

Cavite is PEMSEA's 4th ICM Parallel Site

TRECE MARTERES CITY, PHILIPPINES -- 8 March 2004 marked a new day for the people of Cavite Province as their Provincial Governor signed a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) and PEMSEA agreeing to promote, support and work together on the development and implementation of an integrated coastal management (ICM) parallel site in the province.

Signed by Cavite Governor, Erineo S. Maliksi; DENR Undersecretary, Rolando L. Metin (representing DENR Secretary Elisea G. Gozun); and PEMSEA Regional Programme Director, Dr. Chua Thia-Eng, the agreement aims to proactively address Cavite's escalating environmental problems by developing and implementing an ICM program for the sustainable use, management, preservation, and protection of its coastal and marine resources.

Cavite's fast-growing industrialization and urbanization have undoubtedly posed potential threats to its environment. Pollution and over-exploitation of resources are just some of the critical problems that need to be addressed. With this agreement, the province will be able to implement a Cavite Management Program and uphold the sustainability of its resources through interagency, intergovernmental and multisectoral partnerships.

Dr. Chua expressed that "under this MOA with PEMSEA and DENR, we are sure to promote a long and sustainable environmental protection and conservation program, making our seas more productive and capable of sustaining our growing population."

Other signatories to the agreement were Cavite Coastal Town Mayors Conrado Lindo of Ternate and Monte Andaman of Maragondon; Pollution Control Officer of Jetti Philippines, Engr. Rodolfo Enego; Deputy Administrator of Gateway Business Park, Claro M. Omaña; and Communications Officer, South Luzon Advocacy Group, External Relations Corporate Affairs Office, San Miguel Corporation, Mac C. Dormiendo.

Alongside Shihwa in the Republic of Korea, Sukabumi in Indonesia, and Bataan in the Philippines, Cavite is PEMSEA's 4th ICM Parallel Site in the region.

After Adoption, SDS-SEA Moves for Implementation

QUEZON CITY, PHILIPPINES -- With the successful endorsement of the Sustainable Development Strategy for the Seas of East Asia (SDS-SEA) by PEMSEA participating countries last December in Putrajaya, Malaysia, a Working Group tasked with making recommendations on the SDS-SEA's implementation is being organized.

In response to the recommendations made during PEMSEA's mid-term evaluation, PEMSEA's Programme Steering Committee decided to establish the Working Group on the Regional Implementation of the SDS-SEA. The Working Group will consist of senior government representatives, resource persons and the PEMSEA Regional Programme Office. The Working Group will be involved in developing approaches for the formulation of an implementation plan for the SDS-SEA; considering ways to use the knowledge, experience, partnerships and networks developed under PEMSEA for assisting countries in sustainable oceans and coastal development; and developing regional partnerships and funding arrangements for achieving synergistic and cumulative impacts of efforts by various organizations and regional programmes.

A preparatory meeting for the Working Group will to be held in Chengdu, P.R. China, on 28 March to 2 April 2004. The meeting will brainstorm on the details regarding SDS-SEA implementation such as targets, approaches, modalities and funding implications, taking into account the specific national and local conditions. The meeting is also expected to produce a conceptual framework and marks the beginning of the planning process for the implementation of the SDS-SEA.

Bali Vice Governor Finds Favor in ICM Approach

BALI, INDONESIA -- To Bali Vice Governor, Hon. Kesuma Kelakan, PEMSEA's integrated coastal management (ICM) effort in the island is a means to strengthening partnership among local stakeholders for the sustainable use of coastal and marine resources.

In a meeting with PEMSEA Officers last 1 March 2004, the Vice Governor was given a briefing on the Bali ICM Demonstration Project's progress as well as the major planned activities for the 2004-2005 period. Vice Governor Kelakan was very interested in the ICM project and views ICM as a means to strengthening partnerships among the Provincial government, the municipality of Denpasar, the Regencies, and other key stakeholder groups, including tourism and fisheries. The Vice Governor indicated his intention of chairing Project Coordinating Committee meetings and supports the idea of a zoning plan that clearly delineates sustainable and compatible use of Bali's marine and coastal resources.

The Vice Governor also welcomed the proposal for Bali to host the Fourth Forum of the Regional Network of Local Governments (RNLG) Implementing ICM to be held in 2005. RNLG Forums are venues for local governments of PEMSEA participating countries to share experiences in ICM and evaluate progress, achievements and constraints in ICM development and implementation.

The meeting concluded that the ICM projects planned for 2004 would provide the Vice Governor with options for addressing gaps and weaknesses in the management of the marine and coastal area, including the possibility of a new regulation covering integrated management.

Japan and ROK Look Forward to SDS-SEA Implementation

SEOUL, REPUBLIC OF KOREA -- Ministers and senior government officials of Japan and the Republic of Korea (ROK) signified strong interest and support for the implementation of the Sustainable Development Strategy for the Seas of East Asia (SDS-SEA). The SDS-SEA was endorsed through the Putrajaya Declaration last 12 December 2003.

In a series of consultations held in Seoul and Tokyo from 18-23 March, PEMSEA Regional Programme Director, Dr. Chua Thia-Eng, met with respective ministers and senior government officials regarding the implementation of the SDS-SEA. In Seoul, Dr. Chua met with senior officials from the Ministry of Maritime Affairs and Fisheries (MOMAF), the Korea Maritime Institute and the Korea Ocean Research and Development Institute. While in Tokyo, consultations were held with concerned officials from the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure and Transport (MLIT), the Nippon Foundation and the Ship and Ocean Foundation of Japan.

The consultations saw MOMAF Minister, Hon. Seung-Woo Chang and MLIT Vice-Minister, Hon. Hayao Hora, expressing appreciation of PEMSEA's past efforts in promoting collaboration and partnerships between countries in the region. Both countries reconfirmed interest in the current activities of PEMSEA and the SDS-SEA and agreed in the need to seek ways of mobilizing regional intellectual capital to strengthen regional capacity for coastal and ocean governance. The consultations revealed PEMSEA's proposal in narrowing the capacity gap between the developed and developing nations in the region, a proposal that met with strong approval from the two countries.

Vice-Minister Hora was sympathetic of PEMSEA's objectives and of its long effort in building regional cooperation. He expressed Japan's willingness to do its best to take an active role in PEMSEA activities. In this light, the possible involvement of the Seto Inland Sea in a proposed future project on ecosystem management of watershed-coastal sea areas, which include Chesapeake Bay in the U.S.A., Mansan Chinhe Bay in ROK, Bohai Sea in P.R China, and Manila Bay in the Philippines, was discussed.

Dr. Chua also explained to ministers and officials of both countries, the efforts being made by the World Bank and the Global Environment Facility in establishing revolving funds for the Seas of East Asia. The revolving funds can help create environmental investment opportunities for environmental infrastructure improvement projects - an urgent necessity to reverse the severe rate of marine pollution from land-based sources. On this matter, Dr. Chua consulted officials of the Japanese Bank for International Cooperation for possible future involvement.

Risk Assessment Finds Manila Bay in Urgent Need of Improved Management

QUEZON CITY, PHILIPPINES -- According to the refined risk assessment of Manila Bay, the overall state of the resources and habitats in the bay point to the urgent need for improved management of resources, long-term planning, zonation, and stronger implementation of environmental laws. A multi-disciplinary Technical Working Group of the Manila Bay Environmental Management Project conducted the refined risk assessment study.

The risk assessment found clear evidence of a significant decline in fisheries, shellfisheries and mangroves in the bay. High levels of fecal coliform bacteria in the bay indicated significant human health risk related to recreational use of coastal waters and consumption of bacteria- contaminated shellfish. Other areas of concern identified included the consumption of fish and shellfish contaminated by lead, mercury, and pesticides.

The risk assessment made a number of recommendations that include: improvement of fisheries and shellfisheries management in the bay; implementation and strict enforcement of current environmental laws and regulations; intensification of mangrove rehabilitation; acceleration of sewage collection and treatment programs in highly urbanized and industrialized areas of the Manila Bay area; elimination of direct discharges of untreated domestic, industrial, health-care, and agricultural waste to Manila Bay and its tributaries; and conduct of routine monitoring of water and shellfish in bivalve-growing areas, fish and shellfish in market places, and waters in beaches or contact recreation areas.

The refined risk assessment serves as a screening mechanism to identify priority environmental concerns. It also identifies gaps and uncertainties, and recommends areas for immediate management intervention or assessment. Risk assessment and its results provide management decisions a degree of confidence and give resource managers the opportunity to predict specific ecological changes brought by specific stressors, for effective management decisions and response.

Bangkok Port Ready to Implement PSH-EMS

BANGKOK, THAILAND -- The Port Authority of Thailand became the focus of a set of trainings on Port Safety Audit (PSA) and Port Safety, Health and Environmental Management System (PSH-EMS) held from 1-13 March, as part of PEMSEA's efforts in enhancing the operational quality, safety and pollution prevention of ports in East Asia.

The PSA workshop evaluated the results of the initial port audit conducted by the audit teams for the period of October 2003 to January 2004 and strengthened their skills in: assessment audit to identify the gaps in port policies and regulations; enforcement and port operations in general; and the development of action programs to address identified gaps. The PSA was immediately followed by the PSH-EMS training workshop, which familiarized the audit teams and relevant personnel on developing and implementing a PSH-EMS and its system requirements.

These workshops are part of PEMSEA's efforts to build the capacity of port authorities and operators in the region in the safe handling and transport of dangerous cargoes in port areas and to demonstrate a comprehensive management framework to enhance the quality and safety of operation and pollution prevention of ports in general.

Team from PR China to Work on Chinese Version of IIMS Software

QUEZON CITY, PHILIPPINES -- A technical team from P.R. China is visiting PEMSEA's Regional Programme Office (RPO) to assist in the development of a Chinese version for PEMSEA's Integrated Information Management System (IIMS).

Mr. Ma Zhihua, Mr. Shi Yajun and Mr. Cui Xiaojian all from the State Oceanic Administration of P.R. China, will, in their two-week stay at the PEMSEA RPO: discuss the Bohai Sea Environmental Management Project's progress in IIMS; work on the encoding and verification of Chinese terms into the IIMS translation software; and compile, test and refine the system.

IIMS is a relational environmental database management system that handles a wide range of information on coastal and marine environmental planning, management and assessment. When linked with Geographic Information System or Model Data, it may be used as a decision-support system for policymakers, planners and managers.

Canadian Young Professionals Complete Internship in Manila

QUEZON CITY, PHILIPPINES -- Mr. Stacy Belbin and Ms. Karla Pope from Canada are the latest addition to PEMSEA's growing list of young professionals who successfully completed the PEMSEA Internship Program. Mr. Belbin and Ms. Pope joined PEMSEA's Regional Programme Office (RPO) in Manila as interns in October 2003 and have gained significant on-the-ground experience. Their internship was funded by the Marine Institute of Memorial University of Newfoundland's International Global Placement Program.

The two interns were exposed to coastal management activities in Bataan Province and witnessed first-hand the realities of environmental management in a developing country.

Ms. Pope was involved in the creation, conduct and completion of a study on community awareness and participation in integrated coastal management (ICM) in Bataan. "It's very easy in coastal management to suggest improvements and encourage the implementation of laws to protect the environment and its resources, however, upon being exposed to community members in Bataan, I realized that some solutions are just not an option for people who have insufficient incomes to provide for their families. Often times, their only choice is to act unsustainably to provide for their families, or act sustainably and have their family do without the basic human needs such as food," shared Ms. Pope.

Mr. Belbin in turn, was involved in the creation of Geographic Information System files for a proposed coastal zonation project in Bataan, an activity he found to be of tremendous learning experience. "I have spent numerous hours behind my computer trying to figure out solutions to problems that I have never encountered before and I feel that I am all the better for it. It requires me to think back to what I have previously learned and actually put my mind to things in order to get them solved. Overall, I can say that this internship has been a very valuable experience for me both professionally and personally and I would like to thank PEMSEA for the experience and I hope that the work that I have done here will be of use in the future projects that PEMSEA takes part in."

SOA Officer from P.R. China Joins PEMSEA Internship Programme

QUEZON CITY, PHILIPPINES -- Mr. Yang Yafeng recently joined PEMSEA as its newest intern. Mr. Yang is a Programme Officer of the State Oceanic Administration, P.R. China. His internship focuses on project management and national coastal and marine policy development.

For the duration of his six-month internship, Mr. Yang will provide technical support to the Bohai Sea Environmental Management Project; assist in the preparation of a guide for developing national coastal and marine policies; collect analyze and synthesize information for the preparation of country profiles in coastal and marine policy development for PEMSEA participating countries; and assist in the organization and coordination of preparatory meetings concerning the implementation of the Sustainable Development Strategy for the Seas of East Asia.

PEMSEA's internship program provides opportunities for young professionals from participating countries to acquire and strengthen their skills in related fields by taking part in PEMSEA activities.

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