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6-8 NOVEMBER
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2024厦门国际海洋周
World Ocean Week in Xiamen

Blue Synergy for a Shared Future: One Sustainable and Resilient Ocean

6-8 NOVEMBER 2024 • XIAMEN CITY, CHINA



SUBTHEME 2.7
GLOBAL CHALLENGES, LOCAL SOLUTIONS

Yellow Sea Biosphere Conservation Cooperation (Regional Cooperation for the Yellow Sea Ecosystem Conservation)

PROCEEDINGS

CONVENER:



中华人民共和国自然资源部
Ministry of Natural Resources of the People's Republic of China

厦门市人民政府
Xiamen Municipal People's Government



Regional Cooperation for the Yellow Sea Ecosystem Conservation

November 07 2024, 14:30 ~ 17:00

Xiamen International Conference Hotel, 2E02 VIP Room
Korea Environment Institute

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1** The Yellow Sea is a maritime area shared by three countries, Republic of Korea, China, and Democratic People's Republic of Korea, and it contributes significantly to social and economic aspects. The Yellow Sea is a crucial habitat for migratory species such as marine mammals and migratory birds. Recently, China and Korea have been making efforts to protect their coastal areas by registering as UNESCO World Natural Heritage sites. Notably, the countries that share the Yellow Sea agree on the necessity for joint cooperation to preserve it. In this session, the policies, actions, and pending tasks of the Republic of Korea and China for Yellow Sea ecosystem conservation will be introduced, along with the discussion.
- 1.2** Integrated management of the bordering ocean has been selected as the session topic to ultimately foster the PEMSEA EAS Congress theme “Blue Synergy for a Common Future.” Conservation of the Yellow Sea ecosystem should be accomplished for the common future pursued by neighboring countries. Additionally, as the Yellow Sea plays a significant role, considerable regional management must be prepared. Therefore, KEI decided to hold a convener session which urges the importance of effective and collaborative conservation efforts for the Yellow Sea.
- 1.3** Regional solutions can be fostered among countries bordering the Yellow Sea, including Republic of Korea, China, and Democratic People's Republic of Korea. Collaborative efforts in managing this shared marine ecosystem can address challenges such as habitat loss and pollution while promoting biodiversity. Exemplary management of the Yellow Sea not only strengthens regional cooperation but also offers valuable lessons for conserving marine ecosystems across East Asia, highlighting the importance of joint action for sustainable development.

- 1.4 The target audience and participants for this session are representatives from the Korean and Chinese governments, international organizations, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs).
- 1.5 This session can be connected to broader ocean sustainability goals by addressing biodiversity conservation, transboundary cooperation, and integrated management of the Yellow Sea. It directly supports *SDG 14 Life Below Water*, and aligns with global initiatives such as the *UN Decade of Ocean Science*, demonstrating how regional actions in marine conservation can drive progress toward global ocean sustainability.

2.0 Session Highlights

2.1 Opening Ceremony

Lee Changhoon, the president of the Korea Environment Institute (KEI), delivered the opening speech, emphasizing the ecological, economic, and cultural significance of the Yellow Sea as a shared ocean for the Republic of Korea, China, and Democratic People's Republic of Korea. He highlighted the urgent need to address growing threats such as environmental degradation, habitat loss, and climate change, which endangers the region's biodiversity and resources. President Lee underscored the importance of collaborative conservation efforts to ensure the sustainability of these ecosystems for future generations.

KEI session on Yellow Sea Biosphere Conservation Cooperation aimed to address pressing environmental challenges through regional collaboration, aligning with global sustainability goals. By gathering policymakers, scientists, and experts, the session provided a platform to share policies and practices shaping conservation efforts and to inspire innovative approaches for shared stewardship of the Yellow Sea. President Lee framed the discussions around the Yellow Sea's critical role in biodiversity, food security, and cultural heritage, setting the session for a collaborative exploration of sustainable solutions. With insights from distinguished experts, the session sought to strengthen regional cooperation and contribute meaningfully to global ocean conservation initiatives.

2.2 Technical Presentations

2.2.1 Dr. Choong-Ki Kim from the Korea Environment Institute, presented "Korea's Yellow Sea conservation policies, activities and tasks." Key messages included the need for strengthened coastal governance, expansion of marine protected areas, and capacity building. Significant findings highlighted the dynamic and interconnected nature of the Yellow Sea ecosystem, with severe habitat losses impacting migratory birds and marine biodiversity. For the recommendations, he emphasized flexible conservation planning, enhanced legislative frameworks, and the establishment of a regional data-sharing platform for monitoring and capacity building. This aligns with SDG 14 and regional targets under the Convention on Biological Diversity, promoting sustainable management of marine ecosystems.

2.2.2 Dr. Xu Jing from the Chinese Research Academy of Environmental Sciences presented on "Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework and Biodiversity Conservation in the Yellow Sea." The presentation highlighted China's leadership in leading the COP15 as host country and finalizing the China National Biodiversity Conservation Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP). Also, to conserve the Yellow Sea, the endeavours for enhancing sea use planning, protected area network, ecosystem restoration, aquatic conservation, and pollutant emission controls were emphasized. He concluded the presentation by proposing to leverage the KMGBF's Target 7 (pollution control) and Target 8 (Climate change adaptation) for the pathways of biodiversity conservation in the Yellow Sea with close cooperation between nations.

2.2.3 Masanori Kobayashi, Special Assistant to the President and Program Director at the Sasakawa Peace Foundation, presented on "Science, Policy, and Stakeholder Partnership for Transboundary Marine Ecosystem Management." He underscored the importance of sustainable blue economies, addressing cumulative human impacts on marine ecosystems, and policy-business models. Also, the effects of sea surface temperature changes and the critical role of integrated coastal and marine management were discussed. The presentation emphasized to promote synergies across sectors, aligning national ocean management policies with international frameworks, strengthening participation

in the Port State Measures Agreement (PSMA), and enhancing community-led conservation. This work directly supports SDGs 14 and 17 (Partnerships for the Goals), contributing to regional marine sustainability targets.

2.3 Panel Discussions/Interactive Sessions

2.3.1The discussion session was moderated by Dr. Choong-Ki Kim from the Korea Environment Institute and two panel members, Dr. Zhi Li from Xiamen University and Dr. Suk-Jae Kwon from the Korea Institute of Ocean Science Technology, participated in the discussions revolving around key themes such as transboundary ecosystem management in the Yellow Sea, the integration of environmental and economic strategies, and the pursuit of partnership for sustainable marine resource management. Each panelist brought important insights, contributing significantly to the session's objective of fostering collaborative approaches.

2.3.2 Dr. Zhi Li from Xiamen University shared insights on the economic trade-offs between local fisheries, coastal development, and environmental protection in Xiamen. He introduced examples from Wuyuan Bay, highlighting how local fishermen and stakeholders navigated these competing priorities. Dr. Li emphasized the critical role of Xiamen's government in decision-making processes that balance economic growth with ecological sustainability. He illustrated the importance of integrating community participation and scientific expertise to achieve effective coastal management strategies.

2.3.3Dr. Suk-Jae Kwon focused on the environmental challenges specific to the Yellow Sea, such as water pollution, marine debris, and the sustainable management of fisheries. He stressed the necessity of transboundary cooperation and collaborative scientific investigations to address these pressing issues effectively. Dr. Kwon introduced the achievements of the Yellow Sea Large Marine Ecosystem (YSLME) initiative, which has served as a successful model of regional cooperation. He further recommended building on this framework while drawing lessons from international examples like the Wadden Sea initiative, with the goal of creating robust, long-term governance systems for the Yellow Sea.

2.3.4 The session concluded with consensus on the need for strong regional collaboration that integrates ecological and socio-economic priorities, highlighting the Yellow Sea as a critical area for achieving sustainable marine management.

3.0 Key Outcomes

3.1 The session highlighted the critical importance of transboundary cooperation for managing the Yellow Sea ecosystem. Participants recognized that sustainable conservation requires integrating ecological, economic, and governance approaches. It was also concluded that aligning national policies with international frameworks, such as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), is crucial for addressing shared global challenges.

3.2 Although specific actions were not finalized, participants broadly agreed on the need to enhance data sharing, promote capacity building, and develop flexible conservation strategies tailored to dynamic ecosystem changes. Strengthening collaborative governance mechanisms and fostering scientific research to inform policy-making were needed as immediate priorities.

3.3 The session underscored the potential for strengthening partnerships among bordering nations and involving diverse stakeholders, including governmental bodies, academic institutions, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

3.4 A shared understanding confirmed among participants to work toward collaborated efforts in policy development, resource management, and public awareness initiatives. There was also a mutual interest in continuing dialogues and knowledge exchange for long-term conservation outcomes.

4.0 Recommendations and Way Forward

4.1 To promote transboundary governance frameworks that align with international standards such as the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Harmonized national policies are expected to ensure cohesive management of the Yellow Sea ecosystem. In addition to policy, joint cooperation on ecological monitoring, biodiversity assessments, and the socio-economic valuation of ecosystem services is required. Strengthening



scientific understanding of transboundary challenges through collaborative research is also necessary.

4.2 Responsible organizations for advancing the Yellow Sea conservation efforts include the Ministries of Environment and Fisheries in the Republic of Korea and China for policy alignment and resource mobilization are following. First, research institutions such as the Korea Environment Institute (KEI) should advance the research to figure out the scientific and innovative approach to preserve the Yellow Sea. Second, International organizations such as the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) can provide essential funding and technical support. Lastly, NGOs can encourage community outreach to ensure effective and inclusive conservation efforts across the region.

ANNEX 1. Photos




ANNEX 2. Presentation Slides



Yellow Sea Biosphere Conservation Cooperation

Regional Cooperation for the Yellow Sea Ecosystem Conservation

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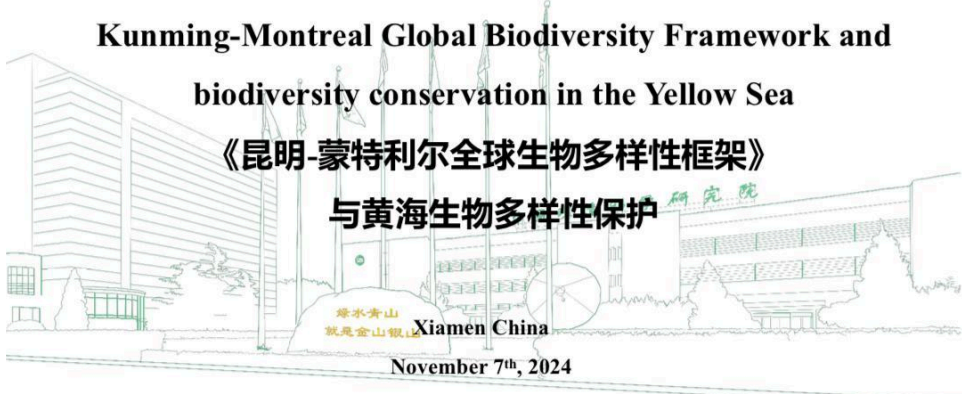


Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework and biodiversity conservation in the Yellow Sea

《昆明-蒙特利尔全球生物多样性框架》 与黄海生物多样性保护

Xiamen China

November 7th, 2024



Yellow Sea Biosphere Conservation Cooperation
Science, policy and stakeholder partnership for transboundary marine
ecosystem management

Masanori Kobayashi
Special Assistant to the President and Program Director
Sasakawa Peace Foundation
7 November 2024

Kayangel, Palau