Provisional Programme of the MFF Symposium on Coastal Community Resilience

30-31 March 2014

Rupashi Bangla Hotel, Dhaka

This Symposium is being organized by the MFF National Coordinating Body (NCB) of Bangladesh and the MFF Secretariat with the goal of promoting cross-learning among Bangladesh, Viet Nam and Indonesia on the topic of how they are applying ecosystem-based approaches to building coastal community resilience. The Symposium will also benefit from the expert input and support of Ecosystems for Life, an IUCN project focusing on regional transboundary water management.

Mangroves for the Future

Mangroves for the Future (MFF) is a unique partner-led initiative to promote investment in the conservation of coastal ecosystems for sustainable development. Co-chaired by IUCN and UNDP, MFF provides a collaborative platform among the many different agencies, sectors and countries which are addressing challenges to coastal ecosystem and livelihood issues with the goal of promoting an integrated ocean-wide approach to coastal management.

MFF builds on a history of coastal management interventions before and after the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami, especially the call to continue the momentum and partnerships generated by the immediate post-tsunami response. It initially focused on countries worst affected by the tsunami -- India, Indonesia, Maldives, Seychelles, Sri Lanka, and Thailand -- and more recently has expanded to include Bangladesh, Cambodia, Pakistan and Viet Nam.

MFF has mangroves as its flagship ecosystem, but is inclusive of all coastal ecosystems including coral reefs, estuaries, lagoons, sandy beaches, sea grasses and wetlands.

The initiative seeks to achieve demonstrable results in influencing regional cooperation, national programme support, private sector engagement and community action. This is being realized through initiatives designed to generate and share knowledge more effectively, empower institutions and enhance governance of coastal ecosystems.

As MFF moves into its third phase, it is consolidating the experience and lessons learned over the past seven years to develop an approach moving forward which will focus on the development of resilience in coastal communities.

MFF is currently piloting this approach in Bangladesh, Indonesia and Viet Nam with a focus on building resilience of coastal communities by promoting ecosystem-based approaches and by showcasing the climate change adaptation and mitigation benefits that can be

achieved with healthy mangrove forests and other types of coastal vegetation. MFF is also working to improve governance and management of coastal resources by promoting models of co-management, Payment for Ecosystem Services (PES) and similar resource-sharing mechanisms that will benefit traditional coastal communities in the three countries.

Ecosystems for Life

Ecosystems for Life: A Bangladesh-India Initiative project is a multi-stakeholder research and dialogue process led by IUCN which seeks to promote a better understanding of trans-boundary ecosystems between Bangladesh and India by providing a platform to discuss issues common to the region. The overall goal is to enhance integrated management of trans-boundary water regimes to achieve improvements in water, food, and livelihood security in South Asia. E4L joins NCB Bangladesh and the MFF Secretariat in organizing the Symposium and will contribute its experience of cross-country learning on common resource management.

Symposium Theme: Coastal Community Resilience

Over the past decade, resilience theory has evolved as a way to characterize the ability of social and ecological systems to prepare for change and to recover and renew themselves in the face of partially known or potentially surprising changes.

In the MFF context, coastal community resilience is a priority as many coastal communities are particularly vulnerable both to ongoing natural disasters, and to climate change. Improved resilience can help human communities adapt quicker and better to change. But ultimately this ability to change and adapt will be dependent on whether natural ecosystems are healthy and themselves resilient. The combined resilience of both natural and human communities will result in true sustainability.

Coastal communities in many parts of Asia are particularly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change, with increased severity of extreme weather events directly affecting their lives and the resources they rely on for everyday survival.

Healthy coastal ecosystems, including healthy mangrove forests, will play a major part in helping coastal communities to adapt to climate change. Taking an ecosystem-based approach which includes healthy mangroves and other coastal ecosystems can make a major contribution to coastal community resilience. This is often considered as a triple-win solution to sustainable development of ecosystem-dependent coastal communities. Mangroves support biodiversity conservation and enable improvements in livelihoods and human well-being, while also providing cost-effective risk reduction against such threats as coastal erosion, storm surges and tsunamis. They also provide opportunities for climate change adaptation and mitigation.

The effectiveness of coastal governance and management mechanisms is a major factor in whether approaches like this will succeed. One problem is that mangrove conservation appears to have high opportunity costs associated with it because other uses of mangrove areas (notably aquaculture) are often more profitable in the short term and the externalities are often overlooked. Local communities, who are often the most affected by natural

resource decision making, may not have a voice and lack of coordination among sectors also gives rise to conflicts in resource management.

Investing in mangrove rehabilitation has now reached the level of national policy interest, however, and there are a number of potential new approaches which may help, including opportunities to introduce co-management, Payment for Ecosystem Services (PES) and similar benefit-sharing schemes as tangible incentives for those who protect mangroves.

The potential of mangroves to mitigate climate change impacts through their high carbon storage capacity, and by contributing to reducing emissions from deforestation and degradation (REDD), are also being investigated by MFF and its core UN partners (FAO, UNDP and UNEP). Mangroves are now included within the forest types eligible for REDD funding. Despite the fact that there are still uncertainties regarding future funding for REDD, it deserves national awareness and capacity building to secure benefits from REDD processes.

The symposium aims to draw knowledge from other MFF countries in South and Southeast Asia and to share lessons and practical solutions for tackling complex coastal issues. It will provide a platform for multi-stakeholder and multi-country dialogue on the following topics.

Session 1: Ecosystem-based approaches to building coastal community resilience

The first session will focus on the vulnerability of coastal communities, in addition to the various policy and practical options available to help them adapt to changing conditions. A Bangladesh-specific case will be presented to set the scene for identifying principles for up-scaling ecosystem-based adaptation options. A second presentation will highlight how Community-Based Adaptation (CBA) has become a global movement, and will also provide an overview on policy challenges that developing countries face in mainstreaming CBA. The presentations will be followed by an open discussion guided by the Session Chair to develop a set of recommendations that MFF can incorporate into its future operations.

Session 2: REDD+ and the way forward

The session will include a facilitated panel discussion on the latest developments in REDD+ and its potential for mangrove conservation. The session will focus mainly on national awareness and capacity-building opportunities to secure benefits from the REDD process.

Session 3: Coastal resource governance

The session will focus on ways to support better coastal resource governance at the local level. There will be an exchange of experiences around co-management systems under different governance regimes, and on how innovative policy instruments, like economic valuation and Payment for Ecosystem Services (PES), can further support better governance and conservation.

Session 4: Delta dynamics and adaptive management

Coastlines and coastal ecosystems such as mangroves are naturally dynamic and change over time. Compared to conventional coastal engineering, nature-based solutions including

the protection and restoration of mangrove forests, provide an alternative, and potentially more effective way, to build resilience though adaptive management. This session will highlight the options available for adaptive management which can enable communities to cope with change.

Session 5: Symposium Summary

At the end of the symposium, chairs from each session will present major outcomes from their respective sessions. Dr. Don Macintosh will moderate the discussion to develop a set of recommendations that MFF can potentially incorporate into future operations.

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