

PEMSEA News

New Executive Director of PEMSEA Announced

Hanoi, Vietnam – PEMSEA has announced the designation of Mr. Raphael P.M. Lotilla as the new Executive Director of the PEMSEA Resource Facility (PRF).

The announcement was made on 9 April by Dr. Chua Thia-Eng, Chair of the East Asian Seas Partnership Council, during a Reception hosted by PEMSEA at the 4th Global Conference on Oceans, Coasts and Islands held in Hanoi, Vietnam, from 7-11 April.

Mr. Lotilla served in the Philippine government as the Secretary of the Department of Energy from 2005 to 2007, where he steered the Department towards the achievement of the government's energy independence and power sector reform agenda. As Undersecretary for the National Economic Development Authority of the Philippines (1996-2004), he represented NEDA in the Cabinet Committee on the Law of the Sea, and its successor the Cabinet Committee on Maritime and Ocean Affairs, as well as coordinated the Philippine Council for Sustainable Development. He also led a multi-stakeholder process in the formulation of Philippine Agenda 21, and participated in numerous regional activities that sought to promote greater regional cooperation among coastal states. Mr. Lotilla began his career in the academe at the University of the Philippines, and was appointed Professor of Law in 1995. As Professor of Law, he has published various articles and lectured on the Law of the Sea and ocean policy.

Prof. Lotilla is expected to assume the PRF Executive Director's Office in May 2008.

PEMSEA launches “Securing the Oceans: Essays on Ocean Governance”

Hanoi, Vietnam – PEMSEA launched a 25-chapter book, which is a compendium of essays written by 25 authors, during the 4th Global Conference on Oceans, Coasts and Islands held in Hanoi, Vietnam, from 7-11 April. *Securing the Oceans: Essays on Ocean Governance – Global and Regional Perspectives* was published a decade after the Year of the Ocean in 1998. The book is envisaged to further stimulate and strengthen the pursuit of sustainable ocean development so as to secure the ocean and its resources for future generations.

Securing the Oceans is a collaborative initiative of PEMSEA and the Nippon Foundation. During the launching event, Mr. Takashi Ito, Director of the Department of Marine Affairs of the Nippon Foundation introduced the book to the international audience. Dr. Chua Thia-Eng and Dr. Kullenberg, Co-chairs of the Nippon Task Team on Regional Governance, and co-editors of the book, shared some insights and experiences in ocean governance and acknowledged the authors whose essays comprise the 25-chapter volume. Mr. Danilo Bonga, a staff of the PEMSEA Resource Facility, who also co-edited the *Securing the Oceans*, was not present during the launching.

Ms. Biliانا Cicin-Sain, Director of the Gerard J. Mangone Center for Marine Policy, University of Delaware (also Head of Secretariat for the Conference), commended the editors and authors on their efforts towards releasing a book of international significance.

For more information on *Securing the Oceans*, please go to the publications section of the PEMSEA website (<http://www.pemsea.org/publications>).

UNOPS Becomes Executing Agency of the PEMSEA Regional Programme

Manila, Philippines – Effective 1 April 2008, the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS) became the Executing Agency of the PEMSEA Regional Programme.

With the entry of PEMSEA into its new phase and the approval of the GEF/UNDP/UNOPS/PEMSEA Project on the Implementation of the Sustainable Development Strategy for the Seas of East Asia (SDS-SEA), a new implementing arrangement was set in place, with United Nations Development Programme serving as the implementing agency, UNOPS as Executing Agency, and the PEMSEA Resource Facility (PRF) providing day-to-day management and coordinating function for the project activities.

UNOPS' expertise in providing services and assistance on operations management will contribute significantly in the successful implementation of the SDS-SEA. UNOPS has also catered to the needs of various UN agencies and programmes, providing various management and administrative services such as procurement, loan supervision and certification and contract management.

Prior to the entry of UNOPS, the PEMSEA Regional Programme was executed from 1994 to March 2008) by the International Maritime Organization (IMO). As PEMSEA transforms into a country-supported regional mechanism and pursues the implementation of the SDS-SEA, its scope and areas of activities have moved beyond the mandate of IMO. As a key partner of PEMSEA, IMO welcomed these developments and expressed full support and engagement to future activities of PEMSEA in the region.

EMECS Joins PEMSEA as Non-Country Partner

Quezon City, Philippines – The International Center for the Environmental Management of Enclosed Coastal Seas (EMECS) is now the newest Non-Country Partner of PEMSEA. The Executive Committee of the East Asian Seas Partnership Council approved the application of EMECS to become a partner in the implementation of the Sustainable Development Strategy for the Seas of East Asia (SDS-SEA) and assist during its second EC Meeting on 15 March.

EMECS is a non-profit organization based in Kobe, along the Seto-Inland Sea, in Japan. EMECS has strong networks of nongovernmental organizations, researchers and prefectural governments regarding the pollution reduction and preservation of the environment of the Seto-Inland Sea. The development of the total water pollutant load control system in Japan originated in the Seto-Inland Sea area.

EMECS was established with the support of Japan's Ministry of Environment. This enables them to have multisectoral networks even with the national government. The mission of EMECS is to construct an organized network linking governments, researchers, companies, stakeholders and other entities to promote academic exchange on an international level and conduct research, training and support activities, in order to preserve as well as rehabilitate existing enclosed coastal sea environments, and help create a society capable of sustainable development in which human beings can co-exist with diversity of nature.

The main activities of EMECS include:

1. The organization of EMECS Conferences;
2. Implementation of training programs for the officials of developing countries; and
3. Provision of educational programmes on coastal and marine environments to local residents and students.

In line with the Partnership Operating Arrangements for the Implementation of the Sustainable Development Strategy for the Seas of East Asia, EMECS and PEMSEA will enter into a partnership arrangement through a Memorandum of Agreement or similar instrument on the implementation of the SDS-SEA.

Coastal Community Gears up to be an Eco-Village

Stung Hav, Cambodia – Almost an hour away from downtown Sihanoukville – through the bumpy stretch of unpaved road off Highway No. 4 – lies Village 3 in Sangkat Tonorolok. It is a small fishing village in Stung Hav, the site of the follow-through project of the Small Grants Programme (SGP)-PEMSEA Joint Communiqué that seeks to “build” an eco-village. The pilot village of 200-250 families is located near the freshwater reservoir – currently being completed with funding support from the UNDP TRAC fund and GEF SGP Cambodia. Aside from providing freshwater sources for agricultural production, the reservoir is also being eyed to be a lagoon-like tourist attraction.

The recently-approved project under the Communiqué will complete the picture for an eco-village. As a community that thrives on sustainable environmental practices and food sufficiency, the project will initiate a community-based waste management facility including an onsite, low-cost wastewater treatment and a solid waste management scheme. Stung Hav is not currently being serviced by the CINTRI waste company but it is willing to provide technical support to establish a solid waste management system for the 934 families within the target community.

Further, the livelihood component is expected to improve the potential for vegetable production to increase food supply in the community. As an off-site community, food is relatively more expensive in Village 3, increasing reliance among families to fishing activities. This component is expected to reduce reliance to expensive food sources by the community and will provide initial start-up capital for some families to get into provision of tourism goods and services as supplemental livelihood activities.

Aside from access to basic services, the families within the village will have to undergo capacity building and training activities. Ultimately, sustaining an eco-village entails more than providing basic services and facilities but in orienting the lifestyle and values system of community members to be consistent with sustainable development practices.

This project complements the first initiative on Community-based Coastal Resource Management in Stung Hav. While communities expressed that the project was relatively successful in engaging communities to rehabilitate mangroves and coral reefs, there looms several threats that need to be addressed – marine pollution, contamination of drinking water, limited freshwater supply and insufficient food sources.

Occheauteal Beach Gets a “Face Lift”

Sihanoukville, Cambodia – From a sleepy, laid back coastal municipality a few years back, Sihanoukville is fast catching up with Siem Reap as one of Cambodia’s top tourist destinations, attracting more local and international tourists with its relaxing white beaches and seafood restaurants. The steady influx of tourists is also brought in by the opening of the Kangkeng Airport, enhancing mobility among tourists and making it possible for them to hop from one destination to another.

For 2007 alone, the Municipality has recorded 379,688 visitors, many of whom were bound to visit Occheauteal Beach at least once during their stay in Sihanoukville. While the growing number of tourists indicates a potential increase in income, many locals were concerned that the income may be cancelled out by the negative environmental impact that comes with the unmitigated tourist activities. In a study conducted by the local government, about 59.4 percent of the respondents felt that waste management in Occheauteal and poor water quality are major environmental concerns that come with the increasing number of tourists.

Local stakeholders believe that if Occheauteal Beach is to remain a sustainable source of revenue for the Municipality, the infrastructure and the general environment of the beach needed to be improved. It was with this consideration that the tourism development and management plan was formulated and adopted by stakeholders in 2005.

While the “face lift” requires a daunting investment for this community, estimated to be of the order of half-a-million dollars, several catalytic activities are being undertaken by the local government, stall owners and local contractors to gradually change things on the beach. For instance, the groups are organizing themselves and working together to improve the landscape along the beach by putting up kab or walkways along the built-up area. Gardens alongside the walkways will be set up as part of the beautification process, to improve vegetation and prevent soil erosion.

As an indication of a stronger support towards sustainable beach management, stall owners have also started putting in more waste bins near their stalls to ensure proper waste storage and disposal. Billboards and banners have also been set up in strategic locations to remind beach goers of responsible tourism practices.

Thus, in spite of lack of financial resources, the Sihanoukville site is living proof that community ownership and commitment can achieve desired results. On 7 April 2008, about 350 students, volunteers and government officials were mobilized for a beach cleanup and information drive to remind all beach users of their responsibility to protect and manage this shared natural resource, which breathes life to Sihanoukville’s socio-economy.

Beyond the Region: PEMSEA Shares ICM Experience in Sudan

Khartoum, Sudan – PEMSEA has been assisting with the development of a national integrated coastal management (ICM) programme in Sudan, as a cooperative inter-regional arrangement with the Regional Organization for the Conservation of the Environment of the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden (PERSGA). PERSGA is an intergovernmental body dedicated to the conservation of the coastal and marine environments found in the Red Sea, Gulf of Aqaba, Gulf of Suez, Suez Canal and Gulf of Aden. Sudan is one of the seven member states of PERSGA.

The PEMSEA Regional Task Force (RTF), which was composed of Dr. Huming Yu and Dr. Michael Pido, visited Sudan on 5 to 12 April. The RTF mission aimed to build awareness and improve understanding of ICM development and implementation among senior government officials; and assist the Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM) Experts Group in Sudan with the preparation of a Plan of Action for ICM Programme Development and a project proposal on the implementation of ICM at selected sites. Key activities included stakeholder consultations; field visits to proposed ICM sites, and the preparation of a project proposal.

A series of meetings were held with senior government officials and representatives of key stakeholder groups in the Red Sea State (RSS). Field visits were also undertaken to assess the conditions and characteristics of the potential ICM sites. During the site visits, local government officials were consulted on an initial project proposal (IPP), which forms part of the World Bank's Sudan Multi-Donor Trust Funds (MDTF). Preparations for the IPP, titled "Sustainable Resource Use Management and Livelihood Enhancement in Red Sea State of Sudan," were largely undertaken through an interactive writeshop. The overall project development goal is to enhance the capacity of local governments and other stakeholders in creating sustainable livelihood opportunities for coastal communities within the integrated natural resource management framework.

From Hills to Coasts, the Integrated Information Management System Covers Them All...

Quezon City, Philippines – PEMSEA's Integrated Information Management System for Coastal and Marine Environments (IIMS) has been expanded, to include integrated management of river basins and coastal areas.

From Hills to Coasts, the Integrated Information Management System covers them all...

Previously, IIMS focused on the coastal and marine environments. It has now been expanded to include biological, social and economic features and activities in river basins. The new version of IIMS can be applied to coastal and marine areas, river basins or a combination of the two interconnected systems.

In addition to the eight data categories of the earlier IIMS version (region/sites, biological, socioeconomic, demography, pollution sources, monitoring data and physiographic data), the latest version includes water resource management, natural and anthropogenic hazards, as well as hydrometeorological, soils and institutional data on both watershed and coastal areas. The IIMS has the capability to roll up or generate data at various levels of aggregation, such as watershed or river basin, sub-watershed, site, province, municipality or community. In addition, the IIMS query system and its linkage with a geographic information system has been improved allowing the users to generate information in a more user-friendly manner. A web-based version for IIMS river basin module was also developed so that sharing of information among users can be facilitated through the Internet.

The upgrading of the IIMS for river basins was a collaboration of PEMSEA and the Philippines Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR). The system is being demonstrated in the Pampanga River Basin, a sub-basin of the Manila Bay Area.

PEMSEA Participates in Philippine Water Week

Quezon City, Philippines – The Philippine Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) spearheaded the Philippine Water Week (24-28 March), as part of the local observance of the World Water Day. PEMSEA participated in the five-day event marked by water resource-related activities.

A three-day water technology exhibition and product exposition at the Protected Area and Wildlife Visitors' Center in Quezon City, Philippines, kicked off the celebration, along with a press briefing on the launching of the roadmap on water and sanitation. PEMSEA, together with the Manila Bay Environmental Management Project (MBEMP), set up an exhibit booth where various PEMSEA publications and brochures were distributed.

The National River Forum, held on 26 March, highlighted the week-long celebration as a venue for interactive discussion to help narrow gaps and solve pervasive problems of declining water quality. Participants from various government agencies as well as nongovernmental organizations and the private sector presented papers on the effects of global warming in the country as well as other topics that included access to water, new technologies on wastewater treatment, sanitation and health, and other related topics. Paper presenters were given copies of the Manila Bay Area Environmental Atlas, a joint output of DENR and PEMSEA.

Training Workshop on the Application of the IIMS for River Basins Conducted

Quezon City, Philippines – Twenty-six participants from various regional offices of the Philippine Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) and the provincial government of Batangas attended a training workshop on the Application of the Integrated Information Management System for River Basins (IIMS-RB) conducted from 12-14 March by PEMSEA and DENR. This workshop was a result of DENR's recognition of the potential of the IIMS based on the experiences of the Manila Bay Environmental Management Project, as well as DENR's subsequent desire to mainstream the IIMS within DENR offices nationwide.

The training workshop aimed to begin a core group to help test and lead the nationwide use of IIMS-RB. Participants were introduced to IIMS-RB's various data tables, learned to install, enter and summarize data, and import data from IIMS-RB into a geographic information system (GIS). Ms. Bresilda Gervacio (PEMSEA) served as resource speaker while Mr. Robert Jara (DENR) facilitated the work planning to field test IIMS-RB in the Pampanga River Basin and roll out IIMS-RB nationwide.

The upgrading of the Integrated Information Management System for Coastal and Marine Environments to support river basin management is a joint effort between PEMSEA and DENR. Key enhancements to IIMS include support for water resources and hazard management and support to be able to summarize data by watershed or river basin.