

# Abstract

## SESSION 1:

A Decade of Partnerships in Sustainable Development of the Seas of East Asia: Synergies and Achievements

## WORKSHOP 1.3:

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

## Ocean Policy Development, Progress and Challenges in Malaysia

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Ocean and coastal management have long ceased from being just about fishing and navigation, to the management of a myriad of activities coexisting in a sea or coastal area. The situation in Malaysia is not much different. The increasingly complex sea use structure logically requires or demands changes in sea management objectives and approaches. Maritime affairs in Malaysia are however largely managed in a sectoral manner. This management approach is based on a tiered system structured around the federal and state government, ministries and agencies and to a lesser extent the local authorities. The management system is dependent on each tier of governance performing planning and coordination, implementation and enforcement, and developmental roles within the confines of their jurisdiction as defined by the constitution, laws and governmental directives. In theory, this approach provides a fairly reasonable coverage of sectoral issues. However, the extent and effectiveness of the coverage is subject to discussion, contestation and contention especially where cross-sectoral issues are concerned.

The importance of the ocean sector to national well-being requires that the approaches that have been largely inherited from the past are revisited towards establishing anticipatory, coordinated, adaptive and directed responses to new challenges and opportunities at sea. Recognising this, the Government prepared a draft National Ocean Policy (NOP). The policy builds on the new policy directions, strategies and programmes that will enable the country to emerge as a high-income nation; besides embracing a more focused role for Government as a regulator and catalyst while harnessing the creativity, energy and initiative of the private sector as the primary driver of Malaysia's growth aspirations. The NOP is envisaged to provide an essential framework to manage ocean resources in an inclusive and sustainable manner. This paper hence presents a case study of the NOP development in Malaysia and recent progress. Gaps and challenges faced in realising and implementing the policy are further discussed.



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## **About Cheryl Rita Kaur:**

Cheryl Rita received her MSc in Marine Science, Policy and Law at the National Oceanography Centre Southampton, University of Southampton, United Kingdom and completed her BSc (Hons.) in Marine Biology at University Malaysia Terengganu. She joined the Maritime Institute of Malaysia (MIMA) in 2006. MIMA is a policy research institute set up by the Malaysian Government to look into matters relating to Malaysia's interest at sea and to serve as a national focal point for research in the maritime sector. Cheryl's research interest is in the areas of ocean governance, natural resources, marine protected areas management, and marine pollution. Her research findings and views on coastal and marine environmental issues have appeared in various publications. Cheryl has also participated and presented papers at national and international events. In addition, she was awarded an Asian Conservation Fellowship (2006-2009) by the Earthwatch Institute of Australia. More recently, she undertook a placement with the government Centre for Environment, Fisheries and Aquaculture Science (CEFAS) in Lowestoft, UK in 2011 where she worked on the European Union's framework on Monitoring and Evaluation of Spatially Managed Areas; and as a Visiting Scientist at Academia Sinica in Taipei, Taiwan in 2012. Cheryl is currently a member of several national working groups under the Coral Triangle Initiative (CTI), and active in regional environmental initiatives including the Bay of Bengal Large Marine Ecosystem (BOBLME) and the Sulu-Sulawesi Marine Ecoregion (SSME) programmes. She was earlier involved in the UNEP/GEF project on Reversing Environmental Degradation Trends in the South China Sea and the Gulf of Thailand.