

ANNEX 10: REPORT OF THE FIFTH MEETING OF THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE, 18-19 AUGUST 2008 (and Addendum)

Present: Five (of seven) members of the Advisory Committee: Jack Frazier (Chair), Ali Al-Kiyumi, Bundit Chokesanguan, George Hughes, Colin Limpus.

Invited experts (part-time): Patricia Davis, Mark Hamann, Ronel Nel, Sudarshan Rodriguez, Clevo Wilson. **Observers** (part-time): Signatory States – Donna Kwan, Franco Alvarez (Australia); Abdullah Hamod Abo Al-Fotooh (Yemen); Alexis Gutierrez (United States); Robert Hepworth (UNEP/CMS Secretariat). **Secretariat** (part-time): Douglas Hykle.

Agenda item 1: Welcoming remarks

1. Opening the meeting, Dr. Frazier welcomed the members of the Advisory Committee (AC), as well as the invited experts and Signatory State observers, and expressed apologies on behalf of Jeanne Mortimer and Nyawira Muthiga.

Agenda item 2: Adoption of agenda and schedule

2. The agenda (Annex 1) was adopted without amendment; however adjustments to the schedule were introduced to accommodate the length of some of the discussions.

Agenda item 3: Secretariat overview of arrangements for the Fifth Meeting of Signatory States

3. The Coordinator, Douglas Hykle, provided an overview of arrangements for the Signatory State meeting, noting that all Signatories except the Islamic Republic of Iran were expected to attend. The Secretariat had worked closely with the Indonesian Ministry of Marine Affairs and Fisheries and WWF-Indonesia on the logistical arrangements. For the first time, the meeting would incorporate two thematic workshops, to allow for focussed discussions on coastal development and fisheries interactions – both identified as priority issues in the IOSEA region. Also, more time for sub-regional consultations had been built into the schedule. The Coordinator advised the meeting on prospects for signature of additional Signatory States, of which there were several, including Yemen, which was expected to sign the MoU at the present meeting.

Agenda item 4: Summary of Committee members' marine turtle activities since SS4

4. The Chairman had consulted with each of the AC members prior to the meeting in order to compile an extensive list of turtle conservation-related activities, publications and presentations undertaken by members individually since the Fourth Meeting (on file with the Secretariat).

Agenda item 5: Discussion of SS5 agenda items requiring AC advice/intervention

Sub-regional consultations

5. The meeting reviewed the outline that the Secretariat had circulated in advance to inform participants of what to expect in the sub-regional consultations scheduled for the afternoon of 20 August. Members were briefed on their roles as group facilitators.

Overview of IOSEA MoU implementation

6. The Coordinator presented the main findings from the comprehensive review of implementation prepared by the Secretariat prior to the meeting (document MT-IOSEA/SS.5/Doc.6), which were summarised in a two-page Executive Summary. It was evident that the IOSEA Online Reporting Facility already contained enormous amounts of information from member States. A lengthy discussion followed on how best to make use of this information for practical conservation purposes. A number of points emerged from the discussion:

- 1) There was a need to enhance appreciation of the value of the reporting process: in particular, the value of the information and the usefulness of the IOSEA reporting system for organising, compiling, and analysing information. It was agreed that the Advisory Committee had a role to play in promoting the value of this work.
- 2) It was important for the system to incorporate information from diverse sources (e.g., research, conservation, education, etc., activities by universities, NGOs, etc.).
- 3) One of the system's greatest strengths was its ability to provide a unique regional perspective, moving beyond the more limited viewpoint of individual countries.
- 4) Standardisation of information, data protocols, etc., was important in order to facilitate regional comparisons.
- 5) Increasingly, as more data became available, the system should be used to evaluate trends over time.
- 6) The current reporting template was largely silent on the issue of climate change, and consideration should be given to addressing this weakness by adding a few well-formulated questions.
- 7) It was proposed that students/interns might be tasked with analysing the information from each question even more thoroughly, to maximise the value of contents of the national reports.

IOSEA Site Network concept

7. The Coordinator introduced MT-IOSEA/SS.5/Doc.6.2 which outlined a proposal for a network of sites of importance for marine turtles. The basic concept was to encourage governments to give formal recognition to important sites for turtles that might not otherwise receive national or regional attention. The committee debated at length the nature and purpose of such a "network" or "list" of sites, and explored also the possibility of according recognition to regionally important turtle populations as well as special contributions towards marine turtle conservation. After some discussion, it was agreed that the latter would best be dealt with through a letter of appreciation, which Dr. Hughes undertook to draft in consultation with the delegations present.

8. The Committee agreed that the primary objective of the site network or IOSEA list was to: ***'promote the long-term conservation and protection of sites of regional value for the conservation of marine turtles and their habitats'***. This goal would be achieved through formal recognition of particular sites, with a view to building political and public support for their protection; capacity-building and technical support (e.g., through information exchange with other sites, and possibly joint activities/personnel exchanges); and new sources of financial support, which a collective initiative might hope to bring.

9. The Committee also developed a provisional list of criteria which would form the basis for inclusion of sites in the IOSEA list. It was proposed that sites be required to meet a certain minimum threshold or number of criteria for listing. The details of the Committee's deliberations are reflected in Annex 2, which the Secretariat proposed to circulate to the Meeting of the Signatory States for further consideration.

Species Assessments update – Loggerhead and Green turtle reports

10. Dr. Hamann explained the lack of progress made on the preparation of the Loggerhead status assessment, on account of a poor response rate from questionnaire recipients. The Committee agreed that it was still important to undertake the assessments for Loggerheads and Green turtles, sequentially, and agreed an alternative way forward making use of national report information contained the IOSEA data base, supplemented by other sources.

Coastal development and fisheries interactions workshops

11. The Committee reviewed the presentations of invited experts Clevo Wilson and Sudarshan Rodriguez which had been requested for the two separate workshops planned for 21 and 22 August.

The Committee also considered the texts of draft resolutions that might be introduced to highlight some of the key issues identified at the workshops.

Agenda item 6: Enhancing intersessional communications of the Advisory Committee

Agenda item 7: Future activities and priorities of the Advisory Committee

12. In view of the length of time spent discussing a number of the other important agenda items, the Committee did not address these issues separately, however they were partly covered in the course of other discussions.

Agenda item 8: Oral report of the Chair to the Meeting of Signatory States

13. It was noted that the Chairman would be invited on 20 August to report to the Meeting of the Signatory States on the activities of the Advisory Committee since the last meeting, including its deliberations at the present meeting.

Agenda item 9: Other business

14. There being no other items of business, the Chairman thanked participants for their contributions and adjourned the meeting.

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ADDENDUM

1. By tradition, the Advisory Committee convenes briefly following the close of the Meeting of the Signatory States, primarily to discuss arrangements for the chairmanship. A number of existing, outgoing and new members did meet informally on 24 August 2008, however their number was insufficient to form a quorum.

2. The current chair, Dr. Frazier, indicated that he would be willing to continue as Chair, if requested and endorsed by his peers. It was therefore agreed that the Secretariat should write to the Committee to indicate Dr. Frazier's willingness to continue to serve, while giving other members an opportunity to express an interest within a defined time frame (30 September 2008).

3. In accordance with this procedure, Dr. Frazier was duly re-confirmed as Chair of the Advisory Committee for another term.

Annex 1

**FIFTH MEETING OF THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Bali, Indonesia, 18-19 August 2008****PROVISIONAL AGENDA and SCHEDULE****Monday, 18 August: Morning session**

1. Welcoming remarks
2. Admission of observers and adoption of the agenda
3. Secretariat overview of arrangements for the Fifth Meeting of the Signatory States (SS5)
4. Committee members to summarise their regional marine turtle activities undertaken since SS4 (updates to provide basis for Chair's report to the SS5 plenary)
5. Discussion of SS5 agenda items that may require Advisory Committee advice/intervention
 - (a) Sub-regional consultations: suggestions for enhancing outputs and follow-through
 - (b) Capacity building in the IOSEA region

Monday, 18 August: Afternoon session

- (c) Overview of IOSEA MoU implementation (Doc.6) and site-based information (Doc.6.1)
- (d) IOSEA Site Network concept (Doc.6.2)

Tuesday, 19 August: Morning session

- (e) Species Assessments update – Loggerhead and Green turtle reports (Mark Hamamn)
 - general discussion on the way forward
- (f) Coastal development workshop
 - brief summary of keynote presentation (Clevo Wilson)
 - brief summary of presentations concerning projects in India (Sudarshan Rodriguez)
 - general discussion on the workshop, with suggestions on enhancing output and follow-through
 - review of draft resolution(s)
- (g) Fisheries-interactions/mitigation workshop
 - overview of the workshop programme (Secretariat)
 - general discussion on the workshop, with suggestions on enhancing output and follow-through
 - review of draft resolution(s)

Tuesday, 19 August: Afternoon session

6. Comments on enhancing intersessional communications of the Advisory Committee
7. Future activities and priorities of the Advisory Committee
8. Oral report of the Chair to the Meeting of Signatory States
9. Other business

Annex 2**IOSEA Advisory Committee considerations in relation to the Proposal for a Network of Sites of Importance for Marine Turtles (Doc.MT-IOSEA/SS.5/Doc.6.2)**

The Third Meeting of the Signatory States broadly supported the idea of a network of sites of importance for marine turtles. Advice was sought from the Advisory Committee regarding the development of criteria for the selection of sites. For various reasons, it has not been possible to revisit this issue until the meeting of the Advisory Committee held immediately prior to the Fifth Meeting of Signatory States.

Although tasked primarily with the elaboration of the site selection criteria, the Advisory Committee also discussed at length the basic concept of the “network”, reviewing possible alternative connotations, such as an “award” or “recognition” or “certification” scheme. After exhaustive discussion, the Advisory Committee proposed a neutral title for the scheme, along the lines of “IOSEA list of sites of critical importance to marine turtle conservation”; and proposed a complementary (additional) recognition scheme to acknowledge other special efforts or activities among the IOSEA membership. The latter will be covered in a separate note.

The Advisory Committee defined the objective of the “IOSEA List” as follows:

To promote the long-term conservation and protection of sites (areas, spatial units) of regional value/importance for the conservation of marine turtles and their habitats (where such areas need not be limited to nesting beaches, but could also include foraging and other areas).

The following benefits would be expected to flow from a site listing:

- Enhanced recognition among decision-makers and other stakeholders;
- Direct financial and logistic support from new sources of external funds;
- Increased opportunities for international collaboration, including technical assistance, training and capacity-building.

As explained in the original site network proposal, site nominations would be formally submitted by the Government of an IOSEA Signatory State. The Advisory Committee has recommended that qualification for listing be based on a site meeting a certain number (but not necessarily all) of the agreed listing criteria. This would mean that sites meeting only two or three criteria would not be eligible for listing (thus achieving a certain degree of exclusivity or special status for listed sites); but meaning also that a site could qualify for listing without necessarily fulfilling all criteria. (The precise threshold has not yet been defined.)

Maintenance in the list would imply a minimum level of compliance with the original selection criteria. Listing a site would not imply any legal obligations, unless the Signatory State specifically wished to endorse it within its own legal structures.

Provisional list of criteria for site listing (as developed by the Advisory Committee, with further elaboration of details still needed):

Regional value of a given site (i.e., geographic location, area, spatial unit) is defined by a combination of a certain number (not necessarily all) of the following criteria. In other words, sites would be evaluated on the basis of the following characteristics:

A. Ecological and biological significance of the site:

1. Presence of management units (species/populations/genetic stocks) of critical importance;
2. Number (or proportion, in terms of genetic stock) of:
 - a. species (management units);
 - b. clutches/hatchlings/recruits per unit of time;
 - c. turtles;
 - d. life stages.

B. Current protection and management status:

1. Legal protection for the site and for the species present;
2. Management and conservation effort for the sites and for the species present.

C. Research and monitoring significance of the site:

1. Index beach/site;
2. Number of years of available data;
3. Availability of population trends.

D. Socio-political importance:

Social aspects:

- a. cultural and traditional importance of the site;
- b. economic (development) activities, human impacts and risk;
- c. educational value;
- d. national importance;
- e. relevant history.

E. Relevance/significance of the site to overall conservation goal of IOSEA.

The Advisory Committee concluded that while details of some aspects of the proposal have yet to be elaborated, it would not be desirable to defer its further development to the next meeting. The Committee also discussed the issue of the level within Government at which the overall site listing proposal should be endorsed; with some members holding the view that it need not be endorsed at Ministerial level.