



Statement of the Northern Indian Ocean Marine Turtle Meeting

We, delegates from Bangladesh, India, the Maldives, Pakistan and Sri Lanka and representatives of non-governmental and scientific organisations met from 11-12 October 2015 in Malé to discuss measures for the comprehensive protection, conservation, replenishment and recovery of marine turtles and their habitats in the Northern Indian Ocean region.

To this end, we –

1. *Acknowledge* that the five species of marine turtles occurring in the Northern Indian Ocean, namely, Green, Hawksbill, Leatherback, Loggerhead and Olive Ridley turtle are listed on the IUCN Red List as critically endangered, endangered or vulnerable;
2. *Recognise* the continuing human-induced pressures on all species and their habitats and the urgency to counter these pressures;
3. *Reconfirm* our commitment to implement the provisions of the Memorandum of Understanding on the Conservation and Management of Marine Turtles and their Habitats of the Indian Ocean and South-East Asia, and its Conservation and Management Plan, in particular to
 - enact and enforce legislation that strictly prohibits the killing, poaching, trafficking and catching of marine turtles, as well as the collection and consumption of their derivatives, in particular their eggs;
4. *Establish* a Northern Indian Ocean Marine Turtle Task Force (NIOMTTF) to strengthen our regional cooperation in addressing:
 - Fisheries bycatch
 - Ghost gear
 - Standardized monitoring protocols
 - Collaborative research
 - Sustainable eco-tourism
 - Head-starting practices
 - Coastal development
 - Socio-economic and cultural issues
 - Impact of climate change
 - Marine pollution
 - Citizen science
 - Sustainable use
 - Illegal, unregulated and unreported (IUU) fishing
5. *Stress* the important role and unique opportunity of the NIOMTTF in:
 - sharing scientific data and information among task force members on pressures and threats to marine turtles and their habitats as well as conservation successes;
 - sharing norms, standards and guidelines to address pressures and threats to marine turtles and their habitats;

- exchanging best practices for the conservation and management of marine turtles and their habitats;
 - jointly embarking on regional awareness-raising and education campaigns related to the protection of marine turtles and their habitats;
 - cooperating closely with governmental and non-governmental organisations, academic institutions as well as civil society in conserving, protecting, replenishing and restoring marine turtles and their habitats;
6. *Commit* to implement the Joint Work Programme for the NIOMTTF and to review its implementation by the task force members on an annual basis at meetings or through the electronic reporting to the IOSEA Secretariat.

We *extend* our sincere thanks to the Government of the Maldives for organising and hosting and to the donors for facilitating this meeting.