

## **Message from the PEMSEA Resource Facility**

Looking back at the early years of PEMSEA, it is interesting to recall its humble beginnings and note the changes that have occurred since then.

When PEMSEA's first phase was launched in 1993, integrated coastal management (ICM) pilot sites were set up in Xiamen, PR China and Batangas Bay, Philippines. The pilot project, covering around 286 km of coastline, primarily aimed to prevent and manage marine pollution. Twenty years later, PEMSEA now implements ICM initiatives to 31 sites around the region benefiting more than 146 million people.

Through the collaborative efforts among stakeholders, PEMSEA was also able to hone the region's wealth of knowledge and experience in integrated management and sustainable use of the coastal and ocean resources through various capacity-building initiatives.

Since 1994, PEMSEA was able to mobilize close to 4,000 individuals to participate in the ICM Training Program, Specialized Skills Trainings and study tours. PEMSEA has hosted around 75 interns and fellows to assist in SDS-SEA implementation. To replicate and scale up ICM implementation across the region, Regional and National Task Force of experts and practitioners, as well as ICM Learning Centers and Areas of Excellence, were also established.

PEMSEA also paved the way in developing various tools, codes, guidelines and good practices to support sustainable ocean and coastal development efforts. This includes the development and initiation of the State of the Coasts (SOC) Reporting System, Integrated Information Management System (IIMS), the Port Safety, Health and Environment Management (PSHEM) Code and Implementation Guidelines, and Policy Briefs and Case Studies on Lessons Learned and Good Practices.

The network of PEMSEA has also expanded with the establishment of the PEMSEA Network of Local Governments for Sustainable Coastal Development (PNLG) supported by a Secretariat in Xiamen, China, and the Twinning Secretariat for Integrated River Basin and Coastal Area Management hosted in RO Korea.

These would not be possible without the valuable contributions of the 11 Country and 20 Non-Country Partners, ICM Sites' Project Management Office staff, collaborators, donors and other supporting institutions. I also wish to thank the past and present officers and staff of the PEMSEA Resource Facility, whose expertise and dedication played a major role in realizing these achievements.

As PEMSEA prepares to move towards a new phase, we remain committed in fostering ICM and facilitating the SDS-SEA implementation to bring about change to East Asia's coastal communities.

We invite everyone to join us, as we celebrate "*People, Partners, Progress: 20 Years of Partnership for Our Shared Seas.*"

**Stephen Adrian Ross**

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