



Mangroves for the Future

Investing in coastal ecosystems

March - April 2011, Issue 20

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Welcome to the Mangroves for the Future (MFF) newsletter!

The MFF newsletter aims to keep MFF National Coordinating Bodies, partner organisations and other stakeholder groups, around the region and internationally, up-to-date on MFF activities and other marine and coastal news.



Ao Phang-nga Coastal Fishing Community Food Security Project in Phuket, Thailand © Piched Pandam

REGIONAL ACTIVITIES

Norwegian Ambassador expresses support for community management of ecosystems

The Norwegian Ambassador to Thailand, Cambodia, and Myanmar, H.E. Ms. Katja C. Nordgaard, together with representatives from Norad and Sida, expressed support for community involvement in ecosystem-based management during a visit to eastern Thailand on 29-30 April. The Center for People and Forests (RECOFTC) organized the Ambassador's visit to Pred Nai, in Trat Province, which included project sites where RECOFTC is currently working with the local community.

Ambassador Nordgaard was inspired after seeing the rehabilitated mangrove forest and the partnership and cooperation between community and local government leaders.

Ambassador Nordgaard acknowledged that replicable efforts such as these can yield positive results and that Pred Nai's forest stewardship is an example of ecosystem management where all involved benefit from the positive outcomes being achieved, and she hopes to see these results sustained in the future.



Her Excellency Ms. Katja Nordgaard with Pred Nai youth, southern Thailand © MFF Thailand

Mr Ola Möller, First Secretary of the Swedish Environmental Secretariat for Asia (Sida/SENSA) noted the active involvement of youth in coastal resource management, and he felt that the strong presence of young people promised sustainability for the project. He encouraged the leaders to keep the youth involvement high to ensure second line managers will be available to continue the efforts that leaders began. Norad Senior Program Officer for Development Cooperation, Mr. Chatri Moonstan affirmed Mr. Möller's sentiment.

[Read more](#)

MFF COUNTRY UPDATES

This section provides a snapshot of activities and events in the MFF member and outreach countries. Further details can be obtained from the National Coordinator in each country, please see the [MFF website](#) for their contact details.

Bangladesh

MFF gains recognition by government and civil society

Bangladesh is an active MFF Outreach country, working towards attaining full membership status in MFF. IUCN is the lead agency for MFF in Bangladesh. On 15 March IUCN held a meeting with the Honorable Secretary of the Ministry of Environment and Forest of the Government of Bangladesh to outline the range of MFF related work currently underway in Bangladesh. The Honorable Secretary Mr. Mezbah Ul Alam, expressed his appreciation for the MFF activities already undertaken.



Participants discuss sustainable coastal zone management, Dhaka © Subrata Biswas IUCN

As a follow up activity, on 11 April the Forest Department and IUCN also arranged a consultative meeting 'Sustainable Coastal Zone Management of Bangladesh through Mangroves for the Future'. High level officials participated in the meeting, joining from a range of universities, research institutes, international organizations and NGOs, and relevant agencies and departments. Participants gave important suggestions on the formation of the future MFF Bangladesh National Coordinating Body and direction for implementation and partnership.

IUCN Bangladesh also successfully showcased MFF prospects in Bangladesh at the First Bangladesh Forestry Congress 19 - 21 April. On behalf of MFF in Bangladesh, Task Manager Ms Ahana Adrika, IUCN, gave a presentation titled 'Mangroves for the Future: Creating opportunities for the coastal communities of Bangladesh' as an overview of MFF goals and activities.

India

Training to protect the Sundarbans

The Sundarbans, the largest single area of mangrove forest in the world (140,000 ha), lies within the delta of the Ganges, Brahmaputra and Meghna rivers that flow into the Bay of Bengal. To advance conservation activities in the area, a workshop entitled Training and Capacity Building in Conservation and Management of Transboundary Protected Areas of Sundarbans was held in Kolkata, India, 20-23 March.

The Directorate of Forests, MFF India and South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) nations shared their experience and knowledge on conservation and management of coastal and marine protected areas, particularly the Sundarbans. Climate change impacts on these important ecosystems were also discussed.

Dr. NM Ishwar, National Coordinator of MFF India, presented MFF regional initiatives and an overview of the proposed MFF project in the Sundarbans. This project would facilitate learning and address transboundary management and conservation issues in the Sundarbans. Representatives from SAARC countries provided ideas for closer collaboration with MFF.

Participants included coastal resources experts from Bhutan, India, Maldives and Sri Lanka; Forest Directorate Government of West Bengal; IUCN and MFF India; and Calcutta University. The workshop was organized by the SAARC Coastal Zone Management Center of Male, Maldives, in collaboration with the Directorate of Forests, Government of West Bengal, India.



Sundarbans training participants, Kolkata © SAARC

Indonesia

Community member receives national award

The Mitra Bahari Group of Pesantren Village in Pemalang, Central Java, was supported by an MFF Small Grant Facility project to conduct training on sustainable coastal management.

Ms. Suci Purnami, a young member of the group and a Kindergarten teacher in the village, was approved by the local government to represent her district at the provincial level, and then succeeded to continue on to the national completion. Ms. Purmani impressed the judging panel with the knowledge she gained during the MFF activities. Her success was also a result of her ability to demonstrate to the judges that she can measure carbon values in the environment; another skill she learned from the training. Ms. Purnami was awarded second runner up in the national Youth Pioneer in Marine Area competition.



Ms. Purnami, second runner up in the national Youth Pioneer in Marine Area competition © MFF Indonesia

Maldives

Climate Change awareness training provided to local students

As part of an MFF Large Project implemented by Live & Learn Environmental Education, Enhancing Community and Island Ecosystem Resilience through Innovative Technology and Food Security, training is being organized to help create awareness about climate change among local school students.

Ms Fathimath Shafa, the School Captain from B. Dharavandhoo, Baa Atoll, participated in the Climate Change Education training provided by the Live and Learn team. She outlined how the training has impacted her personally, as well as within the school community. "At an individual level, I understand the importance of reusing the waste from the household, especially the reusing of plastic bottles and to use cloth bags for household shopping. I have advised my family and friends not to litter the beaches and the sea.



Students from B. Dharavandhoo school with MFF Secretariat staff, Maldives © MFF Secretariat

"At the school level we are greening the schools as an annual event and promoting to care for the plants and trees inside the school compound" Shafa added.

Pakistan

Effects of Tsunami in Japan and Disaster Risk Reduction Mechanisms

MFF builds on a history of coastal management efforts before and after the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami, especially the call to sustain the momentum and partnerships generated by the immediate post-tsunami response, and to apply knowledge and best practices to assist in recovery. In the wake of the recent tsunami in Japan, MFF Pakistan provided a briefing to national media on 22 March to highlight the vulnerability of Pakistan's coastline and to discuss options for risk reduction in case of natural disasters.

MFF Regional Steering Committee Co-chair and IUCN Regional Director for Asia Ms. Aban Marker Kabraji, led the press conference, organized by IUCN Pakistan. The briefing focused on the role of greenbelts and the importance of appropriate land-use planning to help reduce the devastating impacts of a tsunami.

Ms. Marker Kabraji also shared MFF's experience in facilitating investment in coastal ecosystems after the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami. Ms. Kabraji was supported by Mr. Shah Murad Aliani, Country Representative IUCN Pakistan; Mr. Rafiul Haq, National Coordinator for MFF Pakistan; and Mr. Ghulam Qadir Shah, Coordinator Natural Resource Management.



Regional Director for Asia Ms. Aban Marker Kabraji with Mr. Rafiul Haq, National Coordinator for MFF Pakistan © IUCN Pakistan

Seychelles

Underwater cameras are the new tools for shark fishermen

The very first group of Artisanal shark fishermen has been legally registered in the Seychelles as the Artisanal Shark Fishers association (ASF) through a Small Grant Facility project implemented by Green Islands Foundation and funded by MFF. This achievement follows years of unsuccessful negotiations to bring these fishermen into a network to build their capacity and to provide them with tools to collect new data on shark species and abundance in the Seychelles' waters. Since February the fishermen have used project cameras and other basic equipment for their survey work.

Within this formal setting the fishermen will be represented effectively in the National Plan of Action for sharks and will be able to participate in decisions which may affect their livelihoods. Speaking on national television, an ASF association member challenged the stereotype and bad press received as a result of foreign vessels fishing for sharks that only cut off the sharks' fins and throw the rest back into the sea. Instead, shark fishermen in the Seychelles make full use of all parts of the shark.



Green Island Foundation delivers shark monitoring cameras to the project and National Coordinator for MFF Seychelles, Lyndy Bastienne © MFF Seychelles

Sri Lanka

Dynamics of micro-tidal estuaries and lagoons in Sri Lanka

In 2011 Sri Lanka aims to build consensus on, and partnerships for, meaningful and practical approaches to the sustainable management of the country's estuaries and lagoons. Academics and experts recently gathered to understand the dynamics of estuaries and lagoons in Sri Lanka, at Battaramulla approximately 8 km south east of Colombo. The coastline in Sri Lanka is distinguished by its micro-tidal classification, which is defined by its tidal range of less than 2 meters, a key area of interest during the discussion.

Topics discussed by the forty-one participants from 29 organizations included the main causes of the deterioration in the conditions of estuaries and lagoons; identifying lagoon systems that need urgent attention to support livelihoods of people; the type of institutional system which is most appropriate to manage estuaries and lagoons; how scientific information can be conveyed to local communities to make them stronger in dealing with decision-making; and management of seasonal inlets and the need for policy decisions to be based on economic values.

These discussions built on a previous event organised by IUCN Sri Lanka in late 2009 on mangrove rehabilitation efforts in Sri Lanka. Recommendations from the 2011 event will be made available soon. Contact the National Coordinator for MFF in Sri Lanka for further information.



Experts discuss coastal issues in Sri Lanka © MFF Sri Lanka

Thailand

Festival promotes waste management and inspires the preservation of paradise

Koh Tao in Surat Thani Province, on the eastern shore of the Gulf of Thailand, celebrated "Preserving Paradise: Save Koh Tao Festival" on 25-26 March, emphasizing the island's dedication to protect the marine and island environment.

IUCN Thailand, an active partner of MFF, supported the local Green Island Movement's "Waste Management Exhibition and Practice Demonstration" during the festival. A forum organized by IUCN brought together community leaders and members, and government representatives from Koh Tao and Surat Thani Province, to discuss waste management initiatives in schools, households, and tourism establishments.

The attendees affirmed the need for a balance between preserving Koh Tao's natural environment and developing economic opportunities from tourism and other activities. The island's current waste management program allows villagers, tourists, tour operators, and provincial authorities to maintain this balance.

Mr. Anothai Teerasingha from Makamtea Tambon in Koh Tao explained that the waste management program is a very important community-building tool for residents, especially for students and children. He mentioned that the neighboring island of Koh Phangan is also working with Koh Tao and the provincial administration for continued awareness and promotion of the waste management campaign.



Mr. Teerasingha (seated, far right) with members of the Surat Thani government, IUCN, and the Green Island Movement © MFF Secretariat

CROSS CUTTING THEMES

MFF has identified several cross-cutting themes that influence all aspects of coastal sustainability. These require action in many different fields and are integrated into each of the initiative's Programmes of Work and across projects. This section features MFF's initiatives that address knowledge management and communications, climate change and disaster risk reduction and capacity development, and events including relevant articles and scientific studies from institutional partners and leading organizations.

Knowledge management and Communication

Workshop to enhance sharing of MFF knowledge around the region

The development and implementation of a Knowledge Management and Communications strategy for each MFF member country was a decision made at the 7th meeting of the Regional Steering Committee in 2010. To achieve this objective the MFF National Coordinators were invited to meet in Bangkok for a workshop 28 March - 1 April. The goal was to align the national Knowledge Management and Communications activities to the priorities of each country's National Strategy and Action Plans and the work already outlined in the annual workplan.

During this week the National Coordinators from India, Indonesia, Pakistan, Seychelles, Sri Lanka, Thailand, and Viet Nam completed drafts of their National 2011 MFF Knowledge Management and Communications Strategy under the guidance of the MFF Regional Secretariat. The workshop also featured sessions that were helpful to the National Coordinators' additional role as MFF Communication Focal Points.



MFF National Coordinators and MFF Secretariat staff © MFF Secretariat

Climate Change and Disaster Risk Reduction in MFF

MFF and the first Seychelles National Strategy for Disaster Risk Reduction

MFF will support the Seychelles government in the preparation of a National Strategy for Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) and Preparedness with financial aid from the European Union Climate Change project. In a recent meeting with Dr. Don Macintosh, MFF Coordinator, and the Department of Risk and Disaster Management, an active member of the MFF Seychelles NCB, both have agreed to work together to help Seychelles prepare DRR action plans. MFF continues to work with national NGO's in preparing proposals that will establish community-based disaster risk reduction and management initiatives on other islands and in new coastal housing estates in Seychelles.

Promoting local innovations

Strengthening climate change resilience among coastal communities

Coastal communities have to deal continuously with changing environments. Their local knowledge and social networks can help them to adapt and take influence over changing conditions in a locally adapted and sustainable way. Identifying and promoting such local innovations can make a valuable contribution to climate change adaptation.

The most effective way to identify and promote local innovations is through dialogue and joint actions between stakeholders. Through joint learning, stakeholders can establish a shared understanding of a situation, elaborate a common vision and adjust decisions and actions accordingly.

In May 2011, the MFF Secretariat conducted a survey with MFF project managers to assess how they integrate local knowledge into their projects. The results of the survey will be used to share experience and to establish a common sense language. Furthermore it will help to identify the need for trainings on interactive and participatory tools to identify local innovations and promote joint learning for climate change adaptation.



In Sri Lanka the cultivation of Aloe Vera is a traditional practice in drought-prone coastal areas. This local innovation also represents an adaptation to climate change © Ranjith Mahindapala IUCN

RESOURCES

Publications:

Reefs at Risk - This report provides a detailed assessment of the status of and threats to the world's coral reefs. It evaluates threats to coral reefs from a wide range of human activities, and includes an assessment of climate-related threats to reefs. It also contains a global assessment of the vulnerability of nations and territories to coral reef degradation. [Get the report](#)

In a recent study conducted in 23 mangrove forest areas in the Indo-Pacific region, mangroves are among the most carbon-rich forests in the tropics with an average of 1,023 Mg carbon per hectare. This finding adds to the importance and values that mangrove ecosystems are already recognized for, through their regulating services (e.g., protection of coastal communities from storm surge, flooding) and provisioning services (e.g., fisheries production). [Read the article](#)

The Potential for Mangrove Carbon Projects in Viet Nam, report by SNV, Netherlands Development Organisation. [Download report](#)

Film:

David Without Borders, an independent group filming conservation and biodiversity issues, has featured the Banyan Tree resort in Phuket for its achievements as a business and biodiversity initiative in the Asia region. IUCN and MFF are recognized in the film credits. [View the film](#)

In the news:

The press conference held in Pakistan (highlighted in Country Updates) gained widespread media attention. A selection of the online articles are listed below.

[Daily Times](#)

[Daily Express Urdu](#)

[Pakistan Today](#)

[AmarGururo.com](#)

[IUCN Pakistan website](#)

EVENTS

22 May: Launch of United Nations Decade on Biodiversity

5 June: World Environment Day

8 June: World Oceans Day

21 - 27 August: World Water Week

13-15 September [Asian Wetlands and Beyond- Livelihood, Sustainability and Management](#), An International Convention and Workshop', Borneo Convention Centre, Kuching, Sarawak, Malaysia.

25 September: World Rivers Day

Regional Secretariat,
Mangroves for the Future