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THE EAST ASIAN SEAS CONGRESS

25 Years of Partnerships for
Healthy Oceans, People and Economies
Moving as One with the Global Ocean Agenda

27-30 November 2018 • Iloilo Convention Center, Philippines

SUMMARY REPORT OF THE SIXTH SENIOR GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS' MEETING



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Preparatory Meeting for the Sixth Ministerial Forum

The Iloilo Convention Center, Iloilo City, Philippines
28 November 2018

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. The Sixth Senior Government Officials' Meeting (SGOM) was held at the VIP Room, Iloilo Convention Center, Iloilo City, Philippines on 28 November 2018. Senior Government Officials from 11 PEMSEA Country Partners participated in the meeting, namely: Cambodia, PR China, DPR Korea, Indonesia, Japan, Lao PDR, Philippines, RO Korea, Singapore, Timor-Leste and Viet Nam. The PEMSEA Resource Facility (PRF) served as the Secretariat for the Meeting.
- 1.2. Dr. Vu Thanh Ca, Acting Intergovernmental Session Chair of the East Asian Seas Partnership Council, chaired the meeting.
- 1.3. The full list of participants is found in Annex 1.

2.0 REVIEW OF THE MINISTERIAL FORUM AGENDA AND ARRANGEMENTS

- 2.1 Ms. Aimee Gonzales, PEMSEA Executive Director, presented the agenda for the Senior Government Officials' Meeting which was adopted by the Meeting.
- 2.2 The Sixth Senior Government Officials' Meeting Agenda is found in Annex 2.
- 2.3 Dr. Jaeyoung Lee, Sixth Ministerial Forum Organizing Team Leader, presented the arrangements for the Sixth Ministerial Forum, covering:
 - Protocol arrangements
 - Security arrangements
 - Transportation arrangements
 - Dress code
 - Schedule of Ministerial activities which includes the Closing Ceremony of the EAS Congress International Conference, the Sixth Ministerial Forum proper, the Ministerial banquet, and field visits
- 2.4 The Meeting sought clarification on the detailed arrangements on accompanying persons in Ministers' cars. In line with the Philippine security protocol, only the security personnel will accompany the Minister in the car unless the Minister requests for a senior official or interpreter to accompany him. Designated Liaison Officers (LOs) will be provided with a separate car following the Ministers' convoy.
- 2.5 The Country representatives were also requested to ensure submission of copies of their respective Country Statements in advance as part of the preparation for the Meeting. It was confirmed by the meeting that Country Statements will be delivered in alphabetical order with Philippines to deliver the last statement as courtesy to the host country.

3.0 Final Confirmation on the Ministerial Declaration and Signing Arrangements

3.1 The PEMSEA Executive Director presented the final draft of the Iloilo Ministerial Declaration based on the results of series of country consultations, with minor final revisions from the Secretariat for review and consideration by the Meeting. The ED emphasized that the revisions suggested by the Secretariat were meant to provide further clarity in the statements but are not intended to change the meaning or context of the statements.

3.2 In particular, the proposed revisions by the Secretariat (highlighted in yellow) were further reviewed by the Meeting:

- Under the section on *Our Commitments to A Sustainable Future*, paragraph 3:

3. We recognize the importance of the PEMSEA Resource Facility as the coordinating mechanism for the implementation of the SDS-SEA. We commit **to support its operations through voluntary country contributions beyond 2019.**

The Meeting agreed to the proposed revision, taking note that the current GEF/UNDP Project on Scaling up SDS-SEA Implementation is expected to end by 2020.

- Under the section on *Our Commitments to A Sustainable Future*, paragraphs 4 to 6:

4. We support PEMSEA's efforts in identifying and developing blue economy investments at the national and local level. We welcome opportunities to work with our partners, **both government and non- government**, to develop, finance and implement blue economy projects in ICM sites as well as activities set forth in the SDS-SEA Implementation Plan 2018-2022.

5. We acknowledge the current strong momentum to tackle marine debris globally. We commit to significantly reducing or preventing marine pollution of all kinds, in particular from land-based **and sea-based** activities, including marine litter and nutrient pollution.

6. We commit to implementing policies and programs for the sustainable management of coastal tourism destinations. If properly planned and managed, coastal tourism will benefit the environment, the people and the economy. Sustainable tourism planning not only considers social, environmental and economic impacts **within the tourist area or facility itself, but also the impacts on the host coastal community, including livelihoods, water and food security, solid waste disposal, water pollution and social and environmental factors.**

The Meeting concurred with the proposed revisions on paragraphs 4 to 6.

- Under the section on *Partnerships*, first paragraph

WE ARE AWARE that achieving our goals will require the support of all stakeholders across sectors; We will continue our efforts to improve cooperation and engagement between PEMSEA and other countries, relevant international development organizations, **local organizations, the private sector, financial institution and investors**, nongovernment organizations, academic and research institutions, communities and grassroots, women and youth organizations.

The Meeting accepted the proposed revision.

- Under the section on *Partnerships*, second paragraph

WE AGREE to step up the cooperation with **regional organizations, including the regional seas conventions, large marine ecosystems, and regional fisheries as well as other relevant bodies** to achieve the targets under the SDS-SEA; We recognize the opportunities for increased knowledge, efficiency gains and effectiveness when collectively addressing implementation challenges.

The representative from Singapore, suggested to delete “**including the regional seas conventions, large marine ecosystems, and regional fisheries as well as other relevant bodies**” as the term regional organizations already covers regional fisheries bodies, etc. It was also agreed by the meeting that large marine ecosystems are not regional organizations per se. As a matter of semantics and to simplify the statement, the Meeting agreed to adopt the suggestion from Singapore with the final statement to read:

WE AGREE to step up the cooperation with **regional organizations**, to achieve the targets under the SDS-SEA; We recognize the opportunities for increased knowledge, efficiency gains and effectiveness when collectively addressing implementation challenges.

- Under the section on *Partnerships*, third paragraph

WE ARE DETERMINED to continue working together as PEMSEA country partners to deliver our common objectives in line with the SDS-SEA and our regional and global commitments. We are convinced that through our collective actions, PEMSEA will lead to more effective solutions with positive impacts on coastal communities and ecosystems **as evidenced in the next regional State of Oceans and Coasts report in 2022.**

The Meeting concurred with the proposed revision.

- Under the section on *Conclusion*

The biggest threat that we face in the region **is ourselves**, in the way we live our lives and the way we manage our resources. We therefore strongly urge everyone to shift towards a mindset of responsible stewardship, and pledge to take bold steps to protect, manage and restore our coasts and oceans for our present and future generations. PEMSEA Country Partners are ready to engage citizens in East Asia and peoples in other regions to work together to secure our shared vision of healthy oceans, people and economy.

The Meeting concurred with the proposed revision.

- 3.3 The Meeting agreed to adopt the Iloilo Ministerial Declaration as revised by the Meeting, for submission to the Sixth Ministerial Forum for final signature. The revised Iloilo Ministerial Declaration as adopted by the Meeting is found in Annex 3.
- 3.4 The Meeting requested the Secretariat to ensure that revisions to future Ministerial Declarations be submitted to countries in advance to ensure timely and proper in-country reviews and approval.
- 3.5 The Meeting further clarified the signatories to the Ministerial Declaration as some Ministers are represented by their respective Vice Ministers or Senior Government Officers. It was agreed by the Meeting that the names of the head of delegates be reflected in the signature page.
- 3.6 The representative from the Philippines further recommended change in the name of Philippines' signatory from Usec. Analiza Rebuelta-Teh to Usec. Rodolfo Garcia, to be reflected in the final signature page of the Iloilo Ministerial Declaration.
- 3.7 To familiarize the Senior Government Officials of the Liaison Officers assigned to their respective Ministers, the LOs assigned to each country were introduced.

4.0 Closing of the SGOM

- 4.1 Dr. Vu Thanh Ca expressed appreciation to all the Senior Government Officials who participated in the meeting. Dr. Ca adjourned the Meeting at 1:10PM, 28 November 2018.

Annex 1

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

COUNTRY PARTNERS

CAMBODIA

Mr. Long Rithirak

Deputy Director General,
General Directorate of Environmental
Protection,
Ministry of Environment

CHINA

Mr. Wang Antao

Director
International Cooperation
Ministry of Natural Resources

DPR KOREA

Mr. Kwang-Jin Jong

Director
General Bureau for Cooperation with
International Organizations (GBCIO)

INDONESIA

Mr. Dida Migfar Ridha

Director,
Marine and Coastal Pollution and Degradation
Control,
Ministry of Environment and Forestry

JAPAN

Mr. Yasufumi Onishi

Director for International Ocean Affairs
Ocean Policy Division
Policy Bureau
Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and
Tourism (MLIT)

LAO PDR

Mr. Simmalavong Phonexay

Department of Water Resources
Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment

Ms. Sengphasouk Xayavong

Deputy Director of General Affairs Division
Department of Water Resources
Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment

PHILIPPINES

Mr. Rodolfo Garcia

Undersecretary and Chief of Staff
Department of Environment and Natural
Resources

Atty. Analiza Rebuella Teh

Undersecretary for Climate Change Service and
Mining Concerns
Department of Environment and Natural
Resources

RO KOREA

Ms. Su-Yeon Kim

Deputy Director,
Marine Environment Policy Division,
Marine Policy Office,
Ministry of Oceans and Fisheries

SINGAPORE

Ms. Wan Yin See

Senior Executive
International Policy Division
International Agreements
Ministry of the Environment and Water
Resources

TIMOR LESTE**Mr. Acacio Guterres**

Director General for Fisheries,
Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries

Ms. Vida Isabel Vasquez

Secretariat Assistant
PEMSEA Resource Facility

VIETNAM**Mr. Vu Si Tuan**

Deputy General Director
Vietnam Administration of Seas and Islands
Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment

Mr. Hoang Huy Trung

National Border Committee
Ministry of Foreign Affairs

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**Dr. Vu Thanh Ca**

Acting Intergovernmental Session Chair
Associate Professor
Hanoi University of Natural Resources and
Environment
Vietnam

PEMSEA SECRETARIAT**Ms. Aimee Gonzales**

Executive Director
PEMSEA Resource Facility

Dr. Jae-Young Lee

Deputy Head
Planning and Partnerships
PEMSEA Resource Facility

Ms. Kathrine Rose Gallardo-Aguiling

Secretariat Coordinator
PEMSEA Resource Facility

Ms. Diwata Cayaban

Programme Assistant
PEMSEA Resource Facility

Annex 2

SIXTH SENIOR GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS MEETING AGENDA

12:00 – 12:10	Registration of the Senior Government Officials Meeting
12:10 – 12:15	1.0 Opening of the SGOM and Adoption of SGOM Agenda
12:15 – 12:30	2.0 Review of the Ministerial Forum Agenda and Arrangements
12:30 – 12:50	3.0 Final Confirmation on the Ministerial Declaration and Signing Arrangements
12:50 – 13:00	Closing of SGOM

6th Senior Government Officials' Meeting (SGOM)
Iloilo Ministerial Declaration as adopted by SGOM

Iloilo Ministerial Declaration

EAST ASIAN REGION MOVING AS ONE TO SECURE HEALTHY OCEANS, PEOPLE AND ECONOMIES

WE, the Representatives of eleven countries bordering on the Seas of East Asia have gathered in Iloilo City, Philippines, on the 29th day of November 2018 to re-affirm our shared commitments for the sustainable development of the Seas of East Asia to reach our shared vision for healthy oceans, people and economies of the region. On this auspicious occasion, as we together celebrate PEMSEA's twenty-five years, we reflect our satisfaction on the achievements that we have collectively realized and consider our joint future direction.

WE RE-AFFIRM our shared commitments made in Putrajaya, Malaysia (2003) to work together towards the sustainable development of the region's coasts and oceans with a common platform under the Sustainable Development Strategy for the Seas of East Asia (SDS-SEA).

WE REMAIN steadfast in our commitments under the Manila Declaration (2009) on strengthening the implementation of Integrated Coastal Management for sustainable development and climate change adaptation; the Changwon Declaration (2012) on moving toward an ocean-based blue economy; and the Da Nang Compact (2015) on aligning our strategies in the SDS-SEA with global goals and targets such as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) under the United

Nations' 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, Aichi Biodiversity Targets under the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), and the Paris Agreement under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

WE ACKNOWLEDGE the significant value and critical contribution of coastal and marine ecosystems goods and services to securing food and jobs; helping to eradicate poverty and building resilient coastal communities and blue economies in the East Asian region. Juxtaposed against these opportunities is the vulnerability of the region to climate change and other environmental threats such as marine-related disasters, destruction and loss of habitats and natural coastlines, biodiversity loss and degradation, overfishing and lack of food security, pollution from land and sea-based sources, and impairment of water quality, water supply and water security.

WE NOTE the bold strides that we have collectively taken to transform PEMSEA from a mere program into a self-sustaining regional organization to work towards achieving our shared vision.

WE FURTHER NOTE with pride and appreciation, PEMSEA's pioneering work in the region to develop best practices in the design and implementation of the Integrated Coastal Management (ICM) approach. PEMSEA is also at the forefront of developing knowledge and capacity to build climate smart policies and enable ocean-based blue economies.

WE BELIEVE that PEMSEA remains relevant and is well-positioned to continue performing its role as the regional platform to encourage the development of common policies, building capacity and orchestrating essential collaborative and scaled up actions alongside smart financing to deliver economic and social dividends as well as protect biodiversity and address shrinking coastlines.

WE BELIEVE FURTHER that because of its competence, pool of experts, and related body of information generated through its years of work on the ground, PEMSEA has established itself as the coastal and marine knowledge center that can support the region in the effective implementation of the SDS-SEA aligned with the UN SDGs and other international and regional commitments.

WE ARE CONFIDENT that PEMSEA will continue to facilitate regional cooperation to respond to the challenges within the context of the rapidly changing social, political, economic and environmental landscapes and encourage the region to move towards a Blue Economy and Sustainable Development of its coasts and oceans.

OUR COMMITMENTS TO A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

1. We will continue to work to achieve the remaining targets set under the Danang Compact by 2021, namely,
 - a. 25% ICM coverage of the region's coastlines, and
 - b. the adoption and implementation of ICM national laws and policies in all countries in the region.
2. We will regularly update the State of the Oceans and Coasts reports to highlight the contributions of coasts and oceans to economies. We further commit to establish environmental, social and economic indicators, where appropriate, to measure the development impact of initiatives on the state of the coasts, communities and economies.
3. We recognize the importance of the PEMSEA Resource Facility as the coordinating mechanism for the implementation of the SDS-SEA. We commit to support its operations through voluntary country contributions beyond 2019.

4. We support PEMSEA's efforts in identifying and developing blue economy investments at the national and local level. We welcome opportunities to work with our partners, both government and non-government, to develop, finance and implement blue economy projects in ICM sites as well as activities set forth in the SDS-SEA Implementation Plan 2018-2022.
5. We acknowledge the current strong momentum to tackle marine debris globally. We commit to significantly reducing or preventing marine pollution of all kinds, in particular from land-based and sea-based activities, including marine litter and nutrient pollution.
6. We commit to implementing policies and programs for the sustainable management of coastal tourism destinations. If properly planned and managed, coastal tourism will benefit the environment, the people and the economy. Sustainable tourism planning not only considers social, environmental and economic impacts within the tourist area or facility itself, but also the impacts on the host coastal community, including livelihoods, water and food security, solid waste disposal, water pollution and social and environmental factors.
7. We realize the critical importance of regional collaboration in dealing with coastal and marine hazards such as storm surges and tsunamis. We commit to working together to adopt innovative strategies to raise awareness and build regional capacity to monitor, forecast and provide timely early warnings to support safety of life and property at sea, coastal management and minimization of impact of such hazards.
8. We recognize that we are all parties to the Paris Agreement and the UNFCCC and aware of the urgency and seriousness of the threat of climate change to the sustainable development of our countries and region; We commit to implement adaptation and mitigation strategies

to respond to climate change.

PARTNERSHIPS

WE ARE AWARE that achieving our goals will require the support of all stakeholders across sectors; We will continue our efforts to improve cooperation and engagement between PEMSEA and other countries, relevant international development organizations, **local organizations, the private sector, financial institution and investors**, nongovernment organizations, academic and research institutions, communities and grassroots, women and youth organizations.

WE AGREE to step up the cooperation with **regional organizations**, to achieve the targets under the SDS-SEA; We recognize the opportunities for increased knowledge, efficiency gains and effectiveness when collectively addressing implementation challenges.

WE ARE DETERMINED to continue working together as PEMSEA country partners to deliver our common objectives in line with the SDS-SEA and our regional and global commitments. We are convinced that through our collective actions, PEMSEA will lead to more effective solutions with positive impacts on coastal communities and ecosystems **as evidenced in the next regional State of Oceans and Coasts report in 2022.**

CONCLUSION

The biggest threat that we face in the region **is ourselves**, in the way we live our lives and the way we manage our resources. We therefore strongly urge everyone to shift towards a mindset of responsible stewardship, and pledge to take bold steps to protect, manage and restore our coasts and oceans for our present and future generations.

PEMSEA Country Partners are ready to engage citizens in East Asia and peoples in other regions to work together to secure our shared vision of healthy oceans, people and economy.

REFERENCE DOCUMENTS:

[Putrajaya Declaration of Regional Cooperation for the Sustainable Development of the Seas of East Asia](#)

[Manila Declaration on Strengthening the Implementation of Integrated Coastal Management for Sustainable Development and Climate Change Adaptation in the Seas of East Asia Region](#)

[Changwon Declaration Toward an Ocean-based Blue Economy: Moving Ahead with the Sustainable Development Strategy for the Seas of East Asia](#)

[Da Nang Compact on the Sustainable Development Strategy for the Seas of East Asia 2015](#)

[UN Sustainable Development Goals](#)

[Aichi Biodiversity Targets – Convention on Biological Diversity \(CBD\)](#)

[Paris Agreement – United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change \(UNFCCC\)](#)

[Blue Economy for Business in East Asia: Towards an Integrated Understanding of Blue Economy](#)