

# BOBP-IGO: A Flashback to the Signing Ceremony

Senior representatives of the Governments of Bangladesh, India and Sri Lanka met at Chennai on 26 April 2003 to sign the agreement on the institutionalisation of the Bay of Bengal Programme as an Inter – Governmental Organisation (BOBP-IGO). The Maldivian delegation led by its Minister for Fisheries, Agriculture and Marine Resources visited the BOBP-IGO headquarters at Chennai on 21 May 2003 to sign the Agreement on behalf of the Government of Maldives.

The signing ceremony, held in the Wallajah Banquet Hall of Hotel Taj Connemara, began with the lighting of the ceremonial lamp. Dr Y S Yadava, Interim IGO Coordinator of the Bay of Bengal Programme, welcomed invitees.

Dr Daniel Gustafson, FAO Representative in India & Bhutan, said in his welcome remarks, “This event has been a long time in the making. It is an honour for me to be here and represent the FAO”. He thanked member-countries present for ensuring the transformation of BOBP into an IGO.

Representatives of Bangladesh, India and Sri Lanka made brief statements hailing the event.

Inaugurating the meeting, Ms Binoo Sen, Secretary to the Government of India, congratulated the four member-countries for coming together to set up the BOBP-IGO. She noted that the IGO is a co-operative, multi-disciplinary and regional endeavour, the first of its kind in the region. She expressed confidence that it would facilitate important programmes and interventions to benefit small-scale fisheries. She urged other members of the erstwhile BOBP to join the IGO to strengthen it and share its benefits.



*L-R: Dr Daniel Gustafson, FAO Representative for India and Bhutan; Dr Y S Yadava, Director, BOBP-IGO; Mr Abdul Haque, Secretary, Ministry of Fisheries and Livestock, Bangladesh; Ms Binoo Sen, Secretary, Ministry of Agriculture, India; Mr P K Pattanaik, Joint Secretary (Fisheries), India; Mr G Piyasena, Director-General (Fisheries), Department of Fisheries and Ocean Resources, Sri Lanka; Mr G D Chandrapal, Director (Fisheries), Ministry of Agriculture, India.*



*Mr Abdul Rasheed Hussain, Hon'ble Minister of Fisheries, Agriculture and Marine Resources, and Mr Ahmed Hafiz, Assistant Director-General (Fisheries), Republic of Maldives, at the BOBP-IGO office for signing the Agreement.*



*Speakers at the BOBP-IGO Signing Ceremony (clockwise):  
Ms Binoo Sen,  
Mr P K Pattanaik,  
Dr Daniel Gustafson,  
Mr Abdul Haque,  
Mr G Piyasena.*

### Headquarters Agreement

The Headquarters Agreement was signed between the Ministry of Agriculture (Department of Animal Husbandry & Dairying), Government of India, and the BOBP-IGO at New Delhi on 14 January 2004. This Agreement relates to the establishment of the headquarters of the BOBP-IGO at Chennai, India and defines its status, privileges, immunities and facilities to be granted by the Government of India and related matters.



*Ms Radha Singh, Secretary to the Government of India, presides over the signing of the Headquarters Agreement by Mr P K Pattanaik, Joint Secretary (Fisheries), Government of India, and Dr Y S Yadava, Director, BOBP-IGO.*

Mr Abdul Rasheed Hussain, Hon'ble Minister of Fisheries, Agriculture and Marine Resources, Republic of Maldives, accompanied by Mr Ahmed Hafiz, Assistant Director-General (Fisheries), visited Chennai on 21 May 2003 to sign the Agreement. Mr Hussain noted with gratitude the services that BOBP had provided to the region since 1979. He said, "Maldives had benefited from a number of different projects. One of the most successful BOBP projects implemented in the Maldives was the Integrated Reef Resources Management Programme". He had no doubt that under the IGO, equally fruitful collaborations

benefiting fishing communities throughout the Bay of Bengal region would result.

The two meetings held for signing the BOBP-IGO Agreement also enabled review of the documents relating to the Rules of Procedure, recruitment of a Director, and activities carried out during the interim period. The activities to be implemented until the first meeting of the IGO's Governing Council were also finalised by delegates.

### Bay of Bengal News

This issue of *Bay of Bengal News* covers the period April 2003 – August 2004. We are sorry for the long gap - but we were busy with procedures to set up the BOBP-IGO.

*-Editor*