



Day

EAST ASIAN SEAS CONGRESS 2015

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Daily Bulletin

Engaging the Business Sector in Building a Blue Economy in the East Asian Seas Region

Mr. Makoto Harunari, Technical Session Co-Chair of the EAS Partnership Council, introduced the opening plenary of the third day of the EAS Congress International Conference.

Mr. Charles Goddard, Editorial Director of the Economist Asia Pacific, delivered the keynote speech focusing on bridging the rhetoric and reality on investing in the blue economy.

According to Mr. Goddard, the ocean economy is expected to accelerate in the coming years, ushering in a new era of industrialization. But there is a lack of scientifically based definition and measurement of the blue economy that impacts the creation of effective blue economy policies. Coastal governance based on growth, framed within a context of sustainability, can contribute to a transformative approach in managing ocean industries.

Panelist Ms. Christine Valentin, Director for Strategy, Members and Finance, World Ocean Council, listed the collaborative opportunities for industries towards blue economy growth. She explained that the ocean business community is interested in collaboration as use of the ocean expands, increasing global impacts on the marine environment and contributing to a rise in potential use conflicts between industries and other stakeholders.

Dr. Doan Duy Khuong, Chairman, Viet Nam Business Council for Sustainable Development, explained that the major trends impacting blue economy growth in the region represent both challenges and opportunities. He added that the Vietnamese business community is supportive of government initiatives to achieve its vision of a blue economy through its sustainable development plans. He stressed that regional cooperation is needed to move blue economy development forward.

Ms. Charmaine Canillas, Vice President, Bataan Coastal Care Foundation and General Manager, Petron Foundation, shared that Petron envisions its host communities growing with its business. To achieve this, Petron works closely with local government units in the key areas of education, environment and health. Petron recognizes that the blue economy can provide new opportunities for collaboration between companies, government and key stakeholders resulting in greater livelihoods for all.

Amb. Mary Seet-Cheng, Chair of the EAS Partnership Council, expressed that PEMSEA is well positioned to drive blue economy growth in the region. She emphasized the need to move beyond the paradigm of "private sector exploits" and "government regulates" to a new understanding of the role of public-private partnership supporting blue economy in the region.



Coastal and Ocean Governance in the Seas of East Asia: From Nation to Region

The President of the Ocean Policy Research Institute-Sasakawa Peace Foundation (OPRI-SPF), Mr. Hiroshi Terashima, served as the keynote speaker and co-chair for day 2 of the workshop. Mr. Terashima briefed participants on the international policy frameworks that are vital for effective ocean governance at the local and national levels. He stressed the need for all countries to implement policies anchored to international frameworks and make use of various regional mechanisms for collaboration.

Presentations from Japan, Singapore, China, Vietnam, Thailand and Malaysia tackled country-specific responses to the international ocean agenda through national and local development and implementation of ocean policies. Efforts include the harmonization of development and use of oceans, coastal ecosystem restoration with ecosystem-based approaches, addressing marine pollution and coastal erosion, management of fishery resources, establishment of marine reserves and conflict resolution on sea use.

Dr. Chua Thia-Eng, Chair Emeritus of the EAS Partnership Council and a co-chair of the session cited PEMSEA and the SDS-SEA as an effective cooperation framework, along with examples of nationalizing regional strategies and policies, citing the Executive Order for ICM in the Philippines as one example.

The workshop concluded with a keynote presentation by Undersecretary Analiza R. Teh of the EAS Partnership Council on PEMSEA's roadmap towards achieving the UN Sustainable Development Goals in the EAS Region. Panelists from MONRE, Vietnam, OPRI, the GEF Secretariat and IOC/WESPAC confirmed PEMSEA and the SDS-SEA as the cooperation framework and platform for strengthening collaboration and coordination of regional efforts. Panelists also suggested the need to explore how the countries can contribute to the financial sustainability of PEMSEA.

Future of Coastal Cities

The workshop highlighted the critical role of ICM as the management framework and platform for action on sustainable and resilient cities and local governments.

Dr. Jong Geel Je, Mayor of Ansan City, shared the local initiatives in his city towards building a blue economy in response to the impacts from unmanaged urbanization. Dr. Je stressed that to ensure the continuity of ICM implementation despite changes in elected government officials, there should be a clear vision, effective policy and demonstrated results of ICM. Experiencing the benefits of ICM will drive citizens to convince their local leaders to maintain the ICM approach.

Obama City, Japan, integrates its rich historical and cultural heritage in food production with coastal development, as discussed by Mr. Kouji Matsuzaki, Mayor of Obama City. The city addresses environmental degradation of Obama Bay, which has served as the core engine of the region's seafood processing sector. Obama City's Coastal City Development Plan places importance on involving the Coastal City Development Council and the Future Conference, representing the younger generation, to establish ownership in efforts to revitalize the sea.

Ms. Pei Rong Cheo, National Biodiversity Centre, National Parks Board, Singapore provided an overview of the Singapore Index on Cities' Biodiversity. She stressed the importance of a scientifically credible assessment tool for cities and emphasized that "you cannot manage what is not measured". Collecting indicators contributes to the evaluation of biodiversity conservation efforts to provide a basis for decisionmaking and sharing good practices for sustainable development.

Across cities, there is a need to scale up initiatives for citizen engagement, as a unified voice can help push for decisions. Local governments need to set clear targets on climate change and biodiversity in order to safeguard sustainable development in growing cities. A network of local governments, like the PEMSEA Network of Local Governments (PNLG), should lead initiatives to achieve sustainable development of coastal cities and enable replication of good practices.



Blue Economy Development: Where Are We Now? Where Are We Headed?

Ms. Cary Ann Cadman of The World Bank emphasized that the ocean space is changing dramatically. The changes in opportunities have increased tremendously in recent years. Dr. Zhanhai Zhang, Director General, Department of Strategic Planning and Economy, State Oceanic Administration, PR China, likens it to entering a “New Normal Economy”.

This presents an urgency: policymakers must know what the blue economy means for countries, and the value of oceans in supporting sustainable development. The contribution of the coastal and marine economy to the gross domestic product (GDP), as presented by countries in the workshop, shows that the region depends on coastal and marine resources in varying degrees: 3.3% in RO Korea, 4.5% in the Philippines, 9.4% in China, 13% in Indonesia and 19% in Viet Nam. Regardless of the overall contribution, participants expressed that it is essential to recognize natural capital as a critical economic asset and as a source of public benefits.

Different examples were presented on how investments can be “green” for blue economy development. Green ports and shipping, climate smart aquaculture and ecotourism demonstrate the shift from traditional ocean economy to the blue economy. New and innovative industries include marine biotechnology and ocean energy. These industries were born out of initiatives of the scientific community, in response to emerging demands. Presentations on blue carbon and public environmental investments reflected comprehensive plans that would contribute to the protection of coastal and marine ecosystems.

The workshop concluded that the concept of blue economy is still evolving. We are in a transitional phase in developing an ocean economy, necessitating integrated economic-environmental accounting systems and designing the right economic instruments and incentives to effect transformational change in the blue economy. Champions are needed to develop a blue economy assessment system, align it to policy and link it to priority setting for a sustainable ocean economy and sustainable management of coastal and marine ecosystems.



Business and the Blue Economy: Building an East Asian Seas Sustainable Business Network

Stephen Adrian Ross, Executive Director of PEMSEA, opened the workshop with an overview of PEMSEA's work with companies on integrated coastal management, highlighting that with accelerated development in the region, exploitation of marine resources is a certainty. Mr. Ross' opening remarks set the stage for the workshop, which endeavored to explore the role of business in growing a blue economy in the Seas of East Asia – and blue economy's relevance to business.

In this context, PEMSEA announced the launch of a new report on Blue Economy for Business in East Asia. Highlights of the report were shared, including the evolution of the blue economy concept and examples of risks and opportunities across several key industries, such as fisheries and aquaculture, tourism, resorts and coastal development. The report cites an increasing interest in blue economy from industry and business groups including the World Ocean Council and the Economist.

Insights from the report were complemented by presentations by a panel of industry representatives from oil & gas, fisheries, environmental services, heavy industry and tourism. Leaders from PT Badak NGL, Wm Morrison Supermarkets, Manila Water, Holcim Indonesia and Dongtian Park shared their work in the region related to sustainable development of coasts and oceans. Arnold Mortera, CTO of Manila Water, stated “There is a need for a critical mass of businesses that see the bigger picture and the massive impacts they can contribute beyond economic growth.” Participants explored the link between the social and environmental health of coastal and marine areas and business performance over the long term.

A productive breakout session between industry and government representatives produced a collective message from business for government ministers and a set of actionable ideas to guide the launch of PEMSEA's new East Asian Seas Sustainable Business Network, a pioneering initiative in the region for bringing companies together to build a blue economy in the region. Through the network, participants suggested that PEMSEA can play an important facilitative role and provide a platform for knowledge sharing, dialogues with technical experts and governments and innovative tools for managing coastal and marine areas.



PEMSEA Partnership Night

Attendees came together to relax and network with other coastal and ocean colleagues at the PEMSEA Partnership Night. Mr. Stephen Adrian Ross, Executive Director of PEMSEA, opened the evening by sharing the evolution of PEMSEA from a small project to a self-sustaining international organization focused on the sustainable development of the Seas of East Asia. A new video was launched highlighting an updated PEMSEA brand and PEMSEA's services and their application to government, international development, business, scientific and other partners.

Dr. Gil Jacinto emphasized the importance of PEMSEA's network of ICM Learning Centers and Regional Centers of Excellence, and introduced the addition of five more institutions in launching the PEMSEA Network of Learning Centers (PNLC), recognizing 15 outstanding institutions for their participation in the PNLC.

A highlight of the evening was the recognition of a set of pioneering local governments in achieving ICM System Level 1 Certification. This group of 15 local governments from the Philippines, Vietnam, Cambodia, Thailand and China was the first to pilot the certification, working hard to conform to the requirements of the ICM code.

PEMSEA also recognized the generous support and efforts of the East Asian Seas Congress hosts, sponsors and co-conveners, without whom a successful EAS Congress would not be possible.

To wrap up the evening, the audience was treated to special cultural performances from the youth delegation of Timor-Leste, youth delegation from the Philippines and a group of local performers who shared a variety of Vietnamese dances.





EAST ASIAN SEAS

Youth Forum

Fourth EAS Youth Forum delegates chart a path for the future they want

“Hope, initiative and courage” – this was how Ms. Adeline Tiffanie Suwana of Sahabat Alam, Indonesia, summarized her story on environmental advocacy in her presentation to the youth delegates. Hope that something can be done, the initiative to learn and the courage to act, to address an environmental issue. Ms. Suwana leads a group in implementing activities to address climate change, such as planting trees, harnessing renewable energy and raising awareness. Her comments inspired the youth to think critically on what needs to be done in their communities and to be passionate in pursuing their goals.

The fourth day of the EAS Youth Forum continued with delegates sharing their experiences. Chu Tengfei, a youth delegate from China, talked about his experiences with Blue Ribbon Ocean Conservation’s activities on ocean education and awareness.

To help the youth in their environment-related activities, Dr. Natalie Degger from PEMSEA provided an engaging discussion on creating a winning project proposal, ways of raising funds and the use of social media to support the implementation of their environmental activities.

Delegates developed the Da Nang Youth Declaration, which embodies the vision, actions and recommendations of the youth in charting the future they want. The Declaration will be presented during the Closing Ceremony of the EAS Congress.

Capping the day, the youth joined the Partnership Night where delegates from Timor-Leste and the Philippines proudly presented their national cultural dances.

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