

Indonesia, Timor-Leste and Australia commit to protect and manage a globally significant ocean region

23 May, Manado, Indonesia

An important tropical region that plays a vital role in the circulation of the world's oceans stands to benefit from a Ministerial Declaration that was signed here today. Ministers from Timor-Leste, Indonesia and the Australian Ambassador to Indonesia endorsed a regional Strategic Action Programme that will promote the restoration, conservation and management of marine and coastal ecosystems for the Arafura and Timor Seas – known as the ATS region.

This significant area, that links the Indian and Pacific Oceans, provides livelihoods for millions of people and makes a substantial contribution to domestic food and exports. These seas contain the most pristine and also highly threatened coastal and marine ecosystems in the world, underscoring the urgent need for trans-boundary management.

Both seas also play an important economic and ecological part in the four countries bordering them: Indonesia, Timor-Leste and Australia. The area is extremely rich in marine resources as well as oil and gas reserves. "This declaration is the first regional collaboration among the three littoral nations," says Chairman of the Agency for Marine and Fisheries Research and Development, Dr. Achmad Poemomo.

The Declaration endorses the key environmental issues addressed in the regional Strategic Action Programme, including: recovering and sustaining fisheries; restoring degraded habitats; reducing land-based and marine sources of pollution; protecting marine species and supporting adaptation to the impacts of climate change in relevant sectors.

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) working closely with relevant Ministries provided the technical expertise to help shape the regional Strategic Action Programme, raise necessary funds for its implementation, and now look to the future to support the training, policies, governance and community-based projects to implement the Programme.



The Declaration in support of the Strategic Action Programme was signed by the Indonesian Minister for Marine Affairs and Fisheries, Dr. Shari' Cicip Sutarjo; Timor-Leste Minister for Agriculture and Fisheries, Dr. Mariano ASSANAMI Sabino; and the Australian Ambassador to Indonesia, Mr. Greg Moriarty.

The Declaration also approved the creation of a regional mechanism between the Government of Indonesia, the Democratic Republic of Timor Leste and the Government of Australia to ensure that the essential coordination and capacity are in place for sustainable and integrated management of the region. The Government of Indonesia has committed to provide a Regional Secretariat for this coordinating mechanism to be located in Bali.

The Strategic Action Programme may be accessed at: <http://www.atssea-program.org/publication-1/atssea-strategic-action-programme>.

The ATS Ecosystem Action (ATSSEA) Project is co-financed by the Global Environment Facility, the Governments of Indonesia, Timor-Leste and Australia and UNDP. It is implemented by the UN Office for Project Services.

Results & deliveries

2010

- Project inception
- ATSEA Cruise - 1

2011

- Biophysical Profile
- Socio-economic Profile
- Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis (TDA)
- ATSEA Cruise - 2

2012

- SAP
- NAPs
- National Dens Projects
- Regional Cooperation Mechanism
- MoU Term Evaluation

2013

- SAP Implementation Arrangement
- National Dens Projects
- Exchange visit - 1

2014

- Exchange visit - 2
- Ministerial Declaration for SAP endorsement
- Terminal Evaluation
- Project closing

ATSEA Program is a Regional Cooperation of 3 countries: Australia, Indonesia, and Timor-Leste, as a GEF International Waters funded project (2010 – 2014).

Project Goal

Ecologically sustainable management and use of the living coastal and marine resources, including fisheries and biodiversity, of the Arafura-Timor Seas region, and improved, sustainable socio-economic conditions and opportunities for coastal people in the Arafura and Timor Seas region.

Project Objective

To ensure the integrated, cooperative, sustainable, ecosystem-based management and use of the living coastal and marine resources, including fisheries and biodiversity, of the Arafura and Timor Seas, through the formulation, inter-governmental adoption and initial implementation of a Regional Strategic Action Programme (SAP).



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Arafura and Timor Seas Ecosystem Action Program
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ATSEA



Ministerial Meeting

Endorsing

The Strategic Action Programme for the Arafura and Timor Seas

To promote sustainable development of the Arafura-Timor Seas region to improve the quality of life of its inhabitants through restoration, conservation and sustainable management of marine-coastal ecosystems*

Manado, 15 May 2014

