated action in national and local management plans;
- Investigate, as a priority, the shortcomings, gaps, and management challenges of participating MCPA sites selected through the EU funded project, and prioritise the issues to be addressed;
- Identify possible mechanisms or solutions for ground level action to overcome the shortcomings identified, that may be fed into regional SACRTF processes, by CRTF Focal Point;
- Facilitate implementation of the recommended actions through locally relevant organisations and government departments; and
- Identify marine and coastal resource management success stories and devise methods for capitalising on these to leverage and build political and financial support.

Role of CRTF Representatives

- Assist in the development and presence of the CRTF in the country;
- Monitor progress of coral reef management actions, to facilitate reporting to the local government, the SACRTF, donors, and other relevant forums. Garner ministerial and governmental support to address issues that arise with the implementation of existing management plans and future management needs;
- Actively participate in relevant local, national, and regional fora to raise the profile of local issues region within the marine science community;
- Explore avenues of additional funding within country for coral reef conservation and management and for the maintenance of the CRTF.
- Facilitate communication and the dissemination of information for scientific and public awareness purposes; and
- Facilitate linkages and dialogue between sectors, institutions, organisations and communities to maximise synergies at all levels of work on coral reefs

The selection and identification of CRTF representatives will be determined at the national level, in accordance with the local situation and needs.

Press Releases

South Asia Coral Reef Task Force launched

The South Asia Co-operative Environmental Programme (SACEP) launched the 'South Asia Coral Reef Task Force' recently to promote and support the protection and enhancement of South Asia individually, collectively, co-operatively.

It is also intended to encourage the judicious use of resources of the environment to alleviate poverty, reduce social economic disparities and improve the lives of the people.

SACEP is an association which came into being in January 1982 with the adoption of the Colombo Declaration and the Articles of Association of the eight member states, namely, Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, the Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka. In order to advance cooperation and coordination for the management of coral reefs and associated ecosystems in South Asia, SACEP has drawn its attention towards establishing a regional Task Force.

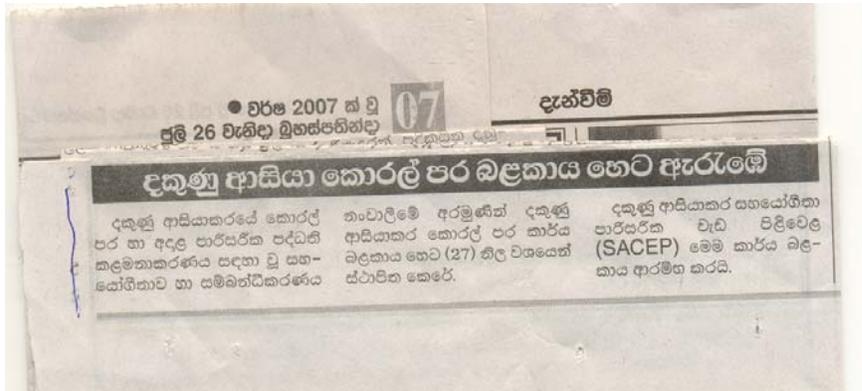
Sustainable use of coastal resources required that some coastal areas be retained in their natural state or as near to natural as possible. Marine and Coastal Protected Areas (MCPAs) are

such areas which the SACEP wishes to protect for any one or a combination of reasons for its high species diversity, biological activity, as an important ecosystem or habitat, as a sanctuary for sustaining or replenishing fish stocks, for its aesthetic value, and coastal protection for the communities exclusively dependant on the resources, said the Director General of SACEP Dr. Arvind Boaz.

The Coral Reef Task force will become the regional driving force relating site based realities to policy-makers and facilitating policy changes in line with identified needs and national priorities. As a focal body for coral reef conservation, the task force will advise on strategies in response to the growing global environmental crisis and coordinate the implementation of policy and its adherence to the objectives of Multilateral Environmental Agreements.

The Minister of Environment Energy and Water of the Maldives, Ahmed Abdullah, Director, International Coral Reef Action Network Dr. Kristian Teleki and a large number of intellectuals from the South Asian countries participated.

4 The Island
Monday 6th August, 2007



Task force to protect environment

The environment is a precious resource for the entire world. Ecosystems including coral reefs are an important part of environment and their protection is vital to the sustainability of the marine ecosystem.

The South Asia Coral Reef Task Force was launched by the South Asia Co-operative Environmental Programme (SACEP) in Colombo recently to promote and support the protection and enhancement of the environment in South Asia. The project is expected to be carried out individually, collectively and co-operatively. It will also encourage the proper use of environmental resources to alleviate

poverty, reduce socio-economic disparities and improve the quality of life of the public.

SACEP was established in January 1982 and Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka are members. Establishing a regional task force to advance cooperation and coordination for the management of coral reefs and associated eco-systems in South Asia is one of its priority areas.

For coastal resources to be sustainable, some coastal areas need to be maintained in their natural state or as near to this state as possible. Marine and Coastal Protected Areas are one such



region that the SACEP wishes to protect. Their plus points include the large diversity of species, biological activity, being an important eco-system or habitat, being a

sanctuary for sustaining or replenishing fish stocks, for its aesthetic value, or coastal protection for the communities exclusively dependant on this resource.

Most of you may know that Sri Lanka was an agricultural society in the days gone by. The island had a great agricultural civilization and was self-sufficient in its food needs. But, due to the severe setbacks faced during the colonial era because of neglect and damage of tanks and canals, we soon lost this self-sufficient position.

Now, many irrigation projects are being established to bring at least part of this lost resource back. The Weli Oya Irrigation Project, which is to be completed soon, is one such project. This project is expected to benefit 5,000 farmer families and help make use of 3,000 acres of fallow land during both seasons. Further, it's also expected to contribute over Rs. 76 million to the GNP.

The people in these areas faced many problems due to the lack of enough water to carry out their cultivation projects. The Weli Oya

Daily News.lk

Saturday, 4 August 2007

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South Asia Coral Reef Task Force launched

Dharma Sri Abeyratne

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Sustainable use of coastal resources required that some coastal areas be retained in their natural state or as near to natural as possible. Marine and Coastal Protected Areas (MCPAs) are such areas which the SACEP wishes to protect for any one or a combination of reasons for its high species diversity, biological activity, as an important ecosystem or habitat, as a sanctuary for sustaining or replenishing fish stocks, for its aesthetic value, and coastal protection for the communities exclusively dependant on the resources, said the Director General of SACEP Dr. Arvind Boaz.

The Coral Reef Task force will become the regional driving force relaying site based realities to policy-makers and facilitating policy changes in line with identified needs and national priorities. As a focal body for coral reef conservation, the task force will advise on strategies in response to the growing global environmental crisis and coordinate the implementation of policy and its adherence to the objectives of Multilateral Environmental Agreements.

The Minister of Environment Energy and Water of the Maldives, Ahmed Abdullah, Director, International Coral Reef Action Network Dr. Kristian Teleki and a large number of intellectuals from the South Asian countries participated.

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Comments and suggestions to : Web Editor.



Hon. Judge C.G. Weeramantry
Patron - South Asia Coral Reef Task Force
(on the left) with Dr. Arvind Boaz, D.G.
SACEP



Hon. Minister for Energy, Environment and
Water, Mr. Ahmed Abdullah, Republic of
Maldives delivering his speech during the
launch of the SACRTF.



Formal launch of the SACRTF by the signing of documents.

From Left: Dr. Arvind Boaz, D.G. SACEP, Hon'. Minister for Energy Environment and Water, Maldives, Mr. Ahmed Abdullah, Hon. Judge C.G. Weeramantry, Formal Vice President – International Court of Justice and Patron of the SACRTF and Dr. Kristian Teleki, Director, ICRAN



Inauguration of the SACRTF launch ceremony by the lighting of oil-lamp



Press briefing event



The second regional coordination workshop of the South Asia MCPA project being held at the Garnet Hall, Hotel Ceylon Continental, Colombo, Sri Lanka.