



THE EAST ASIAN SEAS CONGRESS 2015

**Global Targets**

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

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**East Asia Seas Congress 2015  
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**Conclusions and Recommendations of Technical and Policy Workshop on  
Sustainable Nutrient Management**

*Prepared by the Workshop Chair **Dr. Christopher Cox**, Global Partnership on Nutrient Management Secretariat, UNEP GPA, and Workshop Coordinator, **Ms. Nancy Bermas**, PEMSEA, based on the presentations, open forum and plenary discussions.*

**Workshop Focus**

1. **Nutrient loading from agricultural runoff and untreated wastewater:** Countries attending the workshop, namely Cambodia, China, Indonesia, RO Korea, the Philippines, Thailand and Vietnam noted that crop and livestock production are significant non-point and point-source contributors of nutrient loads to fresh and coastal waters. Untreated and inadequately treated domestic wastewater discharges from coastal cities and communities are also significant nutrient contributors, with noted concern over the rapid rate of expansion of urban footprints and impacts to the marine environment in the region.
2. **Eutrophication and harmful algal blooms (HABs):** Algal blooms are natural ecosystem processes but land-based contribution of nutrients is an important factor favoring their occurrence. Shoreline physical development is known to create conditions that may be more conducive to HABs within inshore areas due to current circulation modification. Superimposed, the frequency and extent of the harmful events can be exacerbated by climate change-induced modifications of ocean dynamics. HABs negatively affect fisheries resources through degraded ecosystems and can impact human health through seafood poisoning from toxins released by algae. The proliferation of eutrophic

and dead-zones worldwide is estimated to result in annual economic losses of approximately US\$200 billion/year.

3. **Fragmented response across countries:** There is need for sharing of common approaches between countries in the Asia region in addressing nutrient management both from the standpoint of efficient use of nutrients at points of application within production systems, and designing and implementing solutions to mitigate nutrient excess and leakage to the environment. There is need to strengthen the profile and reach of the Global Partnership on Nutrient Management (GPNM) within the Asia region to assist countries in this regard.

### **Workshop Conclusions**

4. **National responses to address nutrient management:** The nutrient challenge is a multi-layered complex issue that needs to be addressed in an integrated manner across many sectors, recognizing the agricultural and wastewater management sectors as key areas for intervention. Countries need to continue efforts in addressing the nutrient challenge and support governance mechanisms at the national level; this includes implementation of appropriate incentive frameworks and regulatory tools directed at nutrient use and discharge controls to facilitate adoption of best practice.
5. **Recognition of work in progress:** There is much work already in progress in many countries in the region but they can benefit further from shared experiences and lessons learnt. The GEF-funded Global Nutrient Cycling Project has contributed to best practices in sustainable nutrient management through expansion of the foundational knowledge base through demonstration in Chilika Lake, Odisha State in India, and in the Manila Bay watershed and Laguna de Bay in the Philippines.
6. **Coordinated global approach to nutrient management:** The Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities (GPA), established in 1995 is the only global inter-governmental mechanism explicitly addressing the linkages between freshwater, coastal and marine environments. Its mandate, which was strengthened at GPA's third Inter-Governmental Review (IGR-3) in 2012 through the adoption of the Manila Declaration, directed focused attention to the issue of nutrient pollution through a Global Partnership on Nutrient Management (GPNM).

### **Workshop Recommendations**

7. **Country representation within a GPNM Asia Regional Platform:** The GPNM needs to continue efforts to realize a Regional Platform for Asia that helps countries share lessons

and coordinate efforts in addressing the various aspects of the nutrient challenge. The Regional Seas Programmes (RSPs), specifically the South Asia Cooperative Environment Programme (SACEP)<sup>1</sup>, the Coordinating Body on the Seas of East Asia (COBSEA)<sup>2</sup> and the Action Plan for the Protection, Management and Development of the Marine and Coastal Environment of the Northwest Pacific Region (NOWPAP)<sup>3</sup> should be entry points for the GPNM Asia Nutrient Platform. This will facilitate more formal engagement and commitment by countries within the Asia Platform through the formal governing council and implementation mechanisms of the regional seas programmes. The Partnerships in Environmental Management for the Seas of East Asia (PEMSEA) is a key partner to the GPNM contributing technical and scientific inputs to advance best management practices. This cooperation should be expanded under the Sustainable Development Strategy for the Seas of East Asia (SDS-SEA) framework.

8. **Asia Regional Platform within GPNM global advocacy:** There should be country representatives from each of the regional seas regions, namely South Asia, East Asia and the Northwest Pacific on the GPNM global Steering Committee to enhance global leadership and advocacy that will reflect the positions of the Asia region. The designates from each of these sub-regions will provide representation on behalf of their respective sub-regional country groupings.
9. **Defining the work of the Asia GPNM Platform:** The Regional Platform should work closely with the GPNM and its Secretariat within the UNEP-GPA Coordination Office to develop a Work Plan based on priority themes, endorsed by the Platform member countries. This work plan will need to integrate the work on nutrient management across overall and sectoral developmental plans within relevant national and regional strategy frameworks.

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<sup>1</sup> SACEP members: Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka

<sup>2</sup> COBSEA members: Cambodia, China, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Republic of Korea, Singapore, Thailand, Republic of Vietnam

<sup>3</sup> NOWPAP members: China, Japan, Republic of Korea, Russia