



## Mangroves for the Future E-Newsletter

Issue No: 3

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### Welcome to the third issue of the MFF e-Newsletter!

This E-Newsletter aims to keep MFF National Coordinating Bodies, partner organisations and other stakeholder groups up to date on MFF activities and news. We warmly welcome your contribution!

### Announcements

#### Newcomers



**Ms. Hanying Li** joins the MFF Secretariat, as a Senior Programme Officer, based in the IUCN Asia Regional Office in Bangkok. She will be responsible for providing support to the implementation of the MFF initiative and the day-to-day running of the MFF Secretariat. She can be contacted at: [hanying@iucnt.org](mailto:hanying@iucnt.org). Please join us in welcoming Ms. Li.

**Mr. Bhujang Dharmaji** is the newly appointed UNEP consultant for MFF and climate change. In this capacity he will assist with the development and implementation of MFF's Climate Change Programme of work and related activities.



### Recent Events

**MFF Regional Review Forum**, 21-24 April, 2008, at the Heritance Hotel, Ahungalla, Sri Lanka.

This Forum was a four day event hosted by the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources (MOENR), Sri Lanka. The Forum brought together over 60 participants, including MFF partners, focal points, donors, country representatives and MFF international and national consultants to review the MFF programmes of work (PoWs) progress and to integrate key results from the PoWs into the MFF national strategies and action plans (NSAPs). The Forum was opened by Dr. Ranjith Mahindapala, Country Representative, IUCN Sri Lanka. The Chief Guest was Mr. A. Sumanadasa (Additional Secretary), representing the MOENR Secretary.



*MFF Forum, Ahungalla, Sri Lanka.*

The Forum marked the end of the MFF inception phase and the beginning of the initiative's implementation phase. Both MFF co-chairs, Ms. Marcia Kran (UNDP) and Ms. Aban Kabraji (IUCN) emphasized the importance of the inception phase as a period paving the way for the implementation phase.

A wealth of valuable information was generated at the Forum, as well as concrete recommendations and guidance on how to proceed with the implementation phase. The Forum reflected on what MFF has achieved so far, how to fill the remaining information gaps, as well as the future direction of MFF.

A special session was dedicated to country working groups to integrate the PoW results and recommendations derived from them, and points raised at the Forum into their respective MFF National Strategy and Action Plans (NSAPs). Each country working group consisted of NCB representatives, UNDP and IUCN Focal Points, MFF Consultants and/or Secretariat Representatives. The NSAP were revised accordingly and presented at the Forum. The six MFF focal countries reported excellent progress in the development of their respective plans. The overall take home message emerging from the Forum was that MFF must remain "**partnership based, people focused and policy relevant**".



*Lightening of the traditional oil lamp*

[The MFF Regional Forum report](#)



*Halong Bay, MFF*

**Advancing Ecosystem Management and Integrated Coastal and Ocean Management by 2010 in the Context of Climate Change. 4th Global Conference on Oceans, Coasts, and Islands: April 7-11, 2008, Hanoi, Viet Nam.** Don Macintosh, and Minna Epps, MFF Secretariat, attended the Forum to promote MFF as well as to find out synergies between other projects and initiatives. [A summary report by IISD Reporting Services.](#)

**Asia-Pacific Forestry Week, 21-26 April, 2008 Hanoi, Vietnam.**

For information and reporting on the different sessions, as well as video clips please visit: <http://www.fao.org/forestry/44155/en/>

## Capacity Building

### **Sri Lanka to launch Small Grants Programme to prevent further deterioration of coastal ecosystems**

The Sri Lanka MFF National Steering Committee (NSC) is poised to launch the Small Grants Programme (SGP) in Sri Lanka. The NSC is concerned with the deteriorating state of the coastal ecosystems in the country where eutrophication is very common, and filamentous algae often choke water-ways; heavy sedimentation has led to increased shallowness of water-bodies. Drainage and tidal interventions have been disrupted due to human interventions.

In many areas mouths of estuaries/lagoons do not open regularly and some are closed for most of the time. As a result, life cycles of some organisms have been disrupted resulting in reduced stocks of shrimp, near-shore fishery and small pelagic fish. Overall, productivity has declined thereby affecting the coastal and lagoon fishery that support livelihoods of the poorest of the coastal communities.

The SGP will therefore focus its attention during the formative years to prevent further deterioration to coastal ecosystems. The interventions shall be focused on improving coastal productivity and livelihoods. Considering ecological aspects, resource-use, incidence of poverty, environmental services and products, and potential for sustainability/continuity, the NSC has decided to implement the SGP in six geographic areas, namely, **Puttalam Lagoon, Madu Ganga, Rekawa-Ussangoda-Kalametiya-Bundala area, Panama, Pottuvil and Batticaloa**. As the programme develops, it will be extended to other areas.



*Madu Ganga, Ramsar Site, MFF*

**Safer Islands**

A consultative process facilitated by IUCN Sri Lanka was employed to draft the NSAP for the **Maldives**. The NSAP takes into account the Maldives Seventh National Development Plan (7NDP). The development of safer islands will protect life and property of consolidated populations in selected larger islands. In addressing the challenges of sea level rise and multiple hazards the resilience of a safer island is founded upon coast protection engineering which by its very nature cannot be sensitive to coral reef biodiversity. However, the smaller (population less than 500) and medium islands (population 500-2000) will continue to depend upon their island ecosystem structure and functioning to support wellbeing of their inhabitants. These, therefore, would be the candidates for ecosystem-based ICM in the NSAP. The 7NDP’s safer island development will receive highest priority in the public investment programme. The NSAP integrates with and thereby complements and supplements the expectations in the 7NDP and the NSAP.

Similarly, IUCN East Africa Regional Office has assisted the Seychelles NCB to develop their draft NSAP. This document highlights the fact that the whole country consisting of 115 islands, lies within the coastal zone. Tourism and fisheries are the major economic sectors, with each contributing more than 40% of GNP. Capacity development for coastal management and sustainable coastal tourism are high priorities in the Seychelles NSAP, while the impacts from climate change are an emerging threat which the Seychelles is already responding to.

**Field and Country Visits**

**The MFF Secretariat visited Southern Thailand 28-30 April.**



Minna Epps and Don Macintosh travelled from Phuket Island to Ranong to visit several projects in Phang Nga and Ranong provinces which are helping to create alternative or additional livelihoods for local communities affected by the Tsunami. The Ranong Mangrove Research Biosphere Reserve was also visited and several fish farms including **Ban Bang Kluay Nok**.

**Ban Thung Rak** (Mangrove Forest Centre), explained their mangrove re-plantation project.



The **Ban Talay Nok** community received a post-tsunami government grant to start a small business as an alternative livelihood. The women of Ban Talay chose soap making.



Serena Fortuna, UNEP, visited Sri Lanka 28-29 April, to meet with Dr Ananda Mallawatantri (UNDP Assistant Resident Representative), Ms Tharuka Dissanaikie, Dr W.R.M.S. Wickramasinghe (Addl. Secretary - Environment & Policy) and Mr Anil Premaratne (Additional director/ Coast conservation department), to discuss country modus operandi, main geographical and thematic focus for "Building Capacity for Disaster Risk Reduction through Coastal Zone Management" project.

**MFF Forum participants visit the City of Galle, a World Heritage Site, Maduganga Ramsar Site** including their new visitor's centre, and a successful **Municipal Solid Waste management site**, next to a picturesque fishing village **Weligama**, that has sprung from an IUCN Sri Lanka small grant project funded by the Royal Netherlands Embassy. This waste management project is being replicated elsewhere in Sri Lanka



Source separation at Weligama, MFF

## Upcoming Events

### **The Third Regional Steering Committee Meeting (RSC-3), 9-10 June, 2008**

The next regional steering committee meeting will be held at Evason Resort, Pranburi, Thailand, 23 kilometres south of Hua Hin and 230 kilometres from Bangkok on 9-10 June, 2008. The aim of this meeting is to update the steering committee on the outcomes of the recent forum and to endorse the recommendations that came out of the Forum.

### **The IUCN World Conservation Congress, 5-14 October, 2008, Barcelona, Spain**

The Forum is a grand public gathering hosted by the world's conservation community, bringing together people from all over the world. More than 8,000 of the world's leading decision makers in sustainable development from governments, NGOs, business, the UN and academia will be gathered in one place for 10 days: to debate, share, network, learn, commit, vote and decide.



IUCN  
World  
Conservation  
Congress.  
Barcelona 2008.

The 800 events during the forum aim to share knowledge, build consensus, and to form new alliances and partnerships. MFF will chair a 90 minutes session on investing in coastal ecosystems. The objective of the workshop is to discuss MFF's strategy towards partnerships and programmes.

## Cyclone Nargis

***A personal reflection of the endless 12 hours of typhoon winds by Sergio Feld.***

### ***The once glorious green canopy of Yangon***

Neighbors waste no time to mend roofs, cover gaps with plastic sheeting, and start the seemingly endless task of sawing off the large tree trunks. In a country known for having one of the highest rates of deforestation, there is not a single chainsaw at work in the once glorious green canopy of Yangon. And the only billboard still intact in the city showed a Diehl chainsaw. Three days after the storm, women were seen bundling the smaller branches and carrying them on their heads. A reminder of "anicca," the Buddhist principle of impermanence; the results of destruction turned into the next opportunity.



Women in Yangon after Nargis, S. Feld, UNDP

Indeed, opportunity was instantaneous for those speculating with fuel prices, diesel costs tripled on Saturday evening and kept going higher day after day. Water pumps could not be operated but a few hours a day. It was only Sunday when we understood that whatever tragedy befell the city it paled in comparison to what the Delta had endured.



*A young boy after the cyclone  
S. Feld, UNDP*

A UN agencies meeting was held on the following Monday morning to set up “clusters” and to organize field assessments. It seems that no one was anticipating how gruesome a task the assessments would turn out to be. By Tuesday reports started trickling in from UNDP programme field staff about families of corpses floating together with bloated buffalos.

The cyclone provided me the sad privilege of witnessing the resilient spirit of the people and their immediate resolve to reconstruct their homes, their environment, and their lives. The approach of MFF to “build back better” must be extended to the communities of the Ayeyarwady Delta. In partnership with UNDP Myanmar Country Office and its network of field staff and collaborating local NGOs, MFF can help restore coastal ecosystems, regain and improve livelihoods, and enhance much-needed security. To turn tragedy into opportunity can be a good thing. It seems, is the only thing to do.

### ***The Importance of Mangroves in mitigating cyclone damage- comment by the MFF Secretariat***

From the impacts of previous typhoons/cyclones in Bangladesh and Vietnam, we know exactly how important mangroves for the protection of peoples’ lives and livelihoods. After Typhoon Linda in 1997, which claimed 1000 lives, the Government of Vietnam, assisted by international organizations, relocated households from the most vulnerable coastal areas of the Lower Mekong Delta and created a protection zone of mangroves almost 500 kilometres long.

Mangrove rehabilitation on this scale also brings significant benefits to coastal fisheries production because mangrove ecosystems are vital feeding and nursery grounds for many important fish and shellfish species. Hundreds of thousands of hectares of mangroves in the Mekong Delta had been destroyed, mainly for shrimp farming, which made the damage from this typhoon much greater. Similar large-scale clearance of mangroves for agriculture or aquaculture in the Ayeyarwady Delta seems to be one of the underlying reasons for the massive loss of life and destruction now evident in Myanmar.

Back in 1991, another major cyclone killed almost 140,000 people in Bangladesh. Physical damage and loss of life were much greater in the eastern region of the country where mangroves had been converted to shrimp ponds, whereas in the western region where the Sunderbans mangrove forest is better protected, the impact was much less.

### ***Restoring coastal ecosystems in Myanmar,***



*Healthy Mangroves close to the Mangrove Research Centre in Ranong, Thailand.*

The catastrophic damage caused by the recent cyclone accentuated the need for long-term coastal ecosystem restoration. Restoring mangroves and other coastal ecosystems is an important investment to make for the future.

Once the immediate humanitarian relief can be put into full operation in Myanmar, technical assessments will be needed to answer two main questions. 1. *What damage did the mangroves still remaining in the Ayeyarwady Delta sustain and how can they be assisted to recover?*

2. *What areas that were formerly mangrove forest should be designated for restoration in order to create an effective storm and flood protection barrier against future cyclones?* Answers to these questions will guide decisions about the actual scale and methods of mangrove restoration needed.

Even if coastal land is made available for mangrove replanting, there will be major technical, logistical and socio-economic issues to resolve. Just as important, care of the restored mangroves will depend on giving incentives for mangrove protection to local households – who must see tangible benefits from mangrove restoration if we are to gain their support.

Fortunately, payment for the mangrove planting work can be a much-needed short term benefit for coastal communities, while experiences in other countries have shown that local people often see a significant rise in fish catches linked to mangrove restoration. This is an example of the vital links between mangrove restoration and livelihoods that have to be established as part of the environmental recover effort after Cyclone Nagris.



MFF and its partners bring a wealth of knowledge from the post-tsunami experience in addressing coastal ecosystem restoration needs, particularly with respect to the role of mangroves in providing buffers to future natural disasters. The Government and international aid agencies should also give priority to restoring healthy mangroves forests in the Ayeyarwady Delta. Investing in coastal ecosystems is fundamental to sustainable socio-economic development in the region, besides reducing the vulnerability of coastal people to extreme events such as cyclones.

### Put your news in the next issue of the MFF E-Newsletter!

Do you have any news or stories that you would like to feature in the next issue of the bi-monthly MFF Newsletter? We invite you to send in your latest news and updates on projects and other activities to: [e-news@mangrovesforthefuture.org](mailto:e-news@mangrovesforthefuture.org).

### About MFF

**Mangroves for the Future (MFF)**, is a unique partner-led initiative to promote investment in coastal ecosystem which builds on a history of coastal management interventions before and after the 2004 tsunami, as well as extensive consultations with over 200 individuals and 160 institutions involved in coastal zone management. It focuses on the countries worst-affected by the tsunami; **India, Indonesia, Maldives, Seychelles, Sri Lanka, and Thailand**, as well as dialogue countries in the region that face similar issues. MFF uses mangroves as a flagship ecosystem but is inclusive of all coastal ecosystems.

MFF provides a collaborative platform among the many different agencies, sectors and countries who are addressing challenges to coastal ecosystem and livelihood issues, to work towards a common goal. Through generating knowledge, empowering institutions and individuals to promote good governance in coastal ecosystem management MFF seeks to achieve demonstrable results in influencing regional cooperation, national programme support, private sector engagement and community action.

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