



**PROCEEDINGS OF
THE TWENTY-SIXTH
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
MEETING**

Conducted via Zoom

30 March 2021



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INTRODUCTION

- i. The 26th EC Meeting was held virtually on 30 March 2021 via a Zoom conference call. The meeting was an expanded one and was attended by the EC members and country- and non-country partners of the East Asian Seas (EAS) Partnership in light of key decisions that need to be made on the nature and format of the EAS Congress 2021, following the agreement of the [25th EC Meeting](#) held on 27 October 2020. The PEMSEA Resource Facility (PRF) served as the secretariat for the meeting.
- ii. The list of participants and copy of reference materials (i.e., provisional annotated agenda and other meeting documents; slides; and video recording) can be found in Annexes 1 and 2, respectively.

A. COUNCIL SESSION

1.0 **Opening of the Meeting (EC/26/DOC/01c) and Adoption of the Agenda of the Council and Technical Sessions (EC/26/DOC/01d)**

- 1.1 The Partnership Council (PC) Chair, Mr. Arief Yuwono, called the meeting to order and welcomed the participants to the 26th Expanded EC Meeting. He was pleased to note the large number of participants given the important decisions to be made during the meeting, particularly in identifying the next steps and strategic direction of the Partnership.
- 1.2 He congratulated the Partnership and the PRF for the solid accomplishments in 2020 despite the COVID-19 pandemic.
- 1.3 The slowdown of work in the previous year in light of the pandemic provided a good opportunity for the Partnership to: a) review the 2018-2022 Implementation Plan (IP) of the Sustainable Development Strategy for the Seas of East Asia (SDS-SEA); b) review the partnership arrangements with non-country partners (NCPs), and c) develop the charter of the PEMSEA Network of Learning Centers (PNLC) and the 2021-2025 PEMSEA Training and Capacity Development Plan.
- 1.4 He also informed the meeting that the PRF will work with the PNLG Secretariat to develop the network's Strategic Action Plan (SAP) from 2022 to 2027/2030.
- 1.5 The 13th PC Meeting in July 2021 will be a key meeting to discuss all of the ongoing and future initiatives mentioned above, including other developments that are of interest to PEMSEA. The PRF plans to take a step-wise approach in strategy-building leading up to the EAS Congress 2021.
- 1.6 The Chair reminded the meeting that the Congress is one of the Partnership's key governance mechanisms as it is the forum where the Council reviews its accomplishments against the committed targets in the SDS-SEA and lays out the necessary strategic and forward-looking actions for adoption by the partners through a Ministerial Declaration. The EAS Roadmap to

2030 will form an integral part of the 7th Ministerial Declaration to be adopted during the 2021 Congress. The Roadmap aims to combine the values, principles, and key achievements that were carefully cultivated and replicated through years of transforming the Partnership from a regional marine pollution project into a leading regional collaborative mechanism, including the available opportunities that will enable the Partnership to maintain its relevance and fit for purpose.

- 1.7 The Chair expressed his hope and expectation of active support from the participants beginning from the 26th EC Meeting.
- 1.8 Ms. Karen See, Secretariat Coordinator of the PRF, presented the agenda of the Council and Technical Sessions (Annex 3) for review/approval of the meeting.
- 1.9 **Decision:**
- 1.10 The agenda was approved as presented.

2.0 2020 PEMSEA Accomplishments (EC/26/DOC/02)

- 2.1 Ms. Aimee Gonzales, the Executive Director (ED) of the PRF, presented the summary of the accomplishments of PEMSEA in 2020 while Ms. Nancy Bermas, the Chief Technical Adviser of the PRF and Project Manager of the UNDP/GEF Project on Scaling up the Implementation of the SDS-SEA focused on the major accomplishments of the said project.¹
- 2.2 The ED clarified that the key general accomplishments to be presented are not in the usual format as was the practice in the past PC meetings. Previously, the PC Chair would present first the key agreements/decisions of the Council in the preceding year before the ED reports on the accomplishments. In planning for the virtual 26th EC Meeting however, it was decided by the PC Chair and the ED to focus on the 2020 PEMSEA accomplishments in the presentation and present the PC's agreements/decisions in the previous year in EC/26/DOC/02 for information and reference of the meeting.
- 2.3 The year 2020 was an unusual year worldwide given the onslaught of the COVID-19 pandemic. The outbreak led to unprecedented challenges to human health, food systems, and work operations.
- 2.4 To ensure the health and safety of its staff, the PRF instituted a number of measures such as blended work arrangements in the office and adjustment of work plans and budgets and was able to achieve a number of accomplishments despite the restrictions in travel and mobility adopted by country governments in response to the pandemic. Some of these accomplishments are:

¹ Particular attention was given to this project as it is the last stage of four cycles of grant from the Global Environment Facility (GEF) for the transformation PEMSEA and its Secretariat from a regional marine pollution project to a regional coordinating mechanism of the SDS-SEA. It also constitutes 80 percent of the budget of the PRF from 2016-2020.

- a. Secured the 2021 funds for the PRF despite deferrals/delays in the approval of two major projects:**
- i. *UNDP/GEF/ASEAN/PEMSEA Project on Reducing Pollution and Preserving Environmental Flows in the EAS through the Implementation of Integrated River Basin Management in ASEAN Countries (IRBM Project)* of USD 6.8 million for five years or an annual average of USD 1.36 million starting in 2021/2022; and
 - ii. *IKI/IMO Blue Solutions for Reducing Maritime Transport Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Emissions through Increased Energy Efficiency of Ship and Port Activities in East Asia* of USD 16 million for five years or an annual average of USD 3.2 million starting in 2022/2023;
- b. Successfully concluded the UNDP/GEF Scaling up the Implementation of the SDS-SEA Project (SDS-SEA Project);**
- c. Commenced the following initiatives:**
- iii. Midterm review (MTR) of the SDS-SEA IP 2018-2022;²
 - iv. Development of a regional governance mechanism (RGM), Stakeholder Partnership Forum (SPF), policy measures, and programs to mitigate the challenges to the sustainable development of coastal and marine ecosystems in the Arafura and Timor Seas (ATS) through the UNDP/GEF ATS Ecosystem Approach Phase II (ATSEA-2);³ and
 - v. Activities on plastic pollution reduction⁴ with a variety of partners (e.g., World Bank [WB]), specifically on capacity-building (for conducting baseline assessment, utilization of context-relevant monitoring tools, implementation of community-based livelihood projects), policy reform, and enforcement of solid waste management (SWM);
 - vi. Conduct of awareness raising and capacity-building activities with the International Maritime Organization (IMO) on biofouling and other environmental conventions of the IMO;
 - vii. Formal designation of additional PEMSEA Regional Centers of Excellence (RCOEs), namely the Institute for Global Environmental Strategies (IGES) of Japan and the Coastal and Ocean Management Institute (COMI) of Xiamen University (XMU), China;
 - viii. Signing of agreements with the Incheon Port Authority (IPA) on conducting a maritime transport related research and the GIZ-EU on implementing a ship waste management project;

² The PRF shall send the draft report to CPs in April 2021 for validation of the initial findings and to solicit comments and additional data for the report where needed. The report shall also include the draft EAS Roadmap to 2030 and shall be formally presented at the 13th PC Meeting. The preliminary findings showed that some of the targeted actions have been successfully accomplished (e.g., developing national ocean laws, policies, institutional arrangements, and the National State of the Ocean and Coasts reports) while others are still ongoing or not yet started (e.g., developing a pipeline of investable blue economy projects and the PRF's establishment as a regional accredited entity of the Green Climate Fund [GCF]).

³ The project marks the expansion of PEMSEA operations beyond the EAS.

⁴ Plastic pollution is a prevailing environmental issue in the EAS. Over half of the plastics entering the ocean come from five countries in the region—namely China, Indonesia, Philippines, Thailand, and Viet Nam—according to the [2017 report of the Ocean Conservancy](#).

- ix. Promotion of PEMSEA initiatives, products, and tools at various online fora and social media within the region and beyond, which can be further worked on through PC support;
- x. Commencement of preparations for the EAS Congress 2021; and
- xi. Recertification of the PRF under the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) 9001 Quality Management System (QMS).

2.5 Ms. Bermas started her presentation by briefly revisiting the history of interventions of the Global Environment Facility (GEF) since 1993 and how it helped the region redefine its ocean and coastal governance arrangements and priorities. She highlighted that the 4 phases of GEF's intervention have facilitated the establishment of the necessary foundation for the subsequent transition and transformation of PEMSEA into an independent regional mechanism.

2.6 As one of the longest running programs that GEF had supported under its International Waters (IW) portfolio, Ms. Bermas mentioned that the final phase, which is the focus of the presentation, is crucial since it was designed to culminate in PEMSEA's transformation and sustainability.

2.7 Key facts about the project were shared as follows:

- a. Participated in by Cambodia, China, Indonesia, Lao People's Democratic Republic (PDR), Philippines, Thailand, Timor-Leste, and Viet Nam, with Japan, the Republic of Korea (ROK), and Singapore participating on a cost-sharing basis;
- b. Implemented for 6 years—between September 2014 to December 2020—with a total GEF grant of USD 10.6 million;
- c. Mobilized an estimated co-financing of USD 362 million—more than twice the committed amount in the Project Document—from national and local governments, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), NCPs, and other collaborating organizations;
- d. Completed the Terminal Evaluation in February 2021 and was granted an overall satisfactory rating indicating that the project had minor shortcomings in achieving its objectives in terms of relevance, effectiveness, and efficiency (the evaluation also noted that the project was well managed with excellent implementation and coordination arrangements, particularly in pursuing a bottom-up learning approach and the creation of networks that supported project implementation); and
- e. Resulted in a clean financial record as confirmed by the spot check audit and the Harmonized Approach to Cash Transfers (HACT) audit.

2.8 Ms. Bermas expounded on the following high-level accomplishments of the project that resulted from the implementation of the three interconnected components: a) partnerships in ocean and coastal governance; b) healthy and resilient marine and coastal ecosystems, and c) knowledge management and capacity development. The project is guided by its core target of covering 20 percent of the regional coastline with integrated coastal management (ICM).

2.9 These high-level accomplishments are:

- a. **Institutionalization of PEMSEA:**
 - i. Facilitated the operationalization of the regional partnership mechanism comprising of the PC and EC;
 - ii. Convened of the 2015 and 2018 EAS Congresses that saw the adoption of the Da Nang Compact and Iloilo Declaration, respectively;
 - iii. Established of the National State of Oceans and Coasts as a monitoring and reporting system that captures the progress made in SDS-SEA implementation;
 - iv. Created the new PEMSEA brand with the new logo and vision to signify the service-oriented mode of operation;
 - v. Updated the SDS-SEA to ensure that it remained relevant to the needs and circumstances of the region and to also take into account global agreements and targets that were adopted after 2003;
 - vi. Identified diverse sources of funding to support PEMSEA's bid for self-sustainability; and
 - vii. Showcased the new paradigm for regional cooperation, which is based on the spirit of partnership and commitment of partners to comply with agreed principles, objectives, and activities and guided by a shared vision of healthy oceans, people, and economies (HOPE).
- b. **ICM scaling up.** The project's core target has been achieved and exceeded with 40.38 percent coverage reported at the end of 2020. This estimate covered the scaled-up national and local ICM programs in the 12 countries (i.e., Cambodia, China, DPR Korea, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, Philippines, RO Korea, Singapore, Thailand, Timor-Leste, and Viet Nam), including 42 ICM sites, 3 river basins (in Lao PDR) and 1 subregional sea area (the Gulf of Thailand) that are directly supported by the SDS-SEA Scaling up Project in the 8 beneficiary countries.
- c. **Increased areal extent of healthy and resilient habitats.** The project's contribution to achieving healthy and resilient habitats is primarily anchored on the ICM programs that were implemented at the local level. The 40.38 percent ICM coverage has provided protection to critical coastal habitats such as coral reefs, seagrass beds, mangroves, and other wetlands that fringe the coastlines of the ICM sites. This achievement was made possible by the project's technical interventions using ICM core and specialized tools, methods and approaches along with the necessary enabling policies, institutional and legal reforms, and initiatives at the national and local levels, as supported by the following:
 - i. Conservation-focused ICM programs implemented in 12 ICM sites in 7 countries covering an approximately 14,928 ha of critical coastal habitats;
 - ii. Marine protected area (MPA)-focused ICM programs implemented in 13 MPA sites in 5 countries with recorded ratings under the Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool (METT) of more than 10 percent against the baseline;
 - iii. Pilot integrated river basin and coastal area management programs initiated in 12 priority watershed/coastal areas in 7 countries, which facilitated the planning process for identifying for pollution reduction and water conservation strategies;

- iv. Sustainable fisheries-focused ICM programs implemented in 6 ICM sites in 6 countries covering an estimated area of 297,047 ha, which contributed to the management of critical fishing areas;
 - v. Sustainable livelihood programs implemented in 9 sites in 6 countries;
 - vi. Climate change and disaster risk reduction-focused ICM programs implemented in 9 ICM sites in 7 countries;
 - vii. Continued implementation of the Framework Programme for Joint Oil Spill Preparedness and Response in the Gulf of Thailand (signed in 2006), which signifies the commitment of the 3 littoral countries (Cambodia, Thailand and Viet Nam) to collaborative planning and reporting of progress in oil spill preparedness and response.
 - viii. Port Safety Health and Environmental Management (PSHEM) Code and System implementation in 6 international ports in Thailand and in the Philippines have generated environmental and economic benefits in terms of compliance to regulatory requirements, increase in green cover inside the port premises and reduction in CO2 emission.
- d. **Development of national coastal and ocean legislations, policies, and institutional arrangements.** The project supported the conduct of a regional review of SDS-SEA implementation covering the period 2003-2015, including a review and assessment of national policy and legislation to identify institutional, technical and investment gaps and needs, in order to integrate and align sector-based regulatory and economic instruments with national ocean policy. The review noted that over eighty (80) pieces of legislation have been enacted which contributed to SDS-SEA implementation and facilitated the ICM scaling up process at national and local levels. The project contributed by building on the current efforts of the countries to facilitate the approval, adoption and initiation of national ocean policy, ICM policy and legislation and the institutionalization of interagency coordinating mechanisms.
- e. **National State of the Oceans and Coasts reporting.** As called for in the 2012 Changwon Declaration, which provided the definition of blue economy, and the 2015 Da Nang Compact, the project pioneered the development of National State of Oceans and Coasts Reports with a blue economy theme. Ten such reports have been completed, highlighting the value of oceans and their role in sustainable development and economic growth; opportunities for investments in the pursuit of blue economy; and the need for an effective, integrated ocean governance system.
- f. **Knowledge management.** To facilitate knowledge sharing among the many partners and stakeholders of the project, the Seas of East Asia Knowledge Bank (SEAKB) was established, serving as a regional online knowledge hub for coastal and ocean governance and blue economy. It contains a collection of case studies, manuals, technical reports, tools, and other resources as well as guidance for State of the Coasts reporting, capacity building, ICM certification, and the identification/development of projects that could attract investment. It also includes an interactive regional map that captures ICM across the region in support of scaling up the target of the Da Nang Compact. The SEAKB is also home to the PNLG Tracking System, which is designed to capture and consolidate the PNLG members' achievements in implementing programs related to SDG targets to which they have committed.

- g. **Capacity development.** The project supported the conduct of more than 200 training at the regional, national, and local levels, benefiting more than 7,000 participants in a span of 6 years. For the past 6 years, a fellow from MERIT, PEMSEA’s RCOE, and 13 interns from 4 country partners (CPs)—Cambodia, China, Indonesia, and Lao PDR—completed the PEMSEA Traineeship Program, which provided them with hands-on experience on project development and implementation and exposure to on-the-ground implementation of ICM programs. The project also supported the participation of 2 student fellows from 2 university partners (University of Da Nang and De La Salle University) to the Global Environmental Leaders Programme.
- h. **Networking.** The direct involvement of local governments, which was reinforced through the PNLG, a self-sustaining regional community of 51 local government members in 10 countries and 3 associate members that are working towards sustainable growth and development in the East Asian Region through ICM, has been identified as one of the key strengths of the project. The PNLC, on the other hand, is comprised of 16 universities and scientific institutions in 7 countries and 4 RCOEs that provide technical advice and assistance to national and local governments and other stakeholders and facilitate the on-the-ground transfer of ICM practices, knowledge, tools, and methodologies. These networks have developed critical mass of experts and practitioners needed for the scaling up of ICM practices. In an effort to further enhance capacity building and networking, a joint PNLG and PNLC learning programme has been initiated in 2019 and will be further pursued in collaboration with the PNLG Secretariat in the form of a science-policy forum, ICM executive training course, and ICM study tours.
- i. **Contribution to global learning.** The East Asian Region hosts 6 sub-regional large marine ecosystems (LMEs)—the Yellow Sea, East China Sea, South China Sea, Gulf of Thailand, Sulu-Celebes Sea, and Indonesian Seas, which are all areas of the oceans that are identified for conservation purposes. The project has contributed to the integrated management of these LMEs with PEMSEA entering into collaborative arrangements with two regional programs, the Yellow Sea LME Project and the Western Pacific East Asia Project. In addition, PEMSEA is also implementing Phase II of the ATSEA Project, which focuses on supporting the implementation of the 10-year ATS SAP. The project has also explored cross-regional partnership by initiating discussions and interactions with the Caribbean LME Project through IW:LEARN. A [2018 Regional State of the Oceans and Coasts report](#) has been completed that incorporates the reports on the 6 LMEs of the region and the Bay of Bengal LME. These activities were pursued to strengthen transboundary water management across and beyond the region by collecting and sharing lessons learned, best practices, and innovative solutions to common problems across the GEF IW portfolio.

2.10 The Terminal Evaluation concluded that, in general, PEMSEA has performed well in achieving the project objectives and outcomes. In terms of sustainability, however, there remains critical aspects of PEMSEA’s governance that need to be addressed. These include maintaining PEMSEA’s role and capacity for leadership and innovation in sustainable coastal and ocean development and continually refreshing its outlook to remain fit for purpose. At the national level, sustaining the gains from the project is facilitated by the existence or enactment of ocean

and coastal policies that provide the guiding framework for local level planning and implementation. At the local level, various measures have been put in place to facilitate the continuation of the ICM programs. These include the institutionalization of ICM into the local governance system. The PRF will also continue to provide capacity-building and networking services where current resources would allow, including the development of local State of the Coasts reports. Finally, an important post-project activity is the evaluation of ICM effectiveness using the harmonized evaluation methodology that the PRF developed in consultation with experts. The PRF is currently in consultation with the Ministry of Natural Resources in China and the China PEMSEA Center to lay out the plan for pilot testing the said methodology in China and thereafter, other ICM sites in other countries through the engagement of the PNLC.

- 2.11 In terms of outlook and challenges, the ED explained that it is highly unlikely that the global pandemic will end anytime soon despite the roll-out of vaccines in some countries. As such, work plans and strategies will continue to take into account travel and mobility restrictions and a blended set-up of work-from-home (WFH) and staggered work force in the office in 2021.
- 2.12 A key challenge confronting PEMSEA in the immediate future is the need to secure the financial sustainability of the PRF. A Post-2020 Operational Plan has been drafted (Annex B of EC/26/DOC/08) based on the initial recommendations of the [PEMSEA Post-2020 Futures Report and Strategy](#) and will be refined to incorporate the results of the MTR of the SDS-SEA IP 2018-2022. The plan highlighted a number of actions spread across 3 strategic objectives:
- a. Establish strong expertise and brand awareness of PEMSEA’s services;
 - b. Enhance alignment and partnerships with PEMSEA’s network of stakeholders; and
 - c. Achieve a diverse and sustainable mix of funding streams to implement the SDS-SEA and support the PRF post-2020.
- 2.13 The meeting was then invited by the Chair to review the presented report on 2020 PEMSEA accomplishments and provide additional inputs/comments, especially on the outlook and challenges.
- 2.14 **Discussion Highlights:**
- 2.15 The meeting thanked the Secretariat’s efforts to provide a comprehensive account of PEMSEA’s accomplishments for the year 2020 and the outlook and challenges for 2021. They expressed appreciation for the substantial efforts of PEMSEA to overcome various difficulties under the pandemic to meet the targets of the SDS-SEA.
- 2.16 Dr. Keita Furukawa, the Technical Session Co-Chair, noted PEMSEA’s strength, particularly in developing good channels for communication and cooperation among the partners and stakeholders and helping bridge the global agenda with local policies and actions.
- 2.17 China’s National Focal Point, Deputy Director-General Chen Danhong from the Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR), expressed appreciation for PRF’s comprehensive report on the 2020 accomplishments and the SDS-SEA Scaling up Project. She informed the meeting that the China-

PEMSEA Center (CPC) will continue to support PEMSEA in promoting the ICM practice in China and in the EAS region beyond the end of the project. While China's financial contribution decreased in 2021 due to fiscal austerity measures, the MNR will nonetheless continue to support PEMSEA in other ways (e.g., through development and implementation of joint programs under the framework of the UN Decade of Ocean Science).

2.18 Director Celestino da Cunha Barreto from the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries (MAF) was also pleased to inform the meeting that Timor-Leste is likewise committed to support PEMSEA beyond the end of the project.

2.19 He then sought clarification on the discrepancy in coastline length between the presentation of Ms. Bermas and the country's National State of the Ocean and Coasts report. Ms. Bermas responded that the PRF is regularly coordinating with the PEMSEA National Focal Points in ensuring that the coastline figure per country used by the Staff (in these reports or otherwise) are the latest updated figures and will look into the issue and provide feedback to Timor-Leste.

2.20 **Recommendations:**

2.21 Deputy Director-General Chen raised that PEMSEA should actively explore measures to utilize, communicate, and build better understanding and appreciation of the impacts of these accomplishments. The Technical Session Co-Chair added that the Partnership may, for instance, consider organizing working groups or workshops to facilitate in-depth discussions on specific topics (e.g., networking of marine protected areas [MPAs]; development and implementation of blue carbon strategies; and reporting the State of the Coasts) with prospective partners.

2.22 The ED responded that the upcoming EAS Congress would serve as a major opportunity to share and communicate the good practices, successes, and lessons learned from the Partnership. She also encouraged PEMSEA partners to communicate/share the existing on-hand knowledge products to other interested partners and stakeholders in order to capitalize the gains and build upon PEMSEA's accomplishments. PEMSEA partners are advised to contact [Ms. Reggie Olalia](#), the PRF's Communications and Marketing Specialist, for any questions, comments, opportunities, or requests for assistance on PEMSEA-related marketing and communications.

2.23 Deputy Director-General Chen also stated that PEMSEA should continue working on the improvement of standards, guidelines, techniques, tools, pathways, demonstration areas, and evaluation system for ICM to scale up the approach regionally and worldwide and accomplish its mission of creating the new decade of HOPE. She also suggested that the PRF reach out to foundations and non-state actors to become partners of PEMSEA.

B. TECHNICAL SESSION

3.0 The Technical Session was chaired by Dr. Jae Ryoung Oh, the Technical Session Chair.

4.0 **EAS Congress 2021 (EC/26/DOC/03)**

4.1 Cambodia's National Focal Point, Deputy Director-General Long Rithirak of the Ministry of Environment (MOE), presented the general updates and the proposed format of the Congress, followed by Ms. See, who presented the draft overall program and initial list of prominent speakers to invite.

4.2 Deputy Director-General Long shared that Cambodia remains committed to host the Congress, bearing the theme, "*Charting a New Decade of HOPE*," and that as a result of the country consultations and as mandated by the 2020 EAS PC and EC Meetings,⁵ the PRF and MOE proposed the following for consideration of the Expanded EC:

- a. Hold a virtual scaled down Congress for 2021 given the continuing uncertainty and risks posed by the global pandemic; and
- b. The scaled down version will be held for two days instead of the usual four-day Congress.

4.3 Ms. See explained what a virtual scaled down Congress entails. The two-day Congress, also known as the Congress proper, to be held in December 2021, will focus on the Plenary and select Collabs/Technical Sessions of the International Conference; organizational meetings; and the 7th Ministerial Forum. The rest of the Collabs will be spread throughout the year in the months leading to the Congress proper with the launch possibly happening as early as June/July. These Collabs will be timed around major international events such as the Kick Off Conference for the United Nations (UN) Decade of Ocean Science, 15th Meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP) to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), and 26th Meeting of the COP to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

4.4 The draft overall program of the Congress proper is presented below:

- a. December 1, 2021 (in GMT+8):
 - i. 9 AM – 10 AM:
 1. Opening remarks, featuring the welcome remarks of the MOE and PC Chair; Message from Cambodia's Prime Minister; and formal opening of the International Conference by the MOE;
 - ii. 10 AM – 12 PM:
 1. Plenary of the International Conference, discussing the: status and trends in the ocean and coasts of the EAS region, including the challenges faced, current interventions, and accomplishments; and results and recommendations of the Collabs that will happen prior to the Congress proper;
 - iii. 2 PM – 4 PM (featuring three sets of simultaneous events as follows):
 1. Joint PNLG-PNLC Meeting, where the main agenda items will be: the presentation of accomplishments of the two networks since

⁵ The 25th and 26th EC Meetings were held on April 24, 2020 and October 27, 2020, respectively, whereas the 12th PC Meeting was held on July 22, 2020. The proceedings of these meetings can be accessed here: <http://pemsea.org/publications/meeting-documents>.

- their inception; approval of the Draft PNLG SAP 2022-2027/30; signing of the PNLC Charter; and approval of the Joint PNLG-PNLC work plan;
- 2. Special PC Meeting, which will mainly cover: the approval of the agenda, logistics, protocols, and signing arrangements of the 7th Ministerial Forum; and the final confirmation of the draft 7th Ministerial Declaration; and
- 3. 1-2 Collabs can also be arranged.
- iv. 4 PM – 4:30 PM:
 - 1. Launch of *The PEMSEA Story*;⁶ and
- v. 5 PM onwards:
 - 1. E-networking; and
- b. December 2, 2021 (in GMT+8, featuring two options—either organize 1-3 Collabs in the morning, followed by the Closing Ceremony and Ministerial Forum in the afternoon, or proceed to conduct the following events and conclude the EAS Congress 2021 on the morning):
 - i. Closing Ceremony, presenting the: summary of conclusions and recommendations of the International Conference; and formal closing of the International Conference by the MOE; and
 - ii. 7th Ministerial Forum, which will cover: the presentation of Ministerial Statements; signing of the Declaration (featuring the EAS Roadmap to 2030⁷); and press conference involving national and local media from different countries.

4.5 Ms. See also presented the PRF’s suggestions of possible Collabs that can happen prior to the Congress proper and their ideal schedule. She also noted that the PRF will conduct a short youth-specific event as one of the pre-Congress events.⁸

- 4.6 Additional Collabs can also be arranged based on any of the subthemes of the Congress:
- a. Securing food security, income, and livelihood (which will involve transitioning towards a blue economy in capture fisheries, aquaculture, offshore energy, tourism, and maritime transport);
 - b. Fostering social inclusion (e.g., reducing geographical disparities and the economic divide, especially in the digital age, and mainstreaming gender equality, youth, and indigenous people in coastal and marine development);

⁶ The PEMSEA Story will chronicle the evolution of PEMSEA from a large-scale marine pollution project to a regional coordinating mechanism for the SDS-SEA and shall be published in three formats: printed coffee table book; brochure; and e-book.

⁷ Depending on the consultations, the Roadmap can also be designed for just the short-term (3 years).

⁸ Unlike in previous Congresses, there shall no longer be a multi-day event dedicated to the youth in the EAS Congress 2021. This is in accordance with the 25th EC Meeting where it was suggested to integrate the youth delegates into the International Conference instead of having them focus on the stand-alone event for the youth. However, seeing that it is nevertheless crucial for the youth to craft its own Congress output—in this case, inputs to the EAS Roadmap 2030—it was later decided by the PRF and proposed in the 26th EC Meeting for consideration of the PC to have at least a workshop dedicated for them, albeit short in duration only.

- c. Managing and restoring natural capital (e.g., coastal and marine habitat protection; economic valuation of ecosystem services; natural capital accounting; and marine spatial planning);
 - d. Managing water quality, access, and security (e.g., integrated river basin and coastal management);
 - e. Reducing pollution and solid waste (e.g., on promoting coherence and coordination of a myriad of projects on ocean hypoxia and oil spills; and how to accelerate actions on combatting plastic pollution);
 - f. Averting climate change and promoting social resilience (e.g., disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation and mitigation); and
 - g. Finance and investment in coastal and marine governance (e.g., scaling up from pilot projects to large scale investments—what has worked and what has not).
- 4.7 The Collabs should also incorporate targeted outputs/outcomes that will contribute to the implementation of the SDS-SEA, 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and other relevant commitments and targets at the global and regional scales.
- 4.8 A typical Collab may take half a day or less or possibly longer. Sample formats:
- a. Roundtable discussion;
 - b. TedX type of seminar;
 - c. Presentation/s with panel and/or breakout sessions;
 - d. Film showing;
 - e. Poster presentation with open discussion;
 - f. Debate; and
 - g. Training.
- 4.9 The initial list of personalities that can be invited as guest speakers in the Congress was also presented. The PRF requested the meeting to send suggestions on other possible guest speakers at the regional, national, and local levels (i.e., government officials, business executives, women leaders, and ocean scientists).
- 4.10 Ms. See then reminded the participants that the meeting documents sent on 26 February 2021 contained the draft guidelines, including the timeline and application process, for organizations that are interested to apply as Collaborators. The PRF shall resend the same for the partners' guidance and reference.
- 4.11 The meeting was requested to:
- a. Endorse the proposal to conduct a virtual and scaled down Congress; and
 - b. Provide the following:
 - i. Comments and suggestions on or approval of the draft general program;
 - ii. Comments and suggestions on the prominent guest speakers to invite; and
 - iii. Other general advice and suggestions to the organizing committee of the EAS Congress 2021 (e.g., on the draft guidelines for prospective Collaborators).

4.12 Discussion Highlights:

4.13 Upon the request of Ms. Valerie Chia of Singapore's Ministry of Sustainability and the Environment (MSE), the ED suggested how the e-networking will be conducted given the virtual format of the Congress and what the PRF envisions for the press conference of the Ministerial Forum and the expectations from the CPs, if any, in terms of organizing the press conference. For the e-networking, she clarified that one possible feature could be a simple group toast, followed by break-out sessions for more personalized conversations to enable networking among the participants. The PRF shall provide guidelines on how the e-networking can be carried out, once available. As for the press conference, the PRF is still in the brainstorming stage and shall consult the CPs on the design and implementation.

4.14 Recommendations and Decisions:

- a. **On the proposal to conduct a virtual and scaled down Congress.** The meeting approved the proposal.
- b. **On the draft general program.** The draft general program was approved, subject to further brainstorming on the details and refinement of the ideas based on the comments/recommendations below:⁹
 - i. Ms. Chia stated that the Congress events should be manageable in terms of time and content given the challenges of holding a virtual event. For instance, the Technical Session Co-Chair suggested that the PC meeting should not happen simultaneously with other events given the number of important agenda that the former needs to discuss.
 - ii. The Philippines' National Focal Point, Undersecretary Teh of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), emphasized that the International Conference should integrate the recovery and response measures in light of the global pandemic in the presentations and discussions (e.g., by highlighting the dilemma of protecting and conserving coastal and marine resources while ensuring human health and safety into the discussion). The Congress should also be interactive and offer a comparative value-addition over other virtual events/webinars that may coincide with the Congress. For instance, this can be done by holding TedX style talks and sharing video presentations, in lieu of formal exhibits where applicable. She also stated that the Congress should emphasize sustainable financing given the tight competition over scarce resources among health, environment, climate change, disaster risk, and other development imperatives. On this note, PEMSEA may consider inviting resource speakers from GEF, Adaptation Fund (AF), GCF, and other funding mechanisms to provide information and exchange knowledge on sustainable financing and investment opportunities.

⁹ Only the main thought/concept of the general program is approved such as the line-up of events in December and their main agenda items as well as the overall design of the Collabs (e.g., how they should be in line with the subthemes and the SDS-SEA, can have different formats), but subject to further refinement based on comments and recommendations of the participants (e.g., decongesting the December schedule by moving some of the events therein to the months leading to December).

- iii. Dr. Qinhua Fang of the PNLG Secretariat proposed to rename the Joint PNLG-PNLC Meeting as the *2021 PNLG Annual Forum and PNLG-PNLC Joint Meeting* and suggested a joint training program with the PNLC on building the new generation of ICM managers, which will be held as part of the 2021 Xiamen World Ocean Week (XWOW) during the 3rd week of November 2021. The PNLG Secretariat welcomes other collaborators to organize events during the XWOW.
- iv. The PC Chair suggested that the PRF invite community/local leaders who are actively engaged in ICM projects as guest speakers to serve as models/champions to scale up and promote the accomplishments of SDS-SEA.

C. COUNCIL SESSION

5.0 Other Business

- 5.1 Ms. See presented first, for information of the meeting, the schedule for developing and circulating the recommendations, decisions, and proceedings of the 26th EC Meeting, as follows:
- a. 31 March 2021 – Deadline for the PRF to send the draft recommendations and decisions to the PC for review;
 - b. 2 April 2021 – Deadline for submitting PC approval/inputs on the draft recommendations and decisions to the PRF;
 - c. 5 April 2021 – Transmission of the approved conclusions and recommendations to the PC
 - d. 7 April 2021 – Deadline for the PRF to send the draft proceedings to the PC for review;
 - e. 9 April 2021 – Deadline for submitting PC approval/inputs on the draft proceedings to the PRF; and
 - f. 13 April 2021 – Deadline for uploading the approved proceedings on the PEMSEA website and sharing the same to PC.
- 5.2 Thereafter, the provisional annotated agenda of the 13th PC Meeting, to be held in one day in the third week of July 2021, was presented for review/approval of the meeting:
- a. Council Session:
 - i. Opening of the meeting
 - ii. Review/approval of the agenda of the Council and Technical Sessions; and
 - iii. Presentation of the summary of conclusions, recommendations, and decisions of the 12th PC Meeting and the 23rd-25th EC Meetings and the actions taken therefor for reference of the meeting;
 - b. Technical Session:
 - i. Presentation of the following subject matters pertaining to PEMSEA’s plans and programs for review:
 - 1. Draft report of the MTR of the SDS-SEA IP 2018-2022 and discussion of the draft EAS 2020 roadmap;
 - 2. Draft PNLC Charter; and
 - 3. Draft PNLG SAP 2022-2027/30;

- ii. Presentation of the second draft of the 7th Ministerial Declaration and updates on the EAS Congress 2021 preparations; and
- iii. Presentation of the consolidated NCP reports regarding initiatives aligned with the UN Decade of Ocean Science;
- c. Council Session:
 - i. Presentation of the provisional annotated agenda of the 27th EC Meeting; and
- d. Intergovernmental Session:
 - i. Review/approval of the agenda of the Intergovernmental Session;
 - ii. Review of the draft PEMSEA sustainability plan, services, and the proposed 2022-2023 work plan and budget;
 - iii. Appointment of the PRF's Audit Committee members; and
 - iv. Closing remarks.

5.3 Ms. See also presented updates on the development of the 2020 PEMSEA Annual Report (AR) for information of the meeting. The report, which is developed annually, features the accomplishments and challenges of PEMSEA during the year in question as well as the next steps and things to look forward to in the succeeding year. The draft 2020 AR was circulated on 31 March 2021. The deadline for inputs will be on 9 April 2021.

5.4 The meeting was then requested for their comments/suggestions on the provisional annotated agenda of the 13th PC Meeting.

5.5 **Decision:**

5.6 PRF to review the proposed agenda and decide which items can be discussed via email or separate meeting/s.

6.0 **Closing of the Council and Technical Sessions**

6.1 The Council Chair provided a summary of the main agreements of the Council and Technical Sessions and gave thanks to Dr. Oh for his chairmanship of the Technical Session and the delegates from the organizing team of the EAS Congress 2021 from Cambodia, Deputy Director-General Long and Hon. Kong Vitanak, who represented the MOE and Provincial Government of the Province of Preah Sihanouk, respectively. Thereafter, the Council and Technical Sessions were adjourned.

D. **INTERGOVERNMENTAL SESSION**

7.0 The Intergovernmental Session was chaired by Dr. Vu Thanh Ca, the Intergovernmental Session Chair. He welcomed the meeting and requested the Secretariat to present the agenda.

8.0 **Adoption of the Agenda of the Intergovernmental Session (EC/26/DOC/06)**

- 8.1 Ms. See presented the provisional annotated agenda of the Intergovernmental Session (Annex 4) for review/approval of the meeting:
- 8.2 **Decision:**
- 8.3 The agenda was approved as presented.
- 9.0 **7th Ministerial Declaration (EC/26/DOC/07)**
- 9.1 The ED presented the discussion points on the 7th Ministerial Declaration and introduced Atty. Ma. Teresita Lacerna, the PRF's Legal Specialist who will help draft the Declaration.
- 9.2 The draft conceptual framework features the key elements and background references that need to be considered in drafting the actual Declaration.
- 9.3 Presently, the draft conceptual framework takes into account the following:
- a. Past Ministerial Commitments;
 - b. Recommendations/agreements from the 12th PC Meeting¹⁰ and the 25th EC Meeting;¹¹
 - c. Status of blue economy and impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on coastal and marine resource management; and
 - d. Status of fulfilling the commitments in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, Aichi Biodiversity Targets, The Paris Agreement, SDS-SEA IP 2018-2022, and PEMSEA's transformation objectives.
- 9.4 The proposed theme for the Declaration is, "*Adopting the Blue Economy Path for Economic Recovery and Coastal Resilience,*" which may require modifications to closely link it to the theme of the EAS Congress 2021 and the objective of the event to sustain the momentum of building transformative blue solutions.
- 9.5 The ED then presented the environmental threats and forecasted trends for the EAS region for 2020 and beyond based on the pre-COVID findings of the PEMSEA Post-2020 Futures Report and Strategy.¹² Evidence and key projections from recent studies that were considered in the report revealed how climate change, marine pollution, and unsustainable fisheries and aquaculture and ocean-based industry and trade will converge to present the region's biggest challenges. She also emphasized that the EAS region remains as an important ecological and socioeconomic zone in the pursuit of a blue economy as shown in the 2018 Regional State of the Ocean and Coasts report. According to this report, the ocean economy contributes as much as 3-87 percent of the total Gross Domestic Product (GDP) across the EAS countries. The region houses the center of marine shore fish biodiversity worldwide; is home to 31 percent of the

¹⁰ PRF to develop an outline of the Ministerial Declaration in coordination with the CPs while monitoring and planning for the EAS Congress 2021.

¹¹ The Declaration should: include the status and trends in the ocean or coastal areas in the EAS region; contain relevant, value-adding, and forward-looking commitments; contain commitments that can be sustained by the CPs long after the term of the signatories of the Declaration; and be circulated to CPs and NCPs for review.

¹² The PRF welcomes any suggestions on other reference materials for the status, trends, and forecasts on the ocean and coasts to vet/substantiate the findings.

world's species of mangroves, 33 percent of seagrass beds, and a third of the world's coral reefs; and accounts for 80 percent of global aquaculture output and around 60 percent of the world's capture fisheries by volume. It accounts for 26 percent of worldwide tourist arrivals. Its seas serve as an important conduit for 90 percent of world trade through shipping. The top five busiest seaports in the world are in East Asia, and the average Southeast Asian consumes 36 kg of seafood per year, double the global average.

- 9.6 It is important to note, however, the above-mentioned data are pre-COVID findings.
- 9.7 Based on a [2020 report of the UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific \(UNESCAP\)](#), the pandemic has led to a temporary shutdown or restriction of activities in many industries, schools, and other institutions, and consequently a reduction in the volume of transport, manufacturing, and tourism worldwide. This has resulted in:
- a. Substantial reduction in greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions;
 - b. Window of opportunity for fish stock recovery; and
 - c. Increased promotion of more resilient and sustainable practices, such as digitalization of services.
- 9.8 Simultaneously, however, the pandemic has also resulted in:
- a. Lower demand for fish;
 - b. Threats to fishermen's health and household livelihoods; and
 - c. Potential rise in illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing resulting from the shifting of government priorities to focus on the pandemic and the restrictions brought by the outbreak on travel and movement.
- 9.9 The worldwide distribution of COVID-19 impacts across the ocean sectors based on a [2020 UNDP report](#) was also presented. The report revealed that tourism was the most heavily affected sector, receiving 71 percent of the COVID-19 impacts.¹³

Apart from the foregoing threats/challenges, it is also important that the partnership look into the status of major programs to combat the threats and challenges, as indicated in the SDS-SEA IP 2018-2022 (through the MTR), and the accomplishments in achieving the commitments/targets of past Ministerial Commitments, particularly the Iloilo Declaration 2018.¹⁴ To date, the Partnership has already achieved a number of accomplishments in relation to the Iloilo Declaration. Many of these accomplishments were already mentioned in Ms. Bermas' presentation earlier in the Technical Session.

¹³ The PRF welcomes any country-level data on the impacts of COVID-19 on the ocean economy or coastal and marine resource management to form a comprehensive, systematic, and region-specific picture.

¹⁴ They key commitments and targets of this Declaration are: (i) supporting the PRF's operations through voluntary country contributions beyond 2019; (ii) reaffirming the Da Nang Compact 2015 (i.e., 25 percent ICM coverage; and adoption of ICM laws and policies in all countries); (iii) working with government and non-government stakeholders in developing, financing, and implementing blue economy projects in ICM sites in line with the SDS-SEA IP 2018-2022; (iv) implementing policies and programs for sustainable management of coastal tourism destinations; (v) significantly reducing or preventing land- and sea-based sources of pollution; (vi) implementing adaptation and mitigation strategies to respond to climate change; and (viii) regularly updating the National State of the Ocean and Coasts reports.

9.10 In terms of possible commitments and targets for the 7th Ministerial Declaration, some suggestions are:

- a. Formulate, adopt, and implement a mutually supportive SDS-SEA IP for 2023-2027/30 at the regional, national, and local levels based on country priorities and capacity as well as provide the needed leadership and policy support for the execution of the said IP;
- b. Support the PRF's transition to a self-sustaining entity by 2030; and
- c. Develop and adopt a blue development path as a strategic approach to economic recovery and coastal resilience and achieve the following targets:
 - i. Establish and roll-out the Ocean Investment Facility (OIF) and identify priority coastal investment projects for each country;
 - ii. Generate financing and investments from development partners and the public and private sectors to scale up blue economy and SDS-SEA related projects;
 - iii. Prepare guidelines for incorporating sustainability considerations—such as environmental and social safeguards and the conduct of site vulnerability and climate risk assessments—in the design of proposed programs and projects and industry operations;
 - iv. Institute policy/regulatory reforms, programs, subsidies, or incentives in each country to adopt, implement, and scale up investments on blue economy; and
 - v. Implement nature-based solutions such as increased marine protected areas (MPAs) and coastal wetlands to strengthen coastal resilience and consequently protect communities from various kinds of risks.

9.11 The ED also presented the proposed outline of the 7th Ministerial Declaration, to wit:

- a. Preambular statement reiterating the strengths and benefits of the Partnership;
- b. Progress/accomplishments of the targets set in the 2015 and 2018 Ministerial Declarations, based on the results of the MTR of the SDS-SEA IP 2018-2022;
- c. Targets for the next 3 years, if hard or soft; and
- d. Outline of the EAS Roadmap to 2030.

9.12 Some key elements that may be considered in developing the EAS Roadmap to 2030 are:

- a. First, the need for socioeconomic and environmental indicators and their baselines, targets, and monitoring, evaluation, and monitoring mechanisms;
- b. Second, the need for incentives for small- and medium-enterprises in the travel, tourism, fisheries, and retail sectors to further incite the transition to a blue normal where the ocean economy plays a crucial role in the post-pandemic world in terms of economic recovery and employment and business opportunities;
- c. Third, the need for climate change adaptation (CCA) and disaster risk reduction (DRR); and
- d. Fourth, the need to secure the sustainability, including access to finance, of PEMSEA as a regional coordinating mechanism that implements the SDS-SEA.

9.13 The proposed timeline for developing the Declaration is as follows:

- a. 30 March 2021 – 26th Expanded EC Meeting (discussion/approval of the draft conceptual framework for the Declaration);
- b. April – July 2021 – Initial country consultations (the first draft of the Declaration will be produced and circulated for comments in this time period);
- c. 3rd week of July 2021 – 13th PC Meeting (presentation of the second draft for comments);
- d. October 2021 – 27th Expanded EC Meeting (presentation of the third draft for comments);
- e. November 2021 – Review of the final draft; and
- f. 2 December 2021 – Second day of the EAS Congress 2021 proper (adoption of the Ministerial Declaration by country ministers).

9.14 The actions requested from the meeting are:

- a. Approval of or comments, recommendations, and questions on the draft conceptual framework; and
- b. Recommendations and guidance on the substance and process of drafting the Ministerial Declaration such as:
 - i. Timeline of preparations; and
 - ii. Stakeholders to be involved from each country partner (CP)—depending on the discussions, these can be the PEMSEA National Focal Points and their staff and/or other individuals, ministries, or non-state actors.

9.15 Discussion Highlights, Recommendations, and Decision:

9.16 The meeting expressed their appreciation to the Secretariat for preparing the draft conceptual framework. The PRF was instructed to provide a revised conceptual framework and first draft of the Ministerial Declaration, taking into account the following discussions and recommendations before the 13th PC Meeting:

- a. Ms. Chia of Singapore MSE opined that the Declaration should be strategic in its outlook and concise in its language. She also remarked that commitments and targets should not be explicit nor prescriptive in recommending measures given the differences in national circumstances and policy imperatives.
- b. China’s National Focal Point proposed the following points for consideration in drafting the Ministerial Declaration:
 - i. Include the facilitation of exchange of knowledge and experiences and cooperation-building among partners in formulating standards and guidelines on marine spatial planning, which is an important ICM tool;
 - ii. Reflect the contributions of oceans in carbon emissions reduction or neutralization;
 - iii. Promote blue partnerships in the context of the pandemic and efforts to revive the economy; and
 - iv. Specify the links between the Declaration and related initiatives of the UN such as the Decade of Ocean Science (PEMSEA partners may consider having joint cooperative projects in light of these UN related initiatives).

- c. The Intergovernmental Session Chair indicated that the pandemic has caused a reduction in income of local people in the coastal communities, hence the increasing poverty incidence. It was proposed that the Declaration delve on improving the livelihood of these people as poverty affects coastal resilience.
- d. Director Yasufumi Onishi of Japan's Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism (MLIT) proposed the non-inclusion of the proposed theme of *Adopting the blue economy path for economic recovery and coastal resilience* and its corresponding commitment/target, to wit: Institute policy/regulatory reforms, programs, subsidies, or incentives in each country to adopt, implement, and scale up investments on blue economy.
- e. Director Onishi also requested for more information on the rationale, business plan, feasibility, required legal status, delineation of roles and responsibilities, and possible outcomes and risks with regard to the establishment of an OIF.
- f. He also suggested to discuss the financing and investment issues outside the auspices of the Declaration given the complexity of these matters and the need to consider them in the context of PEMSEA's overall workplan and activities. Deputy Director Soo Bin Shim of RO Korea's Ministry of Oceans and Fisheries (MOF) agreed with Japan's proposal given the legal aspects that need to be reviewed with regards to the establishment and operationalization of the OIF. The PC Chair noted, however, that several conventions and declarations on coastal and marine governance exist that cannot be fully implemented due to the lack of finance/commitment and as such it would be advantageous if the 7th Ministerial Declaration contains provisions on sustainable financing and investment.
- g. The Philippines' National Focal Point recommended that the PRF provide additional guidance on the process of developing the Declaration, taking into consideration that non-state actors should also be given an avenue to provide inputs on the development of the Declaration to ensure that it is responsive to the needs of CPs, effective, and realistic.

9.17 The ED thanked the meeting for their inputs, which will be reflected in the first draft of the Ministerial Declaration. As for involving non-state actors in the consultations, the PRF will present and discuss the second draft of the Declaration during the Technical Session of the 13th PC Meeting, to be participated in by both CPs and NCPs. CPs are also encouraged to discuss and arrange consultations with other government agencies and non-state actors at the national level.

10.0 **Proposed 2021-2022 Work Plan and Budget of the PRF (EC/26/DOC/08)**

10.1 The ED presented the objectives/priorities of PEMSEA for 2021-2022 as well as the corresponding work plan and budget of the PRF.

10.2 The ED reiterated that the PRF, as the secretariat to the Partnership, facilitates the delivery of the SDS-SEA IP 2018-2022 and provides efficient and strategic coastal and marine related services such as project management, policy formulation, technical and advisory support,

knowledge management, monitoring and evaluation, facilitation services, certification of ICM and port systems, and training and capacity building on ICM and blue economy.

10.3 For 2021-2022, the key targets of the PRF are:

- a. Secure PEMSEA’s financial and operational sustainability for 2021-2022 between USD 2-2.5 million annually through:
 - i. Annual country contributions;¹⁵
 - ii. Approval of the deferred/delayed regional projects:
 1. IRBM Project; and
 2. IKI/IMO Blue Solutions Project;
 - iii. Pursuit of funding opportunities with the GEF, World Bank, United States Agency for International Development (USAID), International Climate Initiative (IKI), and private sector; and
 - iv. Strengthened training, capacity development, and monitoring services of the PRF in collaboration with the PNLC and NCPs.
- b. Ensure the complete delivery of the adjusted SDS-SEA IP 2018-2022 through:
 - i. Implementing the remaining targeted actions of the adjusted plan;¹⁶
 - ii. Preparing for the development of the SDS-SEA IP 2023-2027/30;
 - iii. Developing the RGM and the updated strategic action plan for the ATS;
 - iv. Communicating our successes through various tools, knowledge products, and global and regional fora and events; and
 - v. Developing and implementing the 2021-2025 PEMSEA Training and Capacity Development Plan; and
- c. Organize a successful, virtual EAS Congress 2021 with the following expected outputs:
 - i. Forging of formal partnerships (e.g, with the IMO and Association of Southeast Asian Nations [ASEAN] and through the IRBM Project);
 - ii. Launch of *The PEMSEA Story*;
 - iii. Commencement of preparations to develop the SDS-SEA IP 2023-2027/30; and
 - iv. Adoption of the following:
 4. PNLC Charter;
 5. PNLC SAP 2022-2027/30; and
 6. 7th Ministerial Declaration—renewed commitment to the EAS Partnership; and support for the EAS Roadmap to 2030.

10.4 The ED also presented the expected sources of revenue and projected expenditures of the PRF for 2021-2022 and the country contributions received by the secretariat over the years. She appealed to countries to continue their contributions, either through direct funds (cash),

¹⁵ The ED reminded countries who have yet to provide their financial/in-kind contributions to do so by the end of 2021 in accordance with the shared commitments to provide support to the PRF as espoused in the Da Nang Compact and Iloilo Declaration.

¹⁶ Particular attention is given on implementing the targeted actions on pollution reduction and SWM—this can be done by enhancing capacity to implement innovative policies, monitoring tools, and bankable projects to reduce marine litter at the local level.

secondment/internship, payment for PRF services, hosting of PEMSEA-related events, and joint fundraising initiatives.

10.5 The list of projects in the pipeline, including their details and status, was also presented. Some of these projects include the UNDP/GEF IRBM Project and the IKI/IMO Blue Solutions Project mentioned previously.

10.6 The ED also laid out the potential roles for the PRF to ensure its relevance and sustainability as a regional coordinating mechanism as well as its potential roles in blue economy development.

10.7 The meeting was then requested to review/approve the proposed 2021-2022 work plan and budget of the PRF.

10.8 Discussion Highlights:

10.9 The ED clarified, upon the request of Deputy Director Shim, that the upcoming UNDP/GEF IRBM Project and the IKI/IMO Blue Solutions Project will each have investment components that will lay the foundation for potential revenue generation for participating countries and the PRF. The investment mechanics/design of these two projects will be explored and developed during the life of these projects, which are expected to start in 2021/2022. At the moment, the key action is to secure their approval and endorsement to be able to commence their implementation.

10.10 Decision:

10.11 The proposed work plan and budget was approved as presented.

11.0 Closing Remarks (EC/26/DOC/10)

11.1 The PC Co-Chair, Dr. Vann Monyneath, expressed appreciation towards everyone's participation and was pleased to learn about the accomplishments that the Partnership has secured in 2020 despite the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. He was also delighted to see states, development partners, and other stakeholders working together to address the issues that continue to hamper the EAS region: climate change, marine pollution, and unsustainable fishing practices and ocean-based trade and industry. It is important to address these concerns as the region is a key ecological and socioeconomic zone in the pursuit of a blue economy and to ensure that the region achieves the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. He encouraged PEMSEA partners to work together more closely to ensure that the Partnership can achieve its goals and targets.

11.2 On a related note, he reiterated the PC Chair's point that the EAS Congress is an essential event for the Partnership to get high level commitments on coastal and marine governance from CPs. The success of the Congress, however, would require much needed preparation and cooperation from all parties involved. He thanked the Royal Government of Cambodia and the Province of Preah Sihanouk for their generosity and commitment to host the Congress in December 2021. He also expressed appreciation towards the organizing committee of the

Congress for their efforts in coming up with creative ways of conducting the Congress in light of the new normal and extended gratitude towards the PRF for successfully organizing the 26th EC meeting and to everyone for their participation. He wished everyone good health and to stay safe.

11.3 The 26th Expanded EC Meeting was formally adjourned at 4:51 PM (GMT+8).

ANNEX 1
LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

Executive Committee

Name	Position	Email
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Country Partners

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			Ms. Heyun Xu	Division Director, Department of International Cooperation	
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10	Viet Nam	Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (MONRE)	Dr. Nguyen My Hang	Deputy Director, Department of Science, Technology and International Cooperation (DSTIC), Viet Nam Administration of Seas and Islands (VASI)	nguyenmyhang255@gmail.com

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Non-Country Partners

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ANNEX 2
REFERENCE MATERIALS

A copy of the meeting documents, slides, and video recording can be accessed through this link:
<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/55a6zybyoco91uv/AAC397mI03zkqZLBfe2X6D9Ya?dl=0>.

ANNEX 3

PROVISIONAL ANNOTATED AGENDA OF THE COUNCIL AND TECHNICAL SESSION

(in GMT+8)

COUNCIL SESSION

1:00 PM – 1:10 PM

Opening of the meeting and approval of the agenda

The Partnership Council (PC) Chair shall open the meeting and request the Secretariat to present the agenda for review/approval of the meeting.

1:10 PM – 1:30 PM

2020 PEMSEA accomplishments

The PEMSEA Resource Facility (PRF) shall present the key accomplishments that PEMSEA has achieved in 2020 amidst the global pandemic for review of the meeting, especially on the part of outlook and challenges.

TECHNICAL SESSION

1:30 PM – 2:30 PM

EAS Congress 2021

The PRF shall present the updates on the preparations for the Congress, seek the endorsement of the meeting to conduct a virtual scaled down Congress, and solicit inputs on the draft overall agenda, initial list of prominent speakers to invite, and other pertinent matters of the Congress.

COUNCIL SESSION

2:30 PM – 2:35 PM

Other business

The PRF shall apprise the meeting of the schedule for developing and circulating the conclusions, recommendations, and proceedings of the 26th EC Meeting and the status of developing the 2020 PEMSEA Annual Report (AR). They shall also solicit inputs on the provisional annotated agenda of the 13th PC Meeting.

2:35 PM – 2:50 PM

**Group photo
Closing of the Council and Technical Sessions
Break (Intergovernmental Session to follow)**

ANNEX 4

PROVISIONAL ANNOTATED AGENDA OF THE INTERGOVERNMENTAL SESSION

(in GMT+8)

- | | |
|--------------------------|--|
| 2:50 PM – 2:55 PM | Approval of the agenda

The Secretariat shall present the agenda for review/approval of the meeting. |
| 2:55 PM – 3:25 PM | Draft conceptual framework for the 7th Ministerial Declaration

The PRF shall present and gather inputs on the subject draft. Similarly, they shall solicit comments and recommendations on the timeline and process for developing the Declaration. |
| 3:25 PM – 3:45 PM | Proposed 2021-2022 work plan and budget of the PRF

The PRF shall present the objectives/priorities of PEMSEA in the next two years as well as the corresponding work plan and budget of the PRF for consideration/approval of the meeting. |
| 3:45 PM – 3:55 PM | Other business |
| 3:55 PM – 4:00 PM | Closing remarks and group photo |