



## **Marine Spatial Planning (MSP) Subcommittee**

**Meeting no: 06**

***Noo Raajje Program***

**Summary Minutes**

**Date:** Thursday, 11<sup>th</sup> May 2021

**Time:** 10:00 am – 11:00 am (Maldives Time)

**Venue:** *(Virtual)*

**Attendees:** 26 participants *(Refer annex for the virtual attendees list).*

**Meeting Chaired by:** Ilham Atho Mohamed, Ministry of Environment, Climate Change and Technology

*(MSP Subcommittee meetings are co-chaired by the Ministry of Environment, Climate Change and Technology, Ministry of National Planning, Housing and Infrastructure, and the Ministry of Fisheries, Marine Resources and Agriculture on a rotating basis).*

### **Welcome Remarks & Meeting Minutes Recap**

The Chair, Ilham Atho Mohamed commenced the meeting at 10:05 am Maldives time, welcomed the members for the sixth MSP Subcommittee and gave a brief overview of the meeting agenda.

*Noo Raajje* Administrative Coordinator, Maesha Mohamed gave a brief recap of the previous meeting minutes, noted that the previous meeting's minutes have been shared via google document link and if any comments and feedback are there to send in by next Thursday, 20<sup>th</sup> May 2021.

### **Presentation on Recap of Principles**

*(Presentation attached)*

John Weber, Waitt Institute's MSP Director, gave a brief review of principles, goals and objectives and their importance that was covered in the previous meeting. Noting that the actual work of putting the MSP work together starts with this meeting, he highlighted that the intent of this exercise of setting principles is to establish a framework for the MSP process to operate and to ensure that all the parties have a clear idea of what will guide the MSP process. Further, he noted that the MSP principles will be looked at periodically as the MSP goals and objectives are developed to ensure the goals and objectives are following those principles and, therefore, should reflect the ultimate results that are desired to be achieved with the MSP.

John then gave an overview of the breakout rooms and handed over to *Noo Raajje* Site Manager Fathimath Nistharan (Nisthu) to provide further instruction and open the breakout rooms.

Nisthu explained that each member will be able to join 1 of 4 breakout rooms of their choice; i.e., **Room 1: Governance, Room 2: Ethical and Social, Room 3: Biophysical, Room 4: Development.** In each breakout room, the members will be discussing the principles that are relevant to each topic.

The members were then divided into breakout rooms from 10:20 am till 10:50 am (Maldives time).

### **Q&A and Discussion**

The members were convened back to the main room for discussion at 10:50 am.

Nisthu then invited each group to provide an overview of the discussions and following are the key points discussed by the participants in each breakout room.

#### *Breakout Room 1: Governance*

Nisthu, who facilitated Breakout Room 1 (Governance), handed over to Rifath Naeem from the Environmental Protection Agency to give an overview of the discussion.

- Discussed additional two governance principles for consideration; A principle for payment for ecosystem services and a principle for net zero impact from development projects.
- Discussed on the balance between evidence-based decision-making principle and precautionary principle
- Best available science principle – should this be best available sciences and/or best affordable sciences?
- Adaptive management principle – discussed in length whether existing legislations and laws will be allowing it or if they would require to be changed.
- Raised the point to consider feasibility of the governing principles and affordability of their implementation.

#### *Breakout Room 2: Ethical and Social*

Will McClintock who facilitated Breakout Room 2 (Ethical and Social), handed over to Hudha Ahmed from Renewable Energy Maldives Pvt. Ltd to give a brief overview of the discussion.

- Interdependence principle – it is not only development and environmental protection but economic development is also dependent on natural resource protection so MSPs are important in terms of economic development as well
- Good faith and cooperation principle – It is important that everybody has an equal role in making this work. Tourism industry has special permits and leverages granted that are imposed on others, which may undermine this principle. Protection goals may not be mutually agreeable, for example, and certain sectors may be exempted.
- Conflict resolution principle – There are different levels of conflicts in the Maldives. Age old conflict between tourism and fisheries sector - perception that fisheries are always having to give up fishing areas for the tourism sector. At the administrative level there are conflicts amongst agency mandates (e.g., fisheries and environment agencies). At Parliament level, lots of involvement in the environment. Local councils - issue of whose

jurisdiction of ocean space may be of question and may lead to conflict. The councils make decisions about environment management yet they don't have the right background. Need to look beyond the government (council, parliamentarians) and educate people.

- Inclusion and diversity principle - We must recognize the surfing areas and other recreational and professional uses. We haven't had involvement from women. We need their voices. Women's development committees, etc.
- Humanity principle – Hard to understand the difference between humanity principle and human values principle. This description seems academic, perhaps.
- Human values principle - This should be in harmony with environmental preservation, conservation. MSP should not conflict with core beliefs (such as religion).
- Eradicate poverty principle - We have serious issues related to poverty. Need to think about the emerging new poor (e.g., people without internet access, etc.). Need to think about "vulnerable groups".
- Women principle - What role does women have in environmental management in the Maldives? They certainly bear the impact of how environmental decisions are made. Some women have lost their livelihood or need to work double consequently.

### *Breakout Room 3: Biophysical*

Andy Estep, Waitt Institute's Science Director, who facilitated Breakout Room 3 (Biophysical), handed over to Philippa Roe from Maldives Underwater Initiative to provide a summary of discussion.

- Most of the time was spent in reviewing the listed principles and agreed that all of them are really important
- Represents all bioregion principle - Raised the question of what really constitutes a bioregion in relation to Maldives. Is it part of a larger global bioregion or do we want to treat different areas as separate bioregions?
- Identified few other areas that may need additional things to think about, i.e., (1) Identify principles that address climate change and adaptation to sea level rise, (2) Identify principles for vulnerable places, (3) Add a focused principle on fisheries, (4) Add a principle for exploited species and fishing grounds, (5) Safeguard species that may migrate in and out of the EEZ while responding
- Planning to rank the principles in the order of which of the principles are of highest priority for the Maldives to consider.

### *Breakout Room 4: Development*

John Weber, who facilitated the discussion in Breakout Room 4 (Development) gave an overview of the conversation.

- Humanity principle – Humans as central users of ocean space, it is very important to keep not only the ideas of sustainable development but also the aspect of this principle about healthy and productive life and harmony with nature. People have a strong connection to the ocean in Maldives; important to realize this connection because there is an important accessibility aspect here too which needs to be included in the MSP. Security (including the physical aspects and infrastructure of the islands) is also an important component of this humanity principle and in general about protecting coral reefs, and the ecosystem -

need to protect the ecosystem for the good of people; this notion is also related to climate change.

- Integrated environmental protection principle - In the Maldives, to achieve this principle right now, EIAs are a main tool. It is the key to bringing in development and infrastructure, so this principle links directly to EIAs. Sustainability and "development" can be considered together, not as two different silos. EIA is the only consideration currently in the development process, but not sure how much effect EIA has on developments; may be too late in the development process, or can be difficult to enforce. So, are EIAs sufficient to achieve integrated environmental protection? Are we really achieving the sustainability and environmental protection that we wish to? Might it be helpful to consider either changing the EIA process or developing a new process?
- Environmental Impact Assessment principle - Currently missing Strategic Environmental Assessments; could be incorporated into policies and high-level developments.
- Polluter Pays principle – It may be very costly and, in some cases, may result that the developers or responsible party does not have the finances or ability to fully compensate.

Nisthu then handed over to Andy and John to provide the final remarks.

Andy informed that two more MSP Subcommittee meetings will be planned to continue to review and develop the principles and work toward a ranked collection of principles that will be submitted to program governance for consideration. He reminded that everything that is produced by the subcommittees will be submitted to the program Governance Committee for review and guidance, and will eventually get shared with stakeholders when the draft is submitted for public consultation.

Nisthu inquired whether the members are open to have longer MSP Subcommittee meetings to continue discussions in the upcoming sessions. Ilham suggested having an additional 30 minutes or 1 hour depending on the work that needs to be attained. A poll was taken and members agreed that for such discussions, 2-hour sessions are acceptable.

Moosa queried whether it is more convenient to have the meetings in the morning or evening (Maldives time) to which Ilham responded that morning sessions would be more suitable for the government staff.

### **Action Points & Closing Remarks**

Andy requested the members to continue logging comments and feedback in the shared google document (*link in annexes*) or submit feedback via email until the next meeting. Members were invited to deliberate on the principles and share their comments across all the sheets in the document.

The discussion on reviewing and developing the principles will be continued in the next meeting.

The meeting was concluded with short remarks by Nisthu and Ilham who thanked everyone for their attendance and good discussion.

**Annexes:**

1. Attendee's list
2. 6th MSP Subcommittee Meeting Presentation Slides
3. Link to **Draft MSP Principle options** (working document for feedback)
4. Final meeting minutes of the 5<sup>th</sup> MSP Subcommittee meeting

*Noo Raajje* Program Secretariat

20/05/2021