

Message from the EAS Partnership Council Chair

Over the past 20 years, PEMSEA has directed substantial efforts in empowering local governments and coastal communities and national governments to protect and preserve East Asia's oceans and coasts. Evolving from a demonstration project on marine pollution prevention and management, PEMSEA is now well on its way to become a full-fledged international organization promoting the sustainable development of the Seas of East Asia.

With the help of the Global Environment Facility (GEF), United Nations agencies and other international organizations, PEMSEA has fostered a dynamic partnership among the region's stakeholders from the local, national, subregional and regional levels working to address threats to the region's marine and coastal ecosystems.

Through the mutual exchange of knowledge and experience in implementing integrated coastal management (ICM) in the region, the Sustainable Development Strategy for the Seas of East Asia (SDS-SEA) was developed. In 2003, the SDS-SEA was fully adopted as a roadmap for regional cooperation for coastal and ocean governance through the Putrajaya Declaration.

This vibrant collaboration among governments, private institutions and international policymaking and research agencies continues to flourish. Last year, through the Changwon Declaration, PEMSEA and its partners renewed its commitment to work towards sustainable coastal and ocean development, while realizing the full potential of an ocean-based blue economy in the region.

At the local level, the PEMSEA Network of Local Governments for Sustainable Coastal Development (PNLG) continues to grow as a strong support network for local governments implementing ICM. From 10 local government members in 2001, PNLG now has 31 local government members and two associate members (learning institutions). In support of the SDS-SEA, the PNLG, through the Dongying Declaration in 2011, has committed to implement the PNLG Strategic Action Plan 2011-2015 that aims to mainstream ICM into local government development plans, implement the PEMSEA ICM Code and Recognition System, and apply State of the Coasts Reporting system to monitor progress and impacts of ICM implementation, among others.

PEMSEA has indeed come a long way — the Secretariat that was initially run by two has now grown to a 36-strong team; from a single-room office to a two-storey building with the support of the Government of the Philippines, through the Department of Environment and Natural Resources.

The past 20 years, however, have not been without hurdles, but PEMSEA, through the strong support of its Partners has endured and remained focused on the vision set by the SDS-SEA.

Recognizing the new challenges faced by the Seas of East Asia, PEMSEA is in the process of transforming itself, making it more relevant to regional needs, more effective in implementing partnership programs and more focused on capacity development and financial sustainability.

Witnessing PEMSEA's evolution in the past two decades, I am confident that PEMSEA will continue to be a leading international organization that places great emphasis on local, national and regional implementation of coastal and ocean sustainable development strategies.

I sincerely thank everyone who has contributed to PEMSEA's success and we look forward for your continuous support.

Chua Thia-Eng

Chair

EAS Partnership Council