



भारतीय वन्यजीव संस्थान  
Wildlife Institute of India



**First South Asia Sub-regional Workshop of UNEP/CMS Memorandum of Understanding on the Conservation and Management of Dugongs and their Habitats throughout their Range in South Asia  
6-7, June 2011, Tuticorin, India**

In a major step towards enhanced regional cooperation for the conservation of the Dugong (Sea Cow), India hosted the **first South Asia Sub-Regional Workshop on the Conservation and Management of Dugongs** on 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> June 2011, in Tuticorin, Tamil Nadu. The Ministry of Environment and Forests, UNEP/CMS Secretariat and the Wildlife Institute of India had jointly organized the workshop. The policy and conservation management experts from India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh, experts from UNEP/CMS Secretariat, the Environment Agency of Abu Dhabi, State Forest Departments of Tamilnadu, Gujrat and Andman & Nicobar Islands, field officers of the Gulf of Mannar Biosphere Reserve, representatives of the State Fisheries Department, Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute, Wildlife Trust of India, Reefwatch Marine Organization, Wildlife SOS, GEER Foundation and various other stakeholders attended the workshop.

In his 'Message' for the workshop, Minister of Environment and Forests, Jairam Ramesh said *"I am happy that South Asian Range States are coming together for the conservation and management of this shared and unique marine mammal. In India, we have constituted a Task Force for the conservation of dugongs, in order to have a focused conservation approach. We are committed to addressing the conservation threats faced by the dugong in our waters, and this workshop will take regional and national agendas forward. But as we know, for the most effective kind of conservation, we need the cooperation of all States in the region. He also highlighted the involvement of local communities in the conservation of dugongs as of utmost importance for success of the initiative."*

Dr Jagdish Kishwan, Additional Director General of Forests (Wildlife) and Director, Wildlife Preservation, Ministry of Environment and Forests, Chief Guest, said the ministry was interested in focusing on the marine biodiversity with adequate measures to conserve and protect dugongs and their habitats in this part of the world. Dr Donna Kwan, Programme Officer, UNEP/CMS explained the progress made by the Dugong Range Countries in signing the MOU for Conservation and Management of Dugongs and expressed the hope that the Governments of Bangladesh, Pakistan and Sri Lanka would agree to sign the Dugong UNEP/CMS MoU as early as possible. Shri A.K. Srivastava, Inspector General of Forests (Wildlife), Ministry of Environment and Forests, said that the workshop was expected to take the dugong conservation agenda forward not only in India but in other dugong range countries of South Asia also.

**Workshop recommendations**

Participating South Asian countries and organizations including UNEP/CMS

Strongly encourage the Governments of Bangladesh, Pakistan and Sri Lanka to sign the Dugong UNEP/CMS MoU early, and latest before second meeting of the Signatory States.

And decide to

develop and deliver a practical and resource-efficient strategy to collaborate in, and implement regional conservation and management initiatives for the conservation of dugongs and their habitats.

enhance communication among participating countries and organizations including UNEP/CMS so that issues, opportunities and management interventions related to the trans-boundary conservation of dugongs and their habitats can be addressed in a collaborative, effective and timely manner.

identify individually and collectively with guidance from UNEP/CMS, the financial and technological resources to support implementation of these recommendations.

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