

PHYSICAL MECHANISM ON THE ASEAN SEA-TURTLE RESEARCHER NETWORK

by:

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BACKGROUND

A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on ASEAN Sea Turtle Conservation and Protection was agreed upon by the ASEAN Ministers responsible for Agriculture and Forestry (AMAF) on 12th September 1997 in Bangkok. The countries that took part in this prestigious ceremony (in alphabetical order) were:

- The Government of Brunei Darussalam
- The Government of the Republic of Indonesia
- The Government of Lao People's Democratic Republic
- The Government of Malaysia
- The Government of the Republic of the Philippines
- The Government of the Republic of Singapore
- The Government of the Kingdom of Thailand
- The Government of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam

The details of this memorandum can be examined under Annex 2 of the "Report of the Workshop on ASEAN Sea Turtle Conservation and Protection Programme", which was conducted from 4 - 5 December 1997 in Jakarta, Indonesia.

Article IV of this memorandum emphasizes that "... all matters or issues concerning sea turtles conservation and protection shall be subjected to the existing national laws and regulations of each Party (to this MOU)." Moreover, "when necessary, Parties to this MOU would consider harmonizing their existing national laws and regulations and enact new laws on sea turtle conservation and protection to suit with current situations."

Article V designates Malaysia as a Co-ordinator under this MOU to "... co-ordinate and implement the proposed mechanism in Article IV when this MOU enters into force and report directly to the ASEAN Fisheries Working Group."

Article V(4) further states that "ASEAN member countries, recognizing the Southeast Asian Fisheries Development Center (SEAFDEC) as the competent technical regional organization on marine issues in the ASEAN region, shall seek close cooperation and collaboration with SEAFDEC in undertaking its sea turtle conservation and protection program."

Article VI states that "each Party (to this MOU) shall designate an appropriate agency to co-ordinate with the Co-ordinator as specified in Article V." And that "the co-ordinations and linkages among the Parties under this MOU shall be done on a networking basis."

Article VI thus provides the required mandate for the formation of a physical mechanism on the ASEAN sea turtle researcher network, which *inter alia* would facilitate closer cooperation and rapport between members of this network working on this program for the benefit of the region.

FORMATION OF A SEA TURTLE REGIONAL NETWORK

The call for greater level of communication and better information flow between countries of the Southeast Asian region is not exactly new. Indeed, the 1st Regional Workshop on Marine Turtle Research and Conservation, conducted from 15–18 January 1996 by SEAFDEC MFRDMD and participated by members of ASEAN countries, had been made aware of this particular need. One of the recommendations approved at this workshop was the need to develop an effective information exchange among members to facilitate better communication. Such activities can perhaps be improved through the setting up a proper network or by relying on existing ones.

For the establishment of this network to be successful, cooperation from ASEAN members involved in the implementation of the sea turtle conservation and protection program is very much required. *Pending approval of this distinguished meeting*, we propose that this network be named the SEAFDEC-ASEAN Marine Turtle Conservation Network (SAMTCN) which should encompass turtle experts and non-experts alike from the ASEAN member countries. Individuals and even corporate bodies are accepted for free membership to this Network *irrespective* of their educational background but should nevertheless have one distinctive common feature in their mind - the great *desire* to work together with other members towards the conservation and protection of the marine turtle. These people could come from different occupations such as managers, researchers, fishermen, students, stake holders, vendors and even the common laymen that at one time or another come into contact with the turtle. SEAFDEC MFRDMD shall be the active Co-ordinator for the establishment and subsequent expansion of this Network.

SAMTCN is thus expected to have a large group of followers and may be distinguished from the ASEAN Marine Turtle Specialist Network (AMTSN), which was proposed to be set up at the First ASEAN Symposium Workshop on Marine Turtle Conservation, held in Manila, Philippines from December 6-10, 1993. Representatives to this workshop were from Malaysia, Indonesia, the Philippines and Thailand. Dr. Colin J. Limpus, the IUCN marine turtle specialist, was the resource person and adviser for the workshop. SAMTCN welcomes the active participation from the AMTSN members.

SOME EXPECTED ADVANTAGES OF THE REGIONAL NETWORK

Some distinguishing advantages that are being planned for the SAMTCN members include internal and external communication with other global marine turtle networks such as the Global Marine Turtle Specialist (see Annex I); information dissemination relating to turtle proceedings; greater awareness of the current plight of marine turtles in the region; opportunity to provide comments and receiving feedback on matters pertaining to turtle research, conservation and management; and active participation in the open forum created under this networking. Moreover, the various global homepages on the marine turtle previously established by other relevant agencies could be linked up regionally for the benefit of members.

Further considerations on the various features of this regional networking proposal will ensue in the Discussion Session after the presentation.

A sample of the information form that needs to be filled up for membership to SAMTCN is provided as Annex II. Participants are requested to provide the various particulars in this form to enable them be included in the Network.

GLOBAL MARINE TURTLE SPECIALIST

Names	Organization
Alberto Abreu	BITMAR Estacion Mazatlan I.C.M.I./U.N.A.M. Apartado Postal 811 Mazatlan, Sinaloa 82000 MEXICO
Gorge Balazs	National Marine Fisheries Service 2570 Dole Street Honolulu, 111 96822-2396 USA
Karen Bjorndal	Archie Carr Center For Sea Turtle Research Bartram Hall, University of Florida Cainesville, FI 32611 USA
Eng-Heng Chan	Fisheries and Marine Science Centre Universiti Pertanian Malaysia Mengabang Telipot 21030 Kuala Terengganu MALAYSIA
Anny Chaves	Apdi, 18-3019 San Pablo, Heredia COSTA RICA
Deboran Crouse	Center for Marine Conservation 1725, DeSales Street NW #500 Washington, DC 20036, USA
Mariano Gimenez Dixon	World Conservation Union – IUCN Rue Mauverney 28 C11-1 196 Gland SWITZERLAND
Marydeke Donnelly	MTSG Office C/o Center for Marine Conservation 1725, DeSales Street NW #500 Washington, DC 20036, USA
Carlos Hasbun	Ministerio de Agriculturay Ganaderia Centro de Recursos Naturales Apartado Postal 2265 Canton El Matasano Soyapango, EL SALVADOR
Kazuo Horikoshi	Ogasawara Marine Center PO Box 404 Chichi-jima, Ogasawara-mura Tokyo 100-21 JAPAN

Names	Organization
Rhema Kerr	Hope Zoo Ministry of Agriculture Hope Garden JAMAICA
Colin Limpus	Conservation Strategy Branch Queensland Dept. of Environment and Heritage PO Box 541 Capalaba 4157 AUSTRALIA
Neca Marcovaldi	Fundacao Pro-TAMAR Caixa Postal 2219 Salvador Bahia, CEP 41911 BRAZIL
Dimitris Margaritoulis	Sea Turtle Protection Society PO Box 51154 14510 Kifissia GREECE
P. Mohanty-I Hejmadi	Department Of Zoology Utkal University, Vani Vihar Post Box No. 86 G.P.O. Bhubaneswar 751004 Orissa INDIA
Rodney Salm	IUCN – The World Conservation Union Regional Office Eastern Africa PO Box 68200 Nairobi KENYA
Joop P. Schulz	WORP 3 7419 AB Deventer NETHERLANDS
Charles Tambiah	1867, Cavendish Court Charlotte, NC 28211 USA
Romeo B. Trono	PO Box U.P. 209 University of the Philippines U.P. Campus, Diliman, Quezon City 1101 PHILIPPINES
Jack Woody	1748, Black River Drive Rio Rancho, NM 87124 USA
Bert David - Strategic planner Susan Warner - Strategic planner	The Lead Alliance 4208, Evergreen Lane, #215 Annandale, VA 22003 USA

**A SAMPLE OF INFORMATION FORM FOR
THE ELECTRONIC NETWORK ON
ASEAN TURTLE CONSERVATIONIST**

Mr. Turtle Conservation

Family Name : Conservation
 First Name : Turtle
 Year of Birth : 1956
 Country of Birth : Malaysia
 Education : PhD in Turtle Saving Operation
 Job Title : Head of Turtle-neck Technology
 Organization : Save-Our-Turtles Development Center
 Mailing Address : P.O. Box 1, Mersing Marine Park,
 Johor, Malaysia
 Telephone : (606) 123-4567
 Fax : (606) 765-4321
 E-mail : turtle@SOTDC.org
 Experience : 1. Help to develop the turtleneck sweater
 2. 1997, Turtle technology. FAO Rep. 20p.

Annex III

**INFORMATION FORM FOR
THE ELECTRONIC NETWORK ON ASEAN TURTLE CONSERVATIONIST**

Mr. Turtle Conservation

Family Name :
 First Name :
 Year of Birth :
 Country of Birth :
 Education :
 Job Title :
 Organization :
 Mailing Address :
 Telephone :
 Fax :
 E-mail :
 Experience :