

**Report on Discussions on “Principles for the management and sustainable use of mangroves ecosystems – A Work in Progress towards a Mangrove Code of Conduct”**

**Tuesday 25<sup>th</sup> October 2005**

**In association with the International Marine Protected Areas Congress, Geelong, Australia, 23<sup>rd</sup> to 28<sup>th</sup> October 2005.**

**By: Bernard O’Callaghan**

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**Background:**

The discussion was held as a “special lunch discussion” during the International Marine Protected Areas Congress, held in Geelong from the 23<sup>rd</sup> to 28<sup>th</sup> October 2005. The event was promoted in the program for the congress and was one of a number of special events held during the congress. The congress attracted scientists and researchers with an interest in the establishment and management of marine protected areas.

The session was titled “Principles for a Code of Conduct for the Sustainable Management of Mangrove Ecosystems: - A Work in Progress for Public Discussion”.

There were 19 participants at the meeting drawn from throughout the world including Africa, Asia and the Pacific Islands. The time was limited as this was the only time provided by conference organizers for special events.

**Promotion of the discussion session:**

The event was promoted in the conference schedule. An announcement promoting the event was sent to all Congress participants. In addition, over 100 information flyers were produced and distributed to congress participants.

**Structure of Presentation:**

BOC provided a brief introduction to the Principles for a code of conduct for the management and sustainable use of mangrove ecosystems. Due to time limitations, the presentation was re-structured to focus on the main issues related to the process of development of the Code of Conduct and the substantial material content. The presentation was for about 20 minutes.

## **Discussion:**

The discussion focused on the following topics:

- **Process for completing the Principles of Code of Conduct**

The process was reviewed. There was general agreement that this process was comprehensive. The issues relating to translation into local languages were discussed. The targets for the principles were considered to be governments, development agencies, and related institutions, particularly those that are yet to develop mangrove policies. It was also agreed that they provided a useful set of guidelines for scientists and researchers to promote mangrove conservation to government and related agencies. However, the usefulness of the guidelines by local communities were considered as uncertain.

- **Case-studies**

The process of development of “case-studies” was considered as making an important contribution to the development of the “Principles”. The development of “case-studies” was considered as geographically representative in broad terms. However, the inclusion of island case-studies was highlighted as one area that could be strengthened.

- **Need to highlight island concerns**

Islands were identified as housing important mangrove communities. This was considered as important in both the Pacific Ocean, and in the Indian Ocean. Often, on islands, conservation and management efforts were considered to be focused on coral reef and terrestrial ecosystems, while mangroves were often small in area and their importance overlooked. Specific points were raised, this included:

- Mangroves on island may have particular genetic attributes as they were isolated from mainland populations
- Mangroves on island do not have a strong ability for re-stocking as they are isolated. Thus, special attention needed to be paid to the restoration of mangroves in these areas and the use of appropriate seed stock
- Often mangrove destruction occurred as some time in the past, and there is limited information on the former pattern of mangrove vegetation
- Mangroves as still being converted in island areas for aquaculture and other uses

- Mangroves provide a vital function in island ecosystems towards the maintenance of water quality.

The meeting ended at 1:30 p.m. Participants were provided with the address of the web site and encouraged to provide additional comments on the detailed document.

### **Additional discussions**

- Throughout the congress, additional consultations were held on the principles and the leaflet distributed. There was some interest generated through this approach.

### **In summary**

- Many of the participants at the conference were more focused on coral reefs and MPA systems planning. However, the participants in the session were engaged and participated actively in the discussion. It is anticipated that there will be further feedback through the Mangrove Principles web-site, as circulated in the announcement (copied below).

Bernard O'Callaghan

24/ 11 / 2005.

## Tuesday 1:00 – 1:45 – Lunch time discussion

Place: “The meeting room”

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### *Principles for a Code of Conduct for the Sustainable Management of Mangrove Ecosystems: A Work in Progress for Public Discussion*

Presented by

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The Principles for a Code of Conduct for Sustainable Management of Mangrove Ecosystems is a guide to assist states, local and national non-governmental organizations and other stakeholders to develop cooperatively local codes, laws and/or regulations to protect mangroves and the critical functions they serve. Mangroves contribute significantly to local livelihoods, biodiversity conservation, fisheries productivity and coastal protection. But these economic and environmental benefits are only achievable through greater awareness that mangroves must be managed sustainably. The objective is to help bring attention to the importance of mangrove ecosystems, particularly to policy makers, to help arrest and reverse their loss. The Principles, being a work in progress, are being discussed in a range of forums that involve representatives from governments, NGOs, multilateral organizations, research institutions, grassroots organizations and other interested individuals and groups. The Principles were formulated based on a review of global mangrove management experience, about fifteen country case studies, including Australia, from all regions where mangroves exist, and seven regional workshops to date. The purpose of making a presentation on the Mangrove Principles at IMPAC is to gain additional feedback from interested stakeholders and experts, in particular, to provide inputs to the content of the Principles and recommendations for activities to promote their use as a management tool.

The Principles and many of the background documents and summaries of the feedback from workshops conducted to date can be found on the following website: [http://mit.biology.au.dk/center/TCB\\_2004.htm](http://mit.biology.au.dk/center/TCB_2004.htm)

(Please contact Mr T. Nielsen – [Thomas.Nielsen@biology.au.dk](mailto:Thomas.Nielsen@biology.au.dk) - if the link is inactive)