



Ministry of
Science and Technology



PRESS RELEASE:

Specimen of Largest Whale Shark inaugurated

Islamabad: 23 July 2013: UNESCO with its partner Pakistan Science Foundation inaugurated one of the largest found whale shark specimen at Pakistan Museum of Natural History (PMNH), today. The specimen believed to be unique due to its size in world, is 40 feet large, weighs 16 tonnes and is the biggest specimen of fish ever recorded in the history.

This specimen of Whale Shark (*rhincodontypus*) was seen alive but motionless on February 6, 2012 in the Gora Bari area in Pakistani territory of Arabian Sea by the local fishermen. It was brought to Karachi Fish Harbour the next day, which was dead by then. Later Pakistan Museum of Natural History, took possession of the specimen from Karachi Fish Harbour Authority and Marine Fisheries Department, and transported it to the Pakistan Museum of Natural history in Islamabad. Since then the specimen was under the process of preservation and research, and was finally inaugurated today, after the process of its stuffing and preservation was completed.

While elaborating on the importance of the whale shark specimen, Dr. Manzoor Hussain Soomro, Chairman, Pakistan Science Foundation said, "We are very grateful to UNESCO, for providing PSF technical and financial support to promote culture of science, scientific knowledge and science popularization. "

The inauguration was planned to coincide with the visit of Mr. Qian Tang, Assistant Director General, and Education for UNESCO, Paris. Mr. Qian said, "Museums play an important role for popularization of science and science education, and I believe Pakistan Natural Science History Museum is doing a wonderful job for educating masses here in Pakistan."

Dr. Kozue Kay Nagata, in her remarks congratulated PSF and PMNH on the successful completion of the preservation process. She stressed on the idea of making science education, and sharing of scientific knowledge an important milestone for educated minds of next generation. UNESCO is supporting Pakistan Museum of Natural History under the umbrella of PSF, to enhance the experience and knowledge for the visitors specially youth.

Whale Shark is declared vulnerable specie by International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), and its population is said to be decreasing at an alarming rate. The specimen at display was of age 50, when found. Despite its huge size, this whale shark is harmless to humans and only feeds on plankton, krill, fish eggs and crabs. The specimen is open for public display in Pakistan Museum of Natural History.