



EAST ASIAN SEAS CONGRESS 2015

# Daily Bulletin

Opening Ceremony

## The East Asian Seas Congress 2015 Opens in Da Nang, Viet Nam: Setting the Sustainable Development Agenda for the Seas of East Asia Beyond 2015

More than 500 participants converged on the beautiful coastal city of Da Nang, Viet Nam for the opening ceremony of the East Asian Seas Congress 2015. Following the entrance of flags from around the region carried by Youth Forum delegates, a special video presentation introduced the participants to PEMSEA's Country and Non-Country Partners, their work in the region and the importance of the EAS Congress in charting a path for the post-2015 sustainable development agenda for the Seas of East of Asia.

**Deputy Prime Minister of Viet Nam, Mr. Hoang Trung Hai**, opened by calling for the cooperation of nations in the region to address impacts on coastal resources, emphasizing holistic bilateral and multilateral cooperation to maintain sustainable development of the coastal and marine economy. The Prime Minister highlighted that the Sustainable Development Strategy for the Seas of East Asia (SDS-SEA) provides a useful framework for strengthened cooperation and collaboration among regional states, noting that improvement has been observed in countries that have implemented the SDS-SEA.

**Hon. Nguyen Minh Quang, Minister of Natural Resources and Environment of Viet Nam**, followed by expressing that the EAS Congress 2015 provides a valuable forum for assessing the lessons learned and progress made for setting targets beyond

2015, in line with the United Nations (UN) Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Viet Nam has made significant progress in meeting its international commitments towards the sustainable development of its seas and islands with support from international organizations, and experience from its integrated coastal management (ICM) sites has demonstrated that proper science and institutional infrastructure are critical for sustainable coastal development.

Strategically located in Central Viet Nam, with coastal resources that provide opportunities for economic development, Da Nang is an important socioeconomic hub.

**Hon. Huynh Duc Tho, Chairman of the Da Nang People's Committee**, shared that from 2011 to 2015, Da Nang has maintained a healthy GDP, but rapid industrialization and urbanization poses challenges to the sustainable development of the city. The Chairman expressed the city's pride in hosting the EAS Congress 2015, providing leaders and experts opportunities to build partnerships and share experiences in implementing the SDS-SEA and growing a blue economy.

The East Asian Seas are a major economic growth area and will play an important role in achieving the SDGs. Significant

progress has been made in the region towards achieving the targets of the SDS-SEA. **Amb. Mary Seet-Cheng, Chair of the East Asian Seas Partnership Council**, highlighted that 84% of countries in the region have implemented national policies, strategies and action plans/programs in coastal and ocean and river basin management. As of June 2015, 14% of the region's coastline was covered under some form of ICM, with further scaling up efforts well underway. Building on this progress, the SDS-SEA 2015 has been updated to remain in step with the changing circumstances of the region.

**Ms. Pratibha Mehta, UN Resident Coordinator to Viet Nam and UNDP Resident Representative for Viet Nam**, cited the timeliness of the EAS Congress 2015 as the new SDGs have been adopted by UN Member States in September, specifically Goal 14, which addresses marine resources. The implementation of the SDS-SEA highlights the inclusiveness and dedication of the region as it involves the highest level of government down to coastal communities, including the business sector, civil society and academe. Ms. Mehta highlighted that UNDP views PEMSEA

as an innovative and effective platform to address SDG 14 and UNDP is ready to support translating the SDGs and SDS-SEA 2015 into action at the national and local levels.

The Congress was officially opened by **Mr. Terence Jones, EAS Congress International Conference Chair**, who shared his pleasure in witnessing the evolution of PEMSEA from its early years to its current role as a self-sustaining intergovernmental organization, and the adoption of the SDS-SEA across the region. The Congress offers an opportunity to reflect on collective efforts in the region and its voice in the context of the SDGs and international discussions on climate change. Mr. Jones emphasized that the international conference offers a valuable forum to address questions including: (1) what synergies and achievements remain relevant and significant to the sustainable development of the region?; (2) What actions are needed to accelerate the realization of the SDGs and to confront the challenges posed by climate change?; and (3) In the context of the updated SDS-SEA, how can countries move that vision to reality at the local level by aligning with the global agenda for sustainable development?





## EAS Congress 2015 kicks off with a sharing of tools and experiences on marine ecosystem valuation and spatial planning

Organized by the Korea Maritime Institute (KMI), the 2nd International Training Program on Marine Ecosystem Valuation and Spatial Management Tools was attended by over 40 participants from 15 countries on November 16. The special pre-congress event brought together academia, government and practitioners to encourage the wider application of tools and methodologies in other sites and countries in the East Asian region and globally.

Dr. Jungho Nam, Research Fellow of the Korea Maritime Institute reiterated the importance of the tools and their utilization at a local level. This was reiterated by Mr. Stephen Adrian Ross, Executive Director of PEMSEA, who encouraged the participants to go beyond the training and facilitate the application of the tools on the ground.

"It's one thing to learn about these tools. Applying the tools is another thing," Mr. Ross expressed. He encouraged KMI to develop the training into an annual event to strengthen knowledge and skills among the PEMSEA's Network of Learning Centers and other partners for application in new ICM sites.

Tools and case studies on Marine Assessment and Planning Support System – Marine Suitability Assessment (MAPS-MSA), Marine Assessment and Planning Support System – Ecosystem Service Valuation (MAPS-SEV) and Marine InVEST (Integrated Valuation of Environmental Services and Tradeoffs) were shared by Dr. Nam (KMI), Prof. Daeseok Kang (Pukyong National University) and Dr. Choong-Ki Kim (Korea Environment Institute). Participants including representatives



**Dr. Jungho Nam encouraging the participants to provide input to the upcoming training workshop.**

from ICM Learning Centers, national focal agencies, expert groups and research institutions participated in the activity and expressed that the tools are important in making informed management decisions. However, further training and discussions must be conducted to create more confidence among the Learning Centers on the application of these tools.

This special one-day event sets the stage for an in-depth training activity scheduled as part of the international workshop slated for the second quarter of 2016 in Busan, RO Korea. Dr. Nam encouraged participants to apply for the 3rd Training Program on Marine Ecosystem Services and Spatial Planning Tools and called for abstracts for the 4th International Workshop on Marine Ecosystem Services and Spatial Planning.



## Charting the Future We Want: Engaging Young Champions for the Ocean Beyond 2015

The youth has a crucial role in charting the future of our shared seas and achieving the post-2015 development agenda. The fourth East Asian Seas Youth Forum (YF4) kicked off at the Da Nang People's Committee Hall on November 16, centered on the theme, "Engaging Young Champions for the Ocean Beyond 2015."

Convening 75 young leaders from 9 countries in the East Asian Seas (EAS) region (Cambodia, China, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Philippines, RO Korea, Singapore, Timor-Leste and Viet Nam), YF4 will empower younger generations to be champions for the oceans and coasts of the region.

A week-long event held in parallel with the East Asian Seas Congress, YF4 features interactions between young leaders and innovators in youth-led environmental movements and organizations for peer-to-peer learning discussions, team-building and creative sessions, and activities to enhance the youth skills on project development and management, fund raising, use of social media and science and cross-cultural communication.

In the lead-off session, this talented pool of young champions was introduced to PEMSEA's role in promoting the sustainable development of the Seas of East Asia, along with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). These will serve as a framework for drafting a collective youth commitment to achieving the SDGs, which will be embodied in a Da Nang Youth Declaration. Challenged to be the change the world needs, the group of YF4 delegates wasted no time, diving into various team-building activities to foster leadership, initiative, teamwork and camaraderie. The youth delegates' enthusiasm is palpable, as Raezia Marasigan from the Philippines declared, "I am committed to giving 200% for the success of this Forum". The week's activities aim to give the youth the skills needed to generate implementable project proposals for sustainable development of coasts and oceans in the region.

Capping an exciting and productive first day, the youth delegates proudly carried the flags of the EAS region in the EAS Congress opening ceremony before enjoying some time relaxing and meeting their fellow attendees for dinner on the beach.