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# EAS Congress Bulletin

**A Daily Report of the East Asian Seas Congress 2009**

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## EAS CONGRESS 2009 HIGHLIGHTS: MONDAY, 23 NOVEMBER 2009

The East Asian Seas (EAS) Congress 2009 opened on Monday in Manila, Philippines. Convened by the GEF/UNDP/IMO Regional Programme on Partnerships in Environmental Management for the Seas of East Asia (PEMSEA), this five-day event is expected to provide a region-wide platform for dialogue, knowledge exchange, capacity building, strategic action and cooperation for the sustainable development of the seas of East Asia. The theme of the Congress is "Partnerships at Work: Local Implementation and Good Practices."



L-R: Chua Thia-Eng, Chair of the EAS Partnership Council receives a warm "Mabuhay" hug from Fidel V. Ramos, former President of the Republic of the Philippines.

An International Conference on Sustainable Coastal and Ocean Development, a Ministerial Forum, a Special EAS Partnership Council Meeting, a Senior Government Officials Meeting and a Youth Forum will all convene as part of the Congress.

In the morning, delegates attended the opening ceremony and heard a keynote address by the former Philippine President Fidel Valdez Ramos. Delegates also convened in sessions under the conference's first theme, "Coastal and Ocean Governance," including on: contributions of marine economic sectors to regional and national gross domestic product (GDP)



Participants during the opening ceremony.

in an uncertain climate; the continental shelf; addressing transboundary issues through regional and subregional seas cooperation; and land- and sea-use zoning. They also attended a number of workshops and seminars, and a youth forum.

## OPENING THE CEREMONY

The EAS Congress opened with a procession of country flags and a video presentation on the meeting's themes. Jose Atienza Jr., Secretary for the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, Philippines welcomed participants to the meeting, and noted that East Asian seas have the highest concentration of marine life in the world. He said that the coral triangle, one of the world's richest fishing grounds, is now threatened by overexploitation and destructive fishing methods. He observed that the East Asian area is a climate change hotspot and, therefore, highly vulnerable to storms and floods, such as the recent floods in the Philippines. He then highlighted the role of local governments in integrated coastal management (ICM) programs, which have been implemented in more than 100 areas covering 3000 kilometers of coastline in the Philippines.

Raphael Lotilla, Executive Director of PEMSEA Resource Facility, discussed the organization of the Congress and lauded the participation of IGOs and members of the academia. He emphasized the role of the regional implementation of ICM, in which projects become self-sustaining partnerships with support for the Global Environment Facility (GEF), UN Development



Jose Atienza Jr., Secretary for the DENR, Philippines.

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Programme (UNDP) and the UN Environment Programme (UNEP) through the PEMSEA work programme. He noted that PEMSEA now has a secretariat with continuing support from the governments of the Philippines, China, Japan and the Republic of Korea.

Noting that the EAS Congress was conceived as an “intellectual market place” for stakeholders to exchange information on the sustainable management of the watersheds, river basins, estuaries and coastal seas, Chua Thia-Eng, Chair of the EAS Partnership Council, welcomed participants to the Congress. He explained that a major focus of PEMSEA is to promote the implementation of the Sustainable Development Strategy for the Seas of East Asia (SDS-SEA) and said that the transformation of PEMSEA into a regional organization on coastal and ocean governance is a great achievement. He wished everyone a fruitful stay in Manila.

Keiichi Katayama, President of the Ocean Construction Company, Japan, explained how his time spent in an unspoiled fishing village served as his inspiration for finding a solution to marine degradation caused by industrial development and Japan’s burgeoning “concrete culture.” He highlighted the “shell nursery” as a safe haven for fish populations built from discarded oyster shells and, noting that several hundred fishers have embraced the nursery practice, he highlighted the importance of combining local knowledge and environmental responsibility.

Rodrigo de Jesus, Bantay Dagat (Guardians of the Sea), Philippines, said the Bantay Dagat is an association of citizen volunteers from the Batangas fishing community. He explained the group was formed to “protect the seas” and implement the Philippines’ Fishery Code following huge decreases in yields due to illegal fishing methods. He noted that activities include sea-borne and foot patrols watching over protected areas, as well as educating of community members. He highlighted that the Bantay Dagat has resulted in increased fishing stocks, and that tourism has grown with the improved state of the coral reefs.

Jacqueline Badcock, Resident Representative to the Philippines, UNDP, welcomed the participation of youth and reiterated UNDP’s commitment to provide the region with necessary assistance to help achieve the millennium development goals. She hoped that success at this Congress would translate to success in the climate change talks in Copenhagen in December.

Chair Lotilla, speaking as Head of the EAS Congress Secretariat, then officially opened the EAS Congress 2009.



View of the opening ceremony.

### KEYNOTE PRESENTATIONS

Fidel Valdez Ramos, the former President of the Philippines, stressed the importance of PEMSEA for institutionalizing the implementation of the SDS-SEA. He underscored the continued salience of environmental issues and the nexus of economic and environmental health in spite of the global economic crisis, and reviewed associated efforts in the Philippines, including the enactment of a National Marine Policy, which calls for an integrated framework for managing coastal zones and offshore and oceanic resources using sustainable development principles.

He called for improvements in responding to natural disasters, noting that Japan experiences very low mortality rates compared to other countries in the typhoon region. He stressed that responsible ocean and coastal stewardship can cushion people from human-induced crises and natural hazards. He noted that in achieving this it is necessary to strengthen integrated approaches to the management of coastal communities, their marine environment and resources. In closing, he underscored the importance of participatory partnerships, as they promote empowerment, and he further encouraged delegates to “care, share, and dare as a way of shaping our collective future.”

Amb. A. Svererajah, Singapore, provided a plenary keynote presentation and introduced the meeting’s first theme, “Coastal and Ocean Governance” on behalf of Tommy Koh, Ambassador-at-Large for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Singapore. He reminded delegates that climate change has the potential to become the greatest security threat facing humanity, and that rising sea temperatures could disrupt entire ecosystems and impact fish stocks. Svererajah advocated stronger ocean governance at the regional level as a solution to unsustainable fishing. He also recognized UN Convention on the Law of the Sea as the “constitution of the oceans,” which: was difficult to negotiate but is a balanced representation of diverse interests; established a compulsory dispute settlement system for states and governments; introduced new legal concepts such as Exclusive Economic Zones; and created provisions for the protection of the marine environment alongside sovereign States high seas rights.

Drawing on ICM experiences in Singapore, Svererajah highlighted that protecting the marine environment, maintaining navigational freedoms, and pursuing economic development are not mutually exclusive. He concluded by stating that: UNCLOS provisions have served us well and should be respected; there is great value in the ICM approach



Keiichi Katayama, Ocean Construction Company, Japan.



L-R: Demetrio Ignacio, Undersecretary for the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, Philippines; Amb. A. Selverajah, Singapore; Jose Atienza Jr., Secretary for the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, Philippines; Jacqueline Badcock, UNDP; Fidel V. Ramos, former President of the Philippines; Chua Thia-Eng, Chair of the EAS Partnership Council, and Raphael Lotilla, Executive Director of PEMSEA Resource Facility.

for the sustainable use of coastal regions; and PEMSEA participants should strengthen regional governance on land-based pollution, unsustainable fishing and climate change.

## OPENING OF THEMATIC SESSIONS

**COASTAL AND OCEAN GOVERNANCE: Economic contribution of marine sectors to regional and national GDP in an uncertain climate:** The session was chaired by Cielito Habito, Ateneo de Manila University, Philippines, who noted that the island economies in Asia base their economic planning on land, not seas. He observed that in the Philippines, the total territory is four-fifths water, but that planning is still based mainly on land activities.

Making the keynote presentation, Charles Colgan, University of Southern Maine, US, spoke of the challenges and benefits of measuring contributions of the marine economy. He said that marine economies could be measured according to economic activity (employment, output and population) versus economic value (payment for social services such as tourism). He discussed the calculation of estimates of non-market values, amenities and ecosystem values, stating that there are no standard estimates and that data collection is inconsistent. He identified a major problem in marine economics: there are small measured values but big uses of some resources, citing that the economic contributions of recreation and wetlands can exceed values of standard GDP measurements, as an example.

Sam Baird, Fisheries and Oceans, Canada, chaired a panel on contributions of the marine sectors in East Asian economies. Panelists discussed: the importance of the maritime sector in socio-economic development; measurement of maritime economic activities; and how economies are shaped by seas, as conduits for trade, transmigration, religion, and socio-economic development. Speakers mentioned that: measuring economic value is difficult, but necessary, to inform decisions on management; and basic plans on ocean policy are based on economic surveys often derived from unsound data.

The discussion focused on problems of measurement, such as whether statisticians measure fish processing as part of the marine or non-marine sector, and how port authorities measure throughput of containers.

The session on a common framework for measuring the marine economy was chaired by Alistair McIlgorm, PEMSEA, who discussed the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) statistical framework. He said that the project was developed by the Marine Resource Conservation Working Group of APEC for aiding decision makers with uniform measurement of marine economies, and the normalization of data and approaches across APEC economies. He argued that accurate

marine economic data could better aid decision makers by providing government and industry with: information on GDP and employment; monitoring annual changes; identifying marine economic dependence of other sectors; and providing baseline information for long-term planning.

Discussion touched on how end-users need pragmatic definitions of the accounts and full descriptions of the categories used by the economists. McIlgorm noted that policymakers need advice on the meaning of the accounts

and categories to make sound decisions.

The session on how marine economic valuation can contribute to national policy was chaired by Sam Baird, Department of Fisheries and Oceans, Canada. He described national studies in terms of the history of economic studies of ocean industries, methodology problems, the need for a peer review process, and addressing weaknesses in data.



Nazery Khalid, Center for Marine Economics and Industry.

A panel discussed the marine economy and environmental values, and the contribution of marine economy valuation to policy and the management of national wealth. Speakers addressed green accounting in terms of: physical and monetary measures of stocks and flows of natural resources; depreciation of physical and natural capital; and valuation of environmental damage. There was a discussion of adaptation for climate change in terms of sea level rise, storm events and changes in resource location.

The discussion addressed the contribution of marine economic valuation to managing sustainable development. Participants reviewed ideas for developing marine economy profiles for measuring coastal resources in regionally consistent ways.

**Post-May 2009 perspective on the continental shelf:** Chair Galo Carrera, Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf (CLCS), stressed the scientific gains from efforts to delineate the extension of continental shelves, while noting that the study has also exacerbated old territorial disputes and opened new ones.

Masahiro Akiyama, Ocean Policy Research Foundation, described Japan's March 2009 submission to CLCS, which makes claim to seven regions between Japan and the Philippines comprising 740,000 square kilometers. He noted



L-R: Valentian Germani, UNDOALOS and Galo Carrera, Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf.

potential overlapping claims with the US and the Republic of Palau, and said China and the Republic of Korea have submitted “notes verbales” to the CLCS concerning Japan’s assertion that the Okinotori are islands according to UNCLOS Article 121.

Jay L. Batongbacal, Philippine Center for Marine Affairs, described two regions where the Philippines might claim an extended continental shelf: off the eastern shore of Luzon Island; and in the South China Sea. He said the latter will involve disputes with Vietnam, Malaysia, Brunei and China, and called for greater cooperation among these countries.

Nguyen Hong-Thao, University of Hanoi Law Faculty, said that disputes in the South China Sea concern the technical issue of defining the continental shelf and the significance of islands in the region. He reviewed the process followed by the CLCS and the types of submissions states can make, and said the Commission had no power to decide about overlapping claims. He also suggested that South China Sea disputes might encourage more states to clarify their claims according to technical and scientific terms required by UNCLOS.

In questions, participants queried the presenters on specifics of the disputes among the various countries in the region. Co-Chair, Valentina Germani, noted the interesting points about the opportunities for cooperation that may flow from submissions about claims for extended continental shelves.

Chair Galo Carrera, presented on Annex I of the Rules of Procedure of the CLCS and its Implementation by States between 1999 to 2009. He reviewed the relevant provisions of UNCLOS relating to disputes in the context of Article 76 (definition of a continental shelf), and stressed the difficult and delicate discussions determining how and when the CLCS would consider disputes. He discussed the aim of Annex I and reviewed: different forms of country submissions, including disagreements or agreements with other submissions; and situations where country disputes preclude the Commission from considering submissions. He said the Commission is overwhelmed by work and called on states to seek other means to resolve their disputes, noting that peace and stability are prerequisites for all other policy aims.

Robert Beckman, National University of Singapore, clarified that China and the Republic of Korea could challenge Japan’s claims about the Okinotori Islands under Article 121 (regime of island), noting that it remains unclear whether the overwhelming level of submissions to CLCS will improve or deter further cooperation among states over maritime disputes. He opined that China is making its claims align with UNCLOS, though still remained ambiguous to maintain bargaining strength.



Kuen-Chen Fu, Shanghai Jiao Tong University.

In a discussion forum, Hasjim Djalal, Indonesia International Studies Institute, raised questions on, *inter alia*: the classification of islands versus rocks under Article 121; rules for submission to CLCS for countries not yet parties to UNCLOS; and resolving disputes between CLCS and countries. Kuen-chen Fu, Shanghai Jiao Tong University Law School, stressed that the underlying aim of UNCLOS was to foster peace and stability and felt that states need more time to understand CLCS process. Suk Jae Kwon, Korean Ocean Research and Development Institute, noted that the deadline for submission forced some countries to submit to the CLCS when they were aware of disputes. Merlin Magallona, University of the Philippines, explored various possibilities for future cooperation provide for by UNCLOS and the CLCS.

**Initiatives in East Asia for addressing transboundary issues through regional and subregional seas cooperation:**

Chair Ivan Zavadsky, GEF, introduced the workshop, underscoring the importance of delivering clear workshop recommendations. Summarizing the numerous regional and subregional initiatives underway in the East Asian seas, Anna Tengberg, UNDP Regional Centre in Bangkok, recommended, *inter alia*, that regional funding on marine initiatives be increased to US\$1 billion per year to address emerging challenges.



Theresa Mundita Lim, DENR, Philippines

Theresa Mundita S. Lim, DENR, Philippines, presented on the Sulu-Sulawesi Marine Ecoregion (SSME). She informed participants that the framework for the SSME tri-national initiative had been agreed and outlined various good practices demonstrated by the SSME, including adherence to practices of the Association of the Southeast Asian Nations. Yihang Jiang, UNDP/GEF Yellow Sea Project, emphasized the ways that catch fisheries in the yellow sea are monitored and managed. She also presented research on use of bivalves to remove particulate waste in the water column, and optimal infrastructure design to improve water quality.

Ellik Adler, UNEP, lamented that: an estimated one hundred million tons of plastic are present in a mid-pacific trash gyre; 100,000 marine mammals are killed each year from litter; large costs are associated with clean-up; and there is an absence of scientific data, legal mechanisms and enforcement regimes for marine debris. Alexander Tkalin, UNEP, drew attention to, *inter alia*, the Action Plan for the Protection, Management and Development of the Marine and Coastal Environment of the Northwest Pacific Region marine litter database. Tonny Wagey, Regional Coordinator of the Arafura and Timor Seas Expert Forum, summarized highlights of the Coral Triangle Initiative summit and World Oceans Conference held concurrently in May 2009. He also presented on the Arafura and Timor Seas Program, and emphasized that the regional cooperative mechanism component was a critical aspect of the project. Vo Si Tuan, UNEP/GEF South China Sea Project, presented on first attempts to develop a regionally coordinated programme to reverse environmental degradation, particularly on: coastal habitat degradation and loss; land-based pollution; and fisheries. He highlighted the success of local level round-tables to exchange information to local people and draw on local governing mechanisms.



Tony La Viña, Ateneo de Manila University, Philippines

Tony La Viña, Ateneo de Manila University, Philippines, presented on: how PEMSEA has developed into a mechanism with a sustainable focus; and the implementation and limitations of the SDS-SEA.

Zhou Quilin, China, spoke about a UNDP/GEF/SDA Project on Biodiversity Management in the Coastal Area of China's South Sea that includes four initiatives in five Chinese coastal provinces.

He underscored the importance of good partnerships and local capacity, and stressed that countries could not solve problems in isolation as their territories and biodiversity were all linked.

Chair Zavadsky moderated the panel discussion and posed four questions for the panel discussion: creating synergies and complementarities among the regional and subregional organizations and initiatives; replicating good practices; enhancing regional coordination among programmes and initiatives; and areas of collaboration.

Panelists discussed the need for: progressive thinking on developing mechanisms for cooperation; framing discussions within the context of climate change; using regular forums as an alternative to forming a regional coordinating agent; and a systematic gap analysis. Participants urged countries to: work in partnership rather than in isolation and seek capacity assistance to recognize cultural differences that hamper regional coordination. The discussion highlighted that: SSME maximizes its efficacy by identifying common concerns and complementarities between members; and countries must not rely on donors but mobilize funding internally. Chair Zavadsky said the Congress will formulate recommendations for plenary and summarized his key conclusions. They include: informing countries about what regional programmes are running and how they can contribute; harmonizing of methodological approaches to facilitate national planning; and sharing lessons between national and regional programmes.

**Challenges and opportunities in land and sea-use zoning:** Kem Lowry, University of Hawaii, chaired the session. Presenting on the progress in implementing land and sea-use zoning plans, Robert Jara, DENR, Philippines, noted that issues and challenges include the need for: improved

institutional arrangements; increased capacity; localizing regional or provincial zoning plans; and technical guidelines in zoning that consider climate change effects.

Candido Cabrido, University of the Philippines, highlighted the roles of Agroecological and Environmentally-critical Areas Network (ECAN) in land- and water-use planning and for guiding development. He noted that the success of its coastal component depends on various factors including legal mandate, funding and local participation.

Mark Simmons, Queensland Environmental Protection Agency, Australia, presented on strategies and lessons learned from zoning in Moreton Bay Marine Park. He noted that the objectives of the rezoning plan were to increase biodiversity and resilience to climate change in the marine park. He said that the framework was based on guiding principles that had been developed by a scientific steering committee.

Hugh Kirkman, Marine Science and Ecology, presented on choosing marine protected area (MPA) boundaries and zoning MPAs for restricted use and management, highlighting biophysical and socio-economic design principles that guide the development of South Australia's MPAs. On the FISH project, an initiative to enhance fisheries resource management interventions in the Philippines, Nygiel Armadak, Tetra Tech E.M, stressed that the project aims to increase fish stocks by 10% in six years through the implementation of fishing, gear and size restrictions.

In the ensuing discussion, participants noted the need for: extension agents in local zoning initiatives; and the legal basis for zoning sea-use at a provincial level within the Philippines.

Alexander Baluyot, Bataan ICM, presented on the public-private partnership in the development and implementation of Coastal Land and Sea-Use Zoning Plan. He underscored the various environmental problems and multiple-use conflicts that led to its creation. Qinhua Fang, Xiamen University, noted that Xiamen has had three phases of rapid urbanization and a concomitant increase in land use intensity with a decrease in the value of ecosystem services. He stressed the importance of urban planning in influencing urban spatial expansion and the establishment of urban coastal planning practices that consider both land and sea use.

Zhang Zhaohui, First Institute of Oceanography, State Oceanic Administration of China, noted that the impacts of land reclamation include habitat loss and degradation. Xuan Wang, Coastal and Ocean Management Institute, underlined the importance of monetarily valuing the loss of ecosystem services, citing the example of Tong'an Bay, Xiamen, where multi-disciplinary methods were used to predict the negative impact per unit area of reclaimed land. Jimmy Masagca, De La Salle University, Philippines, presented on the inputs to bio-belt programmes for tidal surges and tsunamis. He emphasized the need for tools for land and sea-use zoning recommending the Vulnerability and Adaptation approach.

Kem Lowry, University of Hawaii, noted possible adaptation for beach retreat includes beach protection plans, stricter enforcement of laws on illegal seawalls and reduced insurance subsidies for flooding. He noted intervention criteria includes cost, appropriateness and funding sources.

In the ensuing discussion, participants welcomed the research on land reclamation and questioned existing mangrove rehabilitation procedures.

Participants noted that remaining questions include: determining the correct size of MPAs; issues of accommodating multiple scales in MPAs; bottlenecks in



Hugh Kirkman, Marine Science and Ecology

implementing zoning; local government participation in provincial zoning; the appropriateness of provincial or regional zoning schemes; developing and harmonizing national and local guidelines for zoning; and the treatment of reclaimed areas in zoning.

## YOUTH FORUM



Participants at the Youth forum.

The keynote speech for the Youth Forum was given by Jose Atienza Jr., Secretary of DENR, Philippines. He underlined climate change as the major threat facing the future, calling on youth to become actively involved. Atienza stressed that the rich megadiversity in East Asia needs to be used sustainably and not abused, and that the environment was “getting back at us” for recent abuse. He highlighted that today’s youth is more knowledgeable and better equipped than previous generations, and challenged participants to use their knowledge to repair the environment for theirs and future generations.



L-R: Demetrio Ignacio, Undersecretary, DENR, Philippines; Jose Atienza, Secretary of DENR, Beverly Goh, National Institute of Education Singapore; Felio Lansigan, University of the Philippines, Los Baños.

In addressing questions Atienza said air pollution was Manila’s biggest environmental challenge and the DENR’s biggest recent achievement was raising public environmental awareness.

In the second keynote speech, Antonio Oposa, an environmental lawyer from the Philippines, gave an interactive presentation on the role of the youth in drawing the world towards a sustainable future. He lamented that it has taken the world 200 years to consume resources that it took the

earth hundreds of millions of years to generate, and raised concerns about a world that values “gold more than water.” He defined environment as the source of life, comprising land, air and water, and emphasized the need to safeguard it for future generations. Oposa then called on the youth to refrain from using the words “developed” and “developing” when referring to countries’ economies and replace them with “over-consuming” and “low-consuming” respectively. Stressing the need to educate young people on sustainable living, he said that the solution to the world’s economic crisis is a focus on conserving, preserving and restoring the environment.

Felio Lansigan, University of the Philippines Los Baños, spoke on climate change, noting the latest IPCC knowledge, observational evidences, projections, and impacts and adaptations. He highlighted the downscaled versions of global climate models for regions in the Philippines and showed youth participants how anthropogenic forces are projected to change the country’s summer and winter rainfall. In the ensuing discussion, participants discussed how climate affects economy.



Youth participant posing queries to Antonio Oposa, an environmental lawyer from the Philippines.

On the SDS-SEA, ICM and Climate Change, Neviaty Zamani, Bogor Agricultural University, Indonesia, noted that the actions of coastal peoples in one country affect other countries. On climate change, she noted the threat of inundation to small islands, and described the risks it poses to coral reefs. She said ICM can reduce these risks as countries share best practices.

Beverly Goh, National Institute of Education, Singapore, spoke on how youth participants could effectively communicate the messages from the forum to others. She presented the “S.O.S.” system for action that emphasizes: seeking and making sense of an area of interest and seizing opportunities; organizing ideas, orchestrating actions and taking ownership of projects; and finally sharing the passion with others, and selling the ideas. She stressed her belief that the mission of teachers is to “touch the minds of others.” She gave numerous examples of projects carried out using the S.O.S. approach, which puts strong emphasis on experiential learning.