



Successful PEMSEA Office Building Inauguration Held

Manila, Philippines – On 9 November, the GEF/UNDP/IMO Regional Programme on Partnerships in Environmental Management for the Seas of East Asia (PEMSEA) inaugurated and officially opened its new office building, located at DENR Compound, Quezon City, Philippines. The inauguration was led by the Philippine Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Secretary Jose L. Atienza Jr.; United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Deputy Representative Kyo Naka; and PEMSEA Regional Programme Director and Interim Executive Director, Dr. Chua Thia-Eng. The occasion was attended by key DENR officials, members of the diplomatic corps, local government officials, partners from national government agencies, private sector and international and nongovernmental organizations, and members of the media.

The inauguration was led by UNDP Deputy Representative Kyo Naka; DENR Secretary Jose Atienza Jr., and PEMSEA Regional Programme Director and Interim Executive Director Dr. Chua Thia-Eng. Photo by DENR.

The Philippines, through the DENR has been serving as host to the Regional Programme since 1994. "The construction of this office building by DENR marks another milestone in the history of our collaboration in the Philippines," remarked Dr. Chua. The event highlights the transformation of the PEMSEA from a project-based arrangement into a regional mechanism, with support from 11 State Partners and 15 non-State Partners. The new office building houses the PEMSEA Resource Facility (PRF) Secretariat and Technical Services.

The occasion also showcased the key outcomes of the efforts and initiatives in the region. Exhibit panels and publications featuring the outputs of the integrated coastal management (ICM) sites and environmental hotspots were on display.

Mr. Naka pointed out that "the new PEMSEA Office Building clearly stands not only as a symbol, but as a living hub for capacity development, and for building new and expanded forms of partnerships in addressing the environmental challenges and sustainable development of this region." He reiterated UNDP's full support and stressed the importance of forging partnerships with PEMSEA, DENR and countries in the region for improved management of land and water resources in line with the Millennium Development Goals to reduce poverty.

The guests signed their names on the 'Partnership Tree' to express their support for the common cause of ensuring the sustainability of the East Asian Seas.

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Launching of the Manila Bay Area Environmental Atlas

Manila, Philippines – The Manila Bay Area Environmental Atlas was formally launched on the 9th of November, during the inauguration of the PEMSEA Office Building at the DENR Compound. The launching was led by the Philippine Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Secretary Jose L. Atienza Jr. and PEMSEA Regional Programme Director and Interim Executive Director, Dr. Chua Thia-Eng.

The members of the interagency Technical Working Group who worked and contributed their capacities to produce the Atlas were recognized.

The Atlas provides a relevant source of information necessary in policy formulation, planning, decision-making, monitoring, integrated river basin and coastal area management, and in particular, the implementation of the Manila Bay Coastal Strategy. Secretary Atienza noted that the Atlas can serve as a model for the country's bays and watersheds as it shows issues as well as the major actions towards saving the marine environment, especially Manila Bay.

The Atlas is a key output of the Manila Bay Environmental Management Project (MBEMP), which is being implemented through the concerted efforts of various national government agencies, local government units, academic institutions, the private sector and civil society groups, with the DENR serving as the lead agency. The Director of the Environmental Management Bureau of the DENR, Mr. Julian Amador, presented the key outcomes of years of collaboration among the various sectors and stakeholders in support of the MBEMP.

Dr. Chua pointed out that the Atlas can serve as an invaluable tool to enable a comprehensive approach in restoring Manila Bay that was once looked upon with pride as "a bay of clean and clear water, lined with rich habitats of mangroves and seagrass beds, teamed with fish and marine life and a bay where the children could swim and the inhabitants could stroll along its edge to enjoy the beautiful sunset."

Available online through <http://www.pemsea.org/about-pemsea/pemsea-news/launching-of-the-manila-bay-area-environmental-atlas/>



Twinning Partners Chart Direction for the Next Three Years

Tianjin, PR China – The Third Twinning Workshop on Ecosystem-based Management of Interrelated River Basins, Estuaries and Coastal Seas was successfully held on 17-19 October in Tianjin, PR China.

The workshop dealt with policy reforms, sustainable financing and investments on pollution reduction in the East Asian Seas. The workshop was attended by 42 representatives from Cambodia, DPR Korea, Indonesia, Japan, Philippines, PR China, RO Korea, Vietnam, USA, and PEMSEA, who shared their experiences, and good policies and practices.

Based on the presentations and discussions made, some good policies and practices that can be replicated or adapted were identified. These are:

- Forging alliances (or partnerships) among local governments and stakeholders in coastal areas with their counterparts in the upland areas of associated watersheds;
- A combination of “polluter-pays” and “beneficiary-pays” policies;
- Successful outcomes are more likely to be achieved when projects are initiated at manageable and affordable scales, providing the foundation for larger scale projects and programs;
- Twinning arrangements between nations can expand the use of environmental best management practices; and
- Communications and governance is essential in attracting investments and regulating development.



One of the highlights of the workshop was the program of work for the twinning partners over the next three years. The discussion focused on: (1) building capacities in ecosystem-based management; (2) establishing and operationalizing the Twinning Secretariat to be hosted by RO Korea in 2008; and (3) development and implementation of investment plans for pollution reduction in selected river basins. The first year will focus on identifying priority river basins within three hotspot sites, namely Bohai Sea (China), Manila Bay (Philippines) and Jakarta Bay (Indonesia), as demonstration areas for pollution reduction. The second year will focus on developing and promoting investment plans for pollution reduction in the priority areas. The third year will focus on documenting the development, implementation and results of pollution reduction programs and its replication.

The 4th Twinning Workshop on Ecosystem-based Management of Interrelated River Basins, Estuaries and Coastal Seas to be hosted by Indonesia will be held in October 2008 in Jakarta.

Available online through <http://www.pemsea.org/about-pemsea/pemsea-news/twinning-partners-chart-direction-for-the-next-three-years/>

Batangas Gears for Improved Approaches to Addressing Environmental Concerns

Batangas City, Philippines – A joint meeting of the Batangas Bay Region Environmental Protection Council (BBREPC) and the Provincial Solid Waste Management Board (PSWMB) was held on 14 November in Batangas City, Philippines. The joint meeting was aimed to orient the new executive officials of the province, and the cities and municipalities on existing environmental programs and projects, including the Provincial Strategic Environmental Management Plan (SEMP) which provides a common platform for the coastal and watershed management of the province. The meeting was attended by over 100 participants consisting of members of the BBREPC and PSWMB and representatives of partner institutions and municipalities and cities in Batangas.

Chaired by Hon. Vilma Santos-Recto, Governor of Batangas, the meeting tackled various environmental issues and programs. Several speakers were invited to share approaches and experiences in implementing environmental programs, including Mr. S. Adrian Ross, Acting Regional Programme Director of PEMSEA, Atty. Zoilo Andin, Executive Director of the National Solid Waste Management Commission; Ms. Evelyn Estigoy, Head of the Provincial Government-Environment and Natural Resources Office of Batangas; Mr. Ricardo Sandalo, Project Manager for Batangas, WWF-Philippines; and Col. Venus de Castro, Operations Manager, Task Force Likas Yaman-Vigilance for Sustainable Resources. A number of recommendations and measures were brought forward to further improve and sustain existing efforts such as the enforcement of fishery and mining laws, programs addressing food security and supplemental livelihood, management of natural and human-made disasters, and the protection of vulnerable population and coastal resources, and waste management and pollution reduction.



Consistent with the strategies identified in the SEMP, a holistic approach in natural resources management, and pollution management and control is initiated through the Health, Education, Environment, Agriculture, Roads/infrastructure, Tourism, Security/Services (HEARTS) program of the provincial government. HEARTS calls for a holistic approach to attain an ecologically sustainable socioeconomic development of the province.

In line with the implementation of the SEMP, and Executive Order 578 on biodiversity mandating the formulation of a Verde Passage Management Plan, the Batangas Marine Protected Area (MPA) Network was created through the signing of a Memorandum of Agreement among and between the Provincial Government of Batangas, City Government of Batangas, Municipal Governments of Balayan, Bauan, Calatagan, Mabini, Lobo, San Juan, Nasugbu and Tingloy. The Batangas MPA network is supported by the World Wide Fund for Nature Philippines (WWF-Phil) and Conservation International (CI). WWF-Phil and CI are partners of the Provincial Government in coastal resources management. The network aims to facilitate sharing of information, experiences and resources, and resolution of possible conflicts between MPAs; access assistance from the network; and assist other LGUs to establish marine reserves, sanctuaries and the like.

Available online through <http://www.pemsea.org/about-pemsea/pemsea-news/batangas-gears-for-improved-approaches-to-addressing-environmental-concerns/>

How to Manage a 'Natural Grocery': SDS-SEA Implementation in Lao PDR

Saravane, Lao PDR – “You can see the richness of the biodiversity by just looking at the menu. It's okay if people gather from the wildlife for their consumption, but when they start doing it for commercial and business purposes, that's when we start having problems,” Mr. Bouttavong Somvang of the Water Resources Coordination Committee Secretariat (WRCCS) explains while holding out a menu one dinner during field visit in Saravane Province, Lao PDR.

Communities are concerned, however, that indiscriminate harvesting of resources and the declining water quantity and quality, are endangering their biggest “grocery” – their natural resources. People would show empty pesticide containers used in rubber plantations while describing the deteriorating water quality in the river basin or point to the eroding river banks lined with garbage from nearby restaurants.

“It is worse during the summer when the contaminated water is not being flushed and you see dead fishes floating,” says one community member in Xedone.

These are only some of the stories told by village members in Xedone River Basin when asked to describe the status of their resources. Saravane, Sekong and Champasack are the three provinces within the Xedone River Basin, a site previously identified for SDS-SEA implementation in Lao PDR. The implementation of the Sustainable Development Strategy for the Seas of East Asia (SDS-SEA), is therefore hoped to fill in the need for an integrated river basin management where concerns across sectors and provinces will be taken into consideration.



Building Capacities

An eight-day training workshop aimed at providing the participants with basic knowledge and skills on rapid appraisal was facilitated by the PEMSEA Regional Task Force from 5-14 November. The workshop was attended by the members of the Project Management Team consisting of key agency representatives from Champasack, Saravane and Sekong and the WRCCS. On-site application of rapid appraisal technique and methods were organized to enable participants to apply newly acquired skills and better understand community problems.

“It is important to involve the villages and provinces at this time because they will be the ones involved in implementing the project in their respective provinces. They have to appreciate the importance of what we are doing to build stronger project ownership,” Mr. Souphasay Komany of the WRCCS expressed during the training workshop.

Consultations through focus group discussions and key informant interviews were conducted in 14 selected villages to determine socioeconomic, political and environmental issues in the Xedone River Basin. This was done to build the confidence of the PMT members in identifying strategies for integrated river basin management.

Results revealed the urgent need for a comprehensive river basin management plan that would integrate socioeconomic, environmental and policy planning that would cover the upstream (Saravane) and downstream (Champasack and Sekong) provinces. The deteriorating quality of resources in Xedone is also caused by limited awareness among stakeholders, hampering the formulation and effective implementation for local policies. This is compounded by the limited data and information on the Xedone River Basin and the poor coordination among the provinces to address these concerns. Add to these is the poor monitoring of activities in the river basin. Access to market among communities limits opportunities to improve household conditions and access to other basic services like health and education facilities. At the village level, collective action is also difficult to pursue as some villages are still not organized.

No stopping at problems

Following the results of community consultations, the PMT identified key strategies by which priority concerns will be addressed under the Xedone Integrated River Basin Management Project (XIRBMP). These include the development of a Xedone Integrated River Basin Management Strategy that will serve as the blueprint for the river basin and will be used for leveraging support from other organizations, sectors and government agencies. While the provinces have existing development plans, the strategy will be the first integrated plan for the river basin.

Massive public awareness program will be a major component of the project to strengthen support among the public officials and communities in urban centers. The implementation of strategic action programs that address solid waste and sanitation facilities and fishery resource management at the community level are also of primary importance. Capacity building will also be done through learning-by-doing approach to strengthen the local implementers' skills in development and management of projects.

An Inception Workshop followed the community consultations and participated in by 30 local and national officials. This was conducted to verify the results of the community consultations. Participants identified other activities for the development of a work program including a more scientific process of data gathering for water quality monitoring in the river basin, strengthening the fishery management component, establishment of information management center and strict policy enforcement for forest resources. Upon

discussion and comments by the provinces, the three-year draft work program for the XIRBMP was adopted in principle by the three provinces. This will have to be further considered by the local authorities for formal adoption.

It was clarified during the Inception Workshop that the three provinces, Champasack, Saravane and Sekong will be the primary implementers with the WRCCS and PEMSEA providing guidance and technical support. As part of the institutional arrangement, the Province of Champasack was identified as host of the Project Coordinating Office providing logistics and staffing support to the program. The two provinces further signified support to assign at least two staff each to manage and coordinate activities within their provinces.

The development of the work program is part of a series of consultations for the implementation of the SDS-SEA in Lao PDR. In April of this year, an initial round of discussion was conducted with the key agencies of Saravane and Champasack.

Available online through <http://www.pemsea.org/about-pemsea/pemsea-news/how-to-manage-a-2018natural-grocery2019-sds-sea-implementation-in-lao-pdr/>

NOWPAP Officially Joins the EAS Partnership Council

Xiamen, PR China – The 12th Intergovernmental Meeting of the Northwest Pacific Action Plan (NOWPAP) was held on 23-25 October at Hotel Ramada in Xiamen, PR China to review and endorse NOWPAP's work plan and budget for 2008 and 2009. PEMSEA participated in the meeting as an observer and prospective partner.

After the meeting, the Letter of Cooperation (LOC) between the PEMSEA Resource Facility (PRF) and NOWPAP Regional Coordinating Unit (RCU) for the sustainable development and management of marine and coastal environment of the Seas of East Asia was signed by Dr. Alexander Tkalin, NOWPAP Coordinator, and Dr. Chua Thia-Eng, the Interim Executive Director of the PRF, making the two organizations official partners. The major areas of cooperation for the two organizations as stated in the LOC are:

- Sharing data and information (including publications) obtained by partners;
- Providing linkages on each other's homepages;
- Participating, as appropriate, in the meetings and workshops organized by each party;
- Sharing experience and opportunities in capacity building on protection of the marine environment and sustainable use of marine and coastal resources, in particular in the field of marine pollution monitoring and assessment, marine environmental emergency preparedness and response, integrated coastal and river basin management and state of environment reporting;
- Any other co-operative areas and modalities which both parties agree upon in the course of the implementation of NOWPAP programme of work and the Sustainable Development Strategy for the Seas of East Asia (SDS-SEA).



The meeting was successfully concluded with work program and budget of NOWPAP RCU and Regional Activity Centers (RACs) endorsed for the next biennium. The Integrated Coastal and River Basin Management (ICARM) project of NOWPAP was identified as one of the immediate areas of cooperation that PEMSEA and NOWPAP can work together. Cooperation between the organizations would help maximize benefits gained and also remove duplication in efforts.

Available online through <http://www.pemsea.org/about-pemsea/pemsea-news/nowpap-officially-joins-the-eas-partnership-council/>

MDG Midterm Review: Environmental Sustainability Trails Behind

Manila, Philippines – The launching of the Global Millennium Development Goals Report 2007 and the Philippines Midterm Progress Report on the MDGs was held on 10 October at the Manila Hotel in the City of Manila. UNDP Resident Representative Nileema Noble presented the 2007 Global Report while National Economic Development Authority (NEDA) Acting Director Augusto B. Santos presented the Philippines Midterm Progress Report. The launch was graced by Philippine President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo.

The Global Report is a comprehensive assessment based on a set of data prepared by over 20 organizations both within and outside the United Nations system including The World Bank and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). The results have been uneven and mixed, as insecurity and instability in conflict and post-conflict countries make long-term development efforts extremely difficult. With carbon dioxide emissions rising from 23 billion metric tons in 1990 to 29 billion metric tons in 2004, environmental sustainability remains to be a laggard in terms of progress and coverage.

The Philippines Midterm Progress Report on the MDGs indicated that the country is likely to meet the MDG targets on poverty, nutrition, child mortality, HIV/AIDS, malaria, and access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation having met the midterm indicators as reported by NEDA. However, there is a need to double or triple efforts to meet the targets on primary education, maternal mortality ratio and access to reproductive health services. Sustainable access to safe drinking water and sanitation facilities were considered as targets/indicators for meeting the MDG goal on environmental sustainability. While the country has a sound environmental policy, environmental sustainability remains the least funded, at less than one percent of the total national budget, as noted in the report.

The report specifically mentions Executive Order 553 adopting the Integrated Coastal Management approach as one of the recent efforts to ensure sustainable management of the country's coastal and marine environment. Initiatives of the Manila Bay Environmental Management Project (MBEMP) such as the implementation of the Manila Bay Oil Spill Contingency Plan and Integrated Environmental Monitoring Program, wherein PEMSEA is directly involved were also highlighted.

For more information on Philippines MDG Midterm Progress Report, visit http://www.undp.org.ph/?link=news&news_id=118 or http://www.neda.gov.ph/econreports_dbs/MDGs/default.asp.

Available online through <http://www.pemsea.org/about-pemsea/pemsea-news/mdg-midterm-review-environmental-sustainability-trails-behind/>



PEMSEA Welcomes Intern from Vietnam

Manila, Philippines – PEMSEA welcomes Mr. Do Manh Thang, who is from the Danang Integrated Coastal Management (ICM) Project Management Office (PMO) in Vietnam. Mr. Thang joins PEMSEA as part of its Professional Upgrading Program.

During his internship from 22 October to 31 December, Mr. Thang will be exposed to various programs and activities of PEMSEA including State of the Coasts (SOC) reporting, the Integrated Information Management System for Coastal and Marine Environments (IIMS) and good practices of ICM sites in the Philippines.

Mr. Thang is directly involved in maintaining the Integrated Information Management System of the Danang ICM Project.

Available online through <http://www.pemsea.org/about-pemsea/pemsea-news/pemsea-welcomes-intern-from-vietnam/>

