



THE EAST ASIAN SEAS CONGRESS 2015

**Global Targets**

**Local Benefits**

**Setting the Sustainable Development Agenda for the Seas of East Asia beyond 2015**

16-21 November 2015 • Furama Resort, Danang, Vietnam

**East Asia Seas Congress 2015  
International Conference Session 1:  
A Decade of Partnerships in Sustainable Development of the Seas of East Asia:  
Synergies and Achievements**

**Session 1 Conclusions and Recommendations**

*The following conclusions and recommendations, prepared on the basis of three workshop reports of Session 1, were presented by Mr. Chu Pham Ngoc Hien, Deputy Minister of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment of Viet Nam, and Session Chair, at the closing of the International Conference on 20 November 2015.*

**Focus of the Session**

1. Session 1 explored the progress and achievements across the EAS region in coastal and ocean governance since 14 PEMSEA participating countries adopted the Sustainable Development Strategy for the Seas of East Asia (SDS-SEA) in 2003. The session also considered new international instruments and obligations as well as emerging issues and challenges with regard to sustainable development of coasts and oceans, and their impacts on the economies in the region.
2. This Session consisted of 3 workshops:

**Workshop 1: Managing Risks in Climate Change and Disasters in the Seas of East Asia**, chaired by Mr. N.M.S.I Arambepola, Director of the Asian Disaster Preparedness Center.

**Workshop 2: Maritime Sector Contributions to a Blue Economy for the Seas of East Asia**, co-chaired by Mr. Brian Sullivan, Executive Director of IPIECA and Ms. Franca Sprong, Project Director of GIZ–Sustainable Port Development in the ASEAN region.

**Workshop 3: Coastal and Ocean Governance in the Seas of East Asia: from Nation to Region**, co-chaired by: 1) Ms. Lena Kern, Chief Adviser, GIZ-SSME Project, 2) Dr. Gunnar Kullenberg,

Former Executive Secretary/Director-General, IOC-UNESCO, 3) Mr. Hiroshi Terashima, President, OPRI-SPF, and 4) Dr. Chua Thia-Eng, Chair Emeritus of the EAS Partnership Council, PEMSEA.

## **II. Major Conclusions**

3. Significant progress and improvements in coastal and ocean governance have been made at the regional and national levels since the SDS-SEA was first adopted in 2003, including, among others:
  - the development, adoption and implementation of national coastal and ocean policies in 10 countries;
  - the establishment of multi-sectoral institutional planning and coordinating mechanisms in 9 countries;
  - the formulation and adoption of national legislation on coastal and ocean management in 7 countries; and
  - the development and implementation of national plans of actions or framework programs for SDS-SEA implementation in 10 countries.
4. The Sustainable Development Strategy for the Seas of East Asia remains a highly useful and relevant management framework for addressing international and regional commitments and obligations related to environmental management and sustainable development of coasts and oceans of the region, as well as a platform for cooperation among EAS countries, regional organizations and programmes and multilateral and bilateral projects.
5. Over the years, the region has seen the explosive growth in knowledge and information on the impacts and risks of climate change and natural and man-made disasters, which have been translated into policy and practice in CCA and DRR, including the scaling up ICM and other programs to facilitate change and enhancing the resilience of coastal communities.
6. Partnership arrangements have proven to be an effective and essential component of regional and national programmes, including partnerships among national and local governments, industry, community based organizations, donors, universities and other stakeholders in identifying and responding to the risks and impacts of climate change, oil spill preparedness and response, pollution reduction and waste management, protection, rehabilitation and conservation of habitats, sustainable fisheries and livelihoods, and water supply and conservation management.
7. Despite this progress, it is apparent that threats to coastal and marine ecosystems and the services that they provide to the region are increasing, with particular concern for the major threats and impacts related to climate change and ocean acidification on the social, economic and ecological objectives and gains that have been made over the years.

## **III. Major Recommendations**

8. The SDS-SEA 2015 is well aligned with recent international instruments and commitments including the Aichi Biodiversity Targets, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, among others, and in particular is representative of the region's response to the recently adopted UN SDGs. The new ADAPT strategy within the SDS-SEA 2015 also serves as the

region's input to the upcoming 21<sup>st</sup> Conference of the Parties of UNFCCC discussions in Paris. To achieve the desired outcomes of this updated regional oceans strategy, it is recommended that:

9. Countries of the region put in place the necessary mechanisms to ratify/accede to international instruments including UNCLOS and IMO Conventions.
10. Countries institutionalize international commitments and regional strategies and action programmes (SDG's, SDS-SEA, SAP's through development of national legislation, adoption of comprehensive policies, strategies, programmes and enforcement mechanisms.
11. Countries continue to put in place innovative legal and institutional mechanisms to promote integrated implementation of policies, strategies and action plans at the national and local levels including sustainable financing mechanisms, and to strengthen capacities to effectively implement these mechanisms and instruments.
12. Regional organizations and ocean-related programmes, donors and international development agencies strengthen their support and existing collaborative arrangements in order to minimize duplication, ensure synergies and improve cost-effectiveness of implementation of EAS initiatives. Areas for improved collaboration include targeted research on ecosystem valuation and marine spatial planning, improving vulnerability assessment and resiliency of coastal communities, capacity development, information and knowledge sharing, and developing and harmonizing monitoring, evaluation and reporting systems on the health of coasts and oceans in the region using a set of agreed impact indicators.