

# **Putrajaya Declaration of Regional Cooperation for the Sustainable Development of the Seas of East Asia**

**W**e, Ministers from 12 coastal States of the East Asian region, have gathered this day in Putrajaya to discuss policies and actions for achieving sustainable development of the Seas of East Asia.

The vast resources in our coastal waters and oceans are a priceless and unique feature of our region. Collectively, we are the caretakers of what is recognized as the world center for marine biodiversity. These natural assets are our food supply, a source of employment and livelihood, a medium for transportation, and a living web that links and influences social, cultural and economic behavior in our everyday lives. Our coastal and marine resources are more than natural commodities. They are part of our history, and a safeguard to economic prosperity and peaceful and harmonious co-existence for present and future generations.

Unfortunately, the quality of this natural heritage continues to be eroded, as indicated by the ongoing degradation and destruction of habitats, diminishing fisheries, pollution of coastal waters, red tide occurrences, invasive alien species, and general loss of biodiversity. Progress across the region in overcoming these common environmental problems has been slow relative to economic growth and development, despite the significant individual and collaborative efforts of national governments, international agencies, regional institutions and donor organizations. These problems will remain, unless national capabilities to meet sustainable development requirements can be significantly enhanced.

Over the past 20 years, the governments and other stakeholders have made considerable efforts to address social, economic and environmental concerns within their national jurisdictions. There is a need to step up cooperative efforts amongst the countries of the region to tackle transboundary environmental and resource concerns. Although multilateral environmental agreements have attempted to address these problems, there is a marked disparity among countries of the region in their capacity to respond to the challenges to sustainable development and to implement the relevant international conventions. The single-sector or single-issue approach, which is not uncommon in international instruments, has also failed to consider the interconnectivity among economic sectors, ecosystems, social development and sustainable use of marine and coastal resources. As a consequence, the overall benefits to be derived from multilateral environmental agreements have not been fully captured in national development policies and implementation programmes.

The World Summit for Sustainable Development (WSSD), held in Johannesburg in August 2002, called all nations' attention to the challenges and inter-linkages between sustainable development and poverty alleviation. Participating countries adopted forward-looking Implementation Plans with specific commitments for water and sanitation, efficient use of energy, human health protection, agriculture, biodiversity and ecosystem management. Achieving WSSD development targets underscore the need to adopt a new paradigm of regional cooperation for addressing transboundary issues of common concerns – integrating the social, economic and environmental dimensions of the problem into a comprehensive development framework. The new paradigm framework shall be developed through stakeholder partnership arrangements and appropriate policy directions for regional cooperation in promoting sustainable coastal and marine development, including the uses of living and non-living resources, maritime transport, tourism and others. While the role of national policies and development strategies is of paramount importance to facilitate sustainable development, it is recognized that domestic economies are now interwoven with regional and global economic systems. Therefore national policies and programmes of actions for sustainable coastal and marine uses should, where deemed appropriate by the individual East Asian countries, with due regard for national policy

objectives, development goals, national and local circumstances, capabilities and available resources, be aligned to the global efforts as embodied in the relevant international conventions and agreements.

The emergence of the East Asia economic realignment offers new opportunities for cooperation among countries of the region, geared to achieving prosperity and a better future through individual efforts combined with vigorous multilateral action. In a common pursuit of national economic growth and regional competitiveness, our countries face a critical challenge to enhance the efficacy, coherence and consistency of national development policies and strategies for sustainable use of natural resources. In addition, we need to create, step by step, an enabling domestic environment that encourages partnerships, investment, capacity building, and information and knowledge sharing among our governments, as well as across levels of government and sectors of society.

From this perspective, we embarked jointly on the formulation of the Sustainable Development Strategy for the Seas of East Asia (SDS-SEA).

The SDS-SEA addresses, amongst others, key concerns of our coasts and oceans, providing a platform for cooperation at the regional, subregional, national and local levels, and for intergovernmental, interagency and intersectoral collaboration on:

- WSSD targets for sustainable development;
- Implementation of integrated ocean and coastal management approaches; and
- Action programs aimed at solving problems and deficiencies in ocean and coastal governance.

At the same time, the SDS-SEA facilitates synergistic actions to:

- Enhance maritime safety and protection of the marine environment from pollution and environmental damage caused by ships, including the introduction of invasive alien species, and oil and chemical pollution preparedness and response, through capacity-building, application of the Voluntary International Maritime Organization (IMO) Member States' Audit Scheme, and the implementation of IMO conventions and other agreements, such as the Tokyo Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on Port State Control;
- Protect the coastal and marine environment from land-based sources of pollution through the implementation of the Global Programme of Action (GPA) and the Montreal Declaration, with special emphasis on municipal wastewater, the physical alteration and destruction of habitats and nutrients through efforts at all levels;
- Significantly reduce the loss of marine biodiversity and maintain the productivity and biodiversity of coastal and marine ecosystems, species and genetic resources through the implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity and Jakarta Mandate and other existing international conventions and programs of action; and
- Ensure that fish stocks are maintained or restored to levels that can sustainably support present and future generations through the application of the integrated coastal management (ICM) approach, ecosystem management, marine protected area designation and implementation of the Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries and other Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and Law of the Sea instruments including measures against unsustainable fisheries practices.

The SDS-SEA provides a strategic approach to developing and managing marine and coastal resources in a sustainable manner, with utmost consideration to the different

uses, perceptions of value, and priorities that national governments and other stakeholders place on such resources. By employing integrated approaches to more effectively implement international conventions, the SDS-SEA aims to harness resources and strengthen synergies and linkages in capacity building and to mobilize all stakeholders – including government agencies, international organizations, donors, financial institutions, the private sector, non-government organizations (NGOs), scientists, academe, communities and other members of civil society – to discharge their social responsibilities and actively contribute to sustainable development programmes. At the local level, the SDS-SEA provides directions and approaches for the authorities and stakeholders to act on and resolve local environmental and natural resource issues that have national, regional and global significance, to identify and promote opportunities for environmental investments, and to facilitate sustainable financing options.

We recognize the benefits of working together, and firmly commit ourselves to regional cooperation and collaboration. To this end, we agree to adopt the Sustainable Development Strategy for the Seas of East Asia as a common platform for regional cooperation, and as a framework for policy and programme development and implementation, at the national and local level, on a voluntary basis, where deemed appropriate by each concerned individual state within the East Asian region, without imposing legal obligations or prohibitions.

We thank Malaysia for her hospitality and tremendous efforts in making our Forum a success.

Adopted at the East Asian Seas Congress 2003, Putrajaya, 12 December 2003, in the English language.



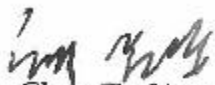
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Ministry of Land and Maritime Transportation  
Democratic People's Republic of Korea



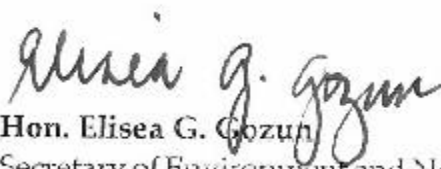
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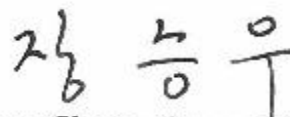
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