



XIAMEN MINISTERIAL DECLARATION

Strengthening Synergies for Sustainable, Inclusive, and Resilient East Asian Seas

The 8th EAS Ministerial Forum
East Asian Seas Congress 2024
November 6, 2024

WE, the Official Government Representatives of PEMSEA country partners gathered this 6th day of November, 2024 in Xiamen, China to reaffirm our commitments and review the progress made in the implementation of the Sustainable Development Strategy for the Seas of East Asia (SDS-SEA), provide policy directions and adopt actions to accelerate the process to secure the PEMSEA 2030 Roadmap that will foster effective ocean governance and healthy seas, people and economies.

WE launched the Sustainable Development Strategy for the Seas of East Asia (SDS-SEA) Implementation Plan (IP) 2023-2027 as PEMSEA's medium term plan for the sustainable use and management of the ocean, seas, river and coastal and marine resources, aligned with national priorities and consensus generated in the past Ministerial Declarations and relevant international and global commitments.

WE recognize the progress made in executing the SDS-SEA IP 2023-2027 and strengthening PEMSEA as a competent regional platform towards achieving the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and other global goals.

WE affirm our commitments to relevant and interlinked regional and global instruments and initiatives, including the Paris Agreement, Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (KMGBF), Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (2015-2030), United Nations Environment Assembly Ministerial Declarations, United Nations Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development (2021-2030) and the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration (2021-2030), reinforcing our collaborative and synergistic actions to meet our international obligations and to ensure a sustainable, inclusive and resilient East Asian Seas.

WE acknowledge the adoption on 19 June 2023 of the Agreement under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea on the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Marine and Biological Diversity of Areas beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ Agreement), which aims to ensure the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction, for the present and in the long-term, while respecting the individual timelines and processes of countries in the review, signing, or ratification of the BBNJ Agreement.



WE are deeply concerned with the findings of the World Ocean Assessment II, that the state of the ocean has not improved, and many of the ocean benefits are increasingly being undermined by the impact of climate change, biodiversity loss, and marine pollution caused by unsustainable human and economic activities, resulting in disproportionate impacts to many countries and communities.

WE underscore the fact that climate change exacerbates the negative impact of human and economic activities on the coastal and marine ecosystems; and undermines the capacity of these resources to promote nature-based solutions and services.

WE emphasize the need for improved data, information and knowledge for science-based decision-making, as well as strengthened capacity to access and apply best available technologies and innovations for good ocean governance at the local, national and regional levels.

WE recognize that blue economy contributes significantly to economic growth, employment and meeting the aspirations of all peoples in the region; and acknowledge that realizing the full potential of the ocean will require responsible and sustainable resource utilization, as well as scaled-up financing and investments to support the conservation and equitable growth of healthy, productive, and resilient East Asian Seas.

WE are convinced of the urgent need to engage and forge partnerships with international financial institutions, public as well as private sector and other donor organizations to adopt innovative financing mechanisms to shift capital flows towards supporting integrated and nature-positive ocean planning, conservation, and climate adaptation.

WE recognize that reducing pressures from man-made activities and moving towards sustainable production and consumption patterns and behavior require major improvements in ocean literacy through formal and informal education, awareness raising, citizen empowerment and capacity development.

WE are convinced, with the urgent need to address the above interlocking pressures and fulfill the regional commitments not in silos, but through leveraging synergies anchored on integrative and outcome-based approaches.

SYNERGISTIC ACTIONS

Synergistic implementation of the SDS-SEA Implementation Plan 2023-2027 and advancing the PEMSEA 2030 Roadmap embody outcome-based integrated approaches and priority actions identified below.

1. Effective Governance

The regional coordinating mechanism for SDS-SEA and the necessary national enabling mechanisms will be strengthened by, but not limited to, the following new actions:

Action 1. Promote vertical, horizontal and spatial integration to support effective ocean governance and strengthen policy coherence across sectors with full recognition of the land-sea interface and the connectivity of ecosystems from ‘ridge to reef’ that require integrated management approaches.





- Action 2.** Consider science-based data and information to support planning, policy development, and investment decision-making; measure the effectiveness of integrated coastal management and expand its scope and linkages to marine spatial planning and other area-based management approaches; mainstream ocean accounting and valuation of marine ecosystem goods and services; promote inclusive digitalization and innovative technology to support ocean monitoring, as well as generate smart data-driven maps to better understand and protect the ocean from overfishing, habitat destruction, pollution, and biodiversity loss.
- Action 3.** Build synergistic approaches in the application of integrated coastal and/or river basin management, integrated pollution reduction and management, marine and coastal ecosystem conservation and restoration, climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction programs; develop joint research, training and capacity development programs; measure and monitor impacts; and share knowledge, lessons, and good practices, among others.

2. Healthy and Resilient Ocean

Ocean-Climate Synergy will be strengthened through protecting and strengthening climate-resilience of ocean resources in support of countries in achieving their respective Nationally Determined Contributions and climate goals under SDG 13, 14.1 and 14.2. Specific actions could include:

- Action 4.** Adopt ocean-based climate solutions, including innovative technologies and strategies to harness renewable and clean energy that will mitigate greenhouse gas emissions while addressing ocean pressures from biodiversity loss, eutrophication, marine plastic pollution, hypoxia, and acidification to be achieved through scaled-up ICM programs that leverage innovative technologies for protecting ocean health and ecosystem supported by PEMSEA's established monitoring and evaluation framework.
- Action 5.** Apply ecosystem-based disaster risk reduction (Eco-DRR) as part of integrated coastal management to contribute to synergistic implementation of the goals and objectives of global instruments and initiatives and national priorities, taking into account socio-economic imperatives including community engagement, community-based monitoring and participatory processes, strengthening policy and technical capacity; and disseminating good practices of Eco-DRR with scientific evidence of co-benefits to coastal communities.
- Action 6.** Tap the potential of blue carbon market and non-market benefits supported by a regional certification scheme based on the PEMSEA Blue Carbon Roadmap.

3. Sustainable, Inclusive and Resilient Blue Economy

Building on the call for a Blue Economy in the 2012 Changwon Ministerial Declaration, it is timely to review the pathways, taxonomy and criteria of ocean-based economic activities that contribute to sustainable, inclusive and resilient blue economy, and create enabling framework and incentives that will facilitate the integration of blue economy in national and local development plans and investment priorities.

- Action 7.** Engage financial and related non-financial institutions to apply Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) and Sustainable Blue Financing frameworks and principles to manage risks and opportunities and as a criterion for unlocking capital so as to promote environmentally and socially responsible ocean industries and advance the sustainable growth of the blue economy.





Action 8. Refine and update the regional and national state of the ocean and coasts reports and/or similar country reports every 5 years to demonstrate the value add of blue economy through monitoring of impacts and progress made towards reducing pollution, GHG emissions, and biodiversity loss while building innovative, climate-smart, socially inclusive, and resource efficient ocean economies.

Action 9. Strengthen ICM by incorporating in national and local development and investment plans and priorities the ‘ridge-to-reef’ framework for ecosystem conservation and restoration as well as the climate-smart and inclusive planning approach to support the actions agenda for the blue economy and the SDS-SEA and KMGBF targets

4. Healthy People

Blue foods have yet to play a prominent role in food and health discussions, which remain largely focused on agriculture, terrestrial crops, and livestock. To ensure food security and advance blue food systems, it is crucial to integrate ecosystem-based river basin management and promote sustainable fisheries, aquaculture value chains, and marine biotechnology. Specific action could include:

Action 10. Integrate blue food and health in the ICM framework as a pathway to blue economy, and mainstream blue food systems in the regional, national, and local planning agenda as concrete solutions to SDG 2 on Zero Hunger, SDG 3 on Good Health and Well-being, and SDG 14 on Life Below Water.

COMMITMENTS

WE call on all Country Partners, Non-Country Partners, PEMSEA Network of Local Governments (PNLG), PEMSEA Network of Learning Centers (PNLC), to:

- a. mobilize resources and forge strategic partnerships for the collective implementation of the priority programs under the SDS-SEA IP 2023-2027 and the identified synergistic actions;
- b. contribute to attaining the goals of the SDS-SEA by putting in place enabling policies, where relevant and implementing activities in accordance with national circumstances, priorities and capabilities; and
- c. strengthen existing and/or establish new blue synergies by adopting a whole-of-society approach, and engaging the public and private sectors, non-government organizations, international development agencies, youth, women, local communities, vulnerable groups and other relevant stakeholders in implementing the SDS-SEA.

WE affirm our commitment to continue to provide voluntary contributions to enable the PEMSEA Resource Facility to deliver the necessary technical, facilitation and secretariat services, in coordinating the implementation of the SDS-SEA through synergistic actions, and reporting the progress to the next East Asian Seas Congress.

WE extend our appreciation to the government of PR China for hosting the 2024 East Asian Seas Congress, the Xiamen World Ocean Week, and the 8th EAS Ministerial Forum in Xiamen, PR China.

