



June - July, 2008

Welcome to the fourth 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!

News/Announcements

Newcomers!



Ms. Siriporn Sriaram is the newly appointed MFF Thailand NCB Coordinator will assist the Thailand National Coordinating Body (NCB). Ms. Siriporn will be based in MFF office around three days a week. She can be contacted at: vithegrt1@gmail.com.

Mr. Bhujang Dharmaji, the newly appointed UNEP consultant for MFF and climate change will assist with the development and implementation of MFF's Climate Change Programme of Work (PoW) and UNEP's Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) activities. Bhujang has experience in mainstreaming climate change into national development agenda across Asia and the Pacific including working closely with local governments. Bhujang will be based in UNEP Regional Resource Centre for Asia and the Pacific in Bangkok (RRCAP). His e-mail address is: bhujang.dharmaji@rrcap.unep.org.

Pakistan joins MFF as a dialogue country

It was announced at the recent Third Regional Steering Committee meeting (RSC-3) that Pakistan is now an official MFF dialogue country. Mr. Abid Ali, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Environment representing Pakistan at the meeting, stressed the importance of regional and international cooperation to help conserve mangroves effectively, and that MFF is the need of the hour. He also highlighted the importance of augmenting the current efforts to establish sustainable coastal ecosystems which also secure livelihoods and help in disaster mitigation.



Planted mangroves in Pakistan

UN ESCAP – Tsunami Regional Trust Fund

The Tsunami Regional Trust Fund aims to enhance tsunami early warning capabilities in Indian Ocean and Southeast Asian countries by tackling challenges such as getting messages quickly out to the coastal communities and filling the gaps in early warning systems. The UN ESCAP Tsunami Trust Fund welcomes proposals, especially with regional links. These will undergo a consolidated appraisal and will be carried out by the ESCAP Task Force and decided by the council. The **deadline** for the next round of funding is **15 Aug, 2008**.

The application form and guidelines are available at: http://www.unescap.org/pmd/tsunami_index.asp



Seagrass meadows in “hot water”

Impacts of global change threaten commercially valuable seagrass meadows, according to a report *Managing Seagrasses for Resilience to Climate Change*, launched 25 July by IUCN. Seagrass meadows are essential to commercial species such as prawns. One hectare of seagrass meadows is worth around €12,000 per year, by providing benefits like food and shelter for highly valued prawn and fish populations. Seagrasses are submerged marine flowering plants forming extensive meadows in shallow waters worldwide. Seagrasses need high light intensities to survive. Storms, flooding and coastal erosion create sediment disturbances that smother the seagrass plants. The IUCN report analyzes the threats faced by these marine flowering plants and provides survival strategies.

Seagrass can be a direct food source for turtles. Photo: MFF Secretariat.

According to the report, excessive nutrients (eutrophication) added to coastal waters may lead to algae invasions that also shade the seagrass leaves. Warmer sea water, changes in ocean acidity and higher CO₂ concentrations in the atmosphere also affect seagrasses, but the exact consequences cannot be foreseen yet. When all these global changes come together, already stressed seagrass systems will be pushed over their limit of existence, resulting in further widespread seagrass losses. By promoting new protected areas and restoring seagrass meadows to stem the causes of global change, more research into protecting these vital plants from being pushed out of existence is necessary” says IUCN.

Recent Events

MFF Third Regional Steering Committee Meeting, 9-10 June, 2008, at Evason Resort, Hua Hin, Thailand.



MFF, held its third Regional Steering Committee meeting (RSC-3) 9-10 June, 2008 at the Evason Resort, Hua Hin, Thailand. The meeting was opened by MFF co-chairs **Ms. Marcia Kran**, UNDP and **Ms. Aban Kabraji**. The meeting brought together nearly 60 participants, including MFF country representatives, partners (UN agencies and International NGO's) and donors to discuss the implementation phase of MFF programme activities. Experts from Thailand included **Prof Sanit Aksornkoe**, President of Thailand Environment Institute (TEI), **Dr. Thanpuying Suthawan Sathirathai**,

Chair of the Good Governance for Social Development & the Environment Institute (GSEI) and **Dr. Nisakorn Kositratna**, Director General and **Dr. Sonjai Havanond**, Mangrove Expert, of the Department of Marine & Coastal Resources, Ministry of Natural Resources & Environment.

Progress

The most significant progress presented at this meeting was that each country has now prepared a draft MFF National Strategy and Action Plan (NSAP); Small Grant Facility (SGF) guidelines produced by the secretariat are being adopted for national use; and Large Project guidelines were endorsed, as well as a draft MFF Communications Strategy. A progress report was presented by each country. A full account of the country progress reports will soon be available on the MFF website (www.mangrovesforthefuture.org).



Participants enjoying a tour in the Evason herbal garden

Encouraging Environmentally Sustainable Business Practices in coastal areas

Encouraging environmentally sustainable business practices in coastal area is one of MFF's PoW. Its main aim is to build on existing Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives and encourage coastal ecosystem investment amongst private stakeholders that will complement MFF's work with the public sector.

Great interest among the business sectors to identify ways of promoting sustainable opportunities and practices to develop new environmental markets, thereby creating new opportunities for profit-making was revealed during MFF consultations. Sustainable activities are being adopted by the private sector as additional areas of operation and, accordingly, should be incorporated into MFF activities

The participants heard from the **Six Senses Spa Hotel Group** on how to stimulate private sector involvement in conservation and sustainable development initiatives. The RSC-3 participants were impressed with the group's commitment and dedication to corporate social responsibility (CSR).



Field Visit

The Evason Resort Hua Hin together with the MFF Secretariat organized a visit for participating delegates to the **Sirinart Rachinee Mangrove Ecosystem Learning Center**, 3 kilometres from the resort. The learning center was opened in late 2007 under HM The King's Initiative, together with the National Park Wildlife and Plant Conservation Department and the local communities. This learning center enables visitors to see beautiful mangroves restored on land that was formerly abandoned shrimp farms. The rehabilitated area covers 848 Rai (136 Ha) and is once again productive mangrove forest rich in biodiversity and aquatic life.

Participants at the Sirinart Rachinee Mangrove Ecosystem Learning Center

Advanced Coastal Management course in Integrated Coastal Zone Management

Minna Epps and Serena Fortuna, MFF Secretariat joined the *Summer Institute in Advanced Coastal Management Course at the Coastal Resources Center, University of Rhode Island*. This intensive three week programme for coastal resource management professionals focused on the planning and implementation challenges associated with coastal management in the light of climate change. It provided a unique opportunity to understand emerging issues, learn about good practices, and gain practical skills to design, implement and evaluate ICM programmes, as well as to share experiences with peers from around the world.



Field visit to an oyster farm in Rhode Island

Disaster Risk Reduction

Building Capacity for Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) through Coastal Zone Management

Asia is one of the regions hardest hit by natural disasters. According to the Intergovernmental Panel for Climate Change's (IPCC's) Fourth Assessment report climate change will increase the frequency and intensity of climate related hazards. In addition to the tragic effects on lives and livelihoods, disasters set back years of development gains. DRR is a key element of climate change adaptation and strengthens the resilience of coastal communities.

Measures must be taken to address the underlying vulnerabilities. Reducing disaster risk in coastal communities requires active participation of a broad cross section of stakeholders – the engagement of coastal zone managers and allied environmental professionals is essential for success.

The MFF initiative provides a rare opportunity to prepare government representatives, coastal zone managers and other practitioners in the region to effectively integrate DRR in programme planning and implementation, as well as to substantially contribute to long-term sustainable coastal development.

UNEP is taking the lead in building DRR capacities of coastal zone managers in the region together with UNISDR with the financial support from the European Commission AIDCO Project "Building Resilience to Tsunamis in the Indian Ocean". The project "**Capacity Building to Integrate Disaster Risk Reduction into Coastal Zone Management**", works with regional and national stakeholders through MFF focusing on India, Indonesia, Sri Lanka and the Maldives. National training activities aim to build capacity of coastal zone managers to design and implement projects that enhance the protection of lives and livelihoods while improving environmental quality and protecting ecosystem services.



Coastal flooding, Indonesia, © IUCN / Jeffrey McNeely

Discussions are currently being undertaken with India, Indonesia and Sri Lanka for the national components of the project and with Asia Disaster Preparedness Centre (ADPC) for the regional component. The project will further contribute to the DRR component of the forthcoming MFF Regional Training Course, 27-31 October, in Semarang, Indonesia planned to deliver training in practical tools and methods applicable at the field/project levels.

Green Coast: successful and cost-effective approach for disaster risk reduction

Green Coast, a post-tsunami coastal restoration programme led by Wetlands International, (WI) and its partners WWF, IUCN and Both ENDS has proven to be a highly cost-effective and successful approach to DRR. As a widely tested approach in response to the 2004 Tsunami, Green Coast is being promoted by WI for large scale implementation at tropical coasts worldwide, as a cost-effective approach to adapt to the impacts of climate change such as extreme weather events and salt water intrusion.



The 4.3 million Euro Green Coast programme, funded by Oxfam, has recently been evaluated by a team of independent consultants from the Netherlands and Sri Lanka. One of the main conclusions that emerged from the external evaluation of Green Coast was that it has been of particular high value for closing the gap between immediate humanitarian relief and successful long-term recovery of livelihoods of the tsunami affected people. The programme was also praised for 'its successful gender approach: of the direct beneficiaries about 59% were women'.

Green Coast's key objective is to rehabilitate the livelihoods of coastal communities through the restoration of coastal ecosystems. The programme uses a science-based and community-led approach where coastal restoration work is done by affected communities themselves. These are then rewarded for their work with small financial capital and technical support to rebuild their livelihoods.

In 3 years, these communities, supported by local NGOs, CBOs and Green Coast partners, managed to re-establish 1,100 hectares of coastal and mangrove forest, restore and protect 100 ha of coral reef and sea grass beds, 2.5 km of sand dunes and clean up more than 1,000 drinking water wells. This has improved the livelihoods and environmental security of over 90,000 tsunami affected people. For more information visit: <http://global.wetlands.org/>.

Photo above: Man trying to make a supplementary livelihood from selling fresh cinnamon to visitors to the Ramsar site, Maduganga, Sri Lanka. © MFF Secretariat

The IUCN World Conservation Congress (WCC)

5-14 October, 2008, Barcelona, Spain

The IUCN World Conservation Congress is the birthplace of ground-breaking environmental conventions, scientific discoveries and global impact international initiatives. Examples are: CBD, RAMSAR, CITIES. The Congress will bring more than 8,000 leading sustainable development decision-makers to Barcelona this coming October. The WCC will be a landmark event in 2008. For more information and to register, please visit: www.iucn.org/congress.

From Bangkok to Barcelona - WCC Press Briefing

The MFF Secretariat is organizing a Press brief on WCC and Thailand at the Foreign Correspondents Club Thailand (FCCT), 03 September, 2008 at 10.30am with invited key Thai experts and government representative speakers who will discuss pressing environmental problems and how Thailand can benefit from this event. The event will be open to the members of the press and to the general public.

World Conservation Forum 6-9 October

The Forum offers four days of debates, workshops, dialogues, art and film, roundtable discussions, training courses, music and exhibitions to share knowledge, to build understanding and consensus, and to form new alliances and partnerships. The events are centered around the following three streams:

- A new climate for change
- Healthy environments - healthy people
- Safeguarding the diversity of life

More than 400 events will take place during the four days of the Forum. About 90% of them are organized by IUCN members, Commissions and partners and the rest by the IUCN Secretariat. The MFF Secretariat will hold a 90 minutes session, *Mangroves for the Future – A Unique Partnership for Healthy Coasts, Ecosystems and Communities in the Indian Ocean* under the “Healthy Environments- Healthy People” theme **Thursday 9 October** at 09.30. The objective of the workshop is to discuss MFF’s strategy towards partnerships and programmes. A press conference will be held directly after the workshop session.



IUCN
World
Conservation
Congress.
Barcelona 2008.

Applying Project Cycle Tools to Support Integrated Coastal Management – Training Course, 27 – 31 October, 2008, Semarang, Indonesia.

The Indonesian NCB will host a technical training course in Semarang, Central Java, 27-31 October, 2008. This training course is intended for natural resource managers and project staff who are engaged in various aspects of coastal zone management, especially coastal and marine conservation, community-based management, and sustainable natural resources utilisation.

The week-long course will encompass training in practical tools and methods applicable at the field/project levels. The following tools and methods will be presented within three main thematic areas, supported by one or more training modules.

- Economic valuation of coastal ecosystems, and sustainable financing of Protected Areas.
- Livelihoods and community participation in coastal resources management.
- Coastal Climate Change considerations and Disaster Risk Reduction.

The modality of the training course will be a combination of plenary presentations, parallel working groups and field work sessions. The emphasis will be on interactive learning involving practical demonstration and use of the tools and methods in real life situations. For more information please contact: Dr. John Poulsen, MFF focal point for Indonesia, poulsen@iucn.org; +66-892028690.

Ms. Ida Kusuma; NCB Indonesia MAFF, ida-k@dkp.go.id; ida-k@centrin.net.id; +62-816721516;

Scientific and Technical Symposium on Sustainable Mangrove Ecosystem Management,

22-25 November 2008, Tinidee Hotel Ranong, Southern Thailand

The Symposium is co-hosted and organized by the Department of Marine & Coastal Resources (DMCR), Thailand and Mangroves for the Future (MFF) Secretariat, in collaboration with the Asian Institute of Technology (AIT), cenTER (University of Aarhus), Good Governance for Social Development and the Environmental Institute (GSEI), International Society for Mangrove Ecosystems (ISME), Thailand Environment Institute (TEI), and Wetlands International (WI).



Mangrove forest in the Ranong area, © MFF



Tinidee Hotel Ranong

The Symposium will address sustainable management issues affecting mangrove ecosystems throughout the Indian Ocean Region, and how local communities can be better informed and involved in sustainable mangrove management as a way to protect their traditional livelihoods.

The objective of the Symposium is to improve the ability and national capacity of Thailand and the other MFF focal and dialogue countries to share information and experiences on how to apply knowledge more effectively to support management in a way that is both sustainable and beneficial to local people. This encompasses knowledge derived both through scientific research, and from traditional/local knowledge.

The Thai NCB will invite Myanmar NGOs working in the Delta to attend the Ranong regional mangroves symposium for a discussion on transboundary mangrove ecosystem management in the Kraburi River Estuary.

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.

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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