

IOI - PEMSEA Cooperation - the Second East Asian Congress.

Almost 800 participants from 40 countries took part in the East Asian Seas Congress held in Haikou City, China from 12-16 December 2006.

The Agenda of the Congress included Ministerial Forum on the Implementation of the Sustainable Development Strategy for the Seas of East Asia: International Conference on Coastal and Ocean Governance: One Ocean, One People, One Vision; and the meeting of the EAS Partnership Council. A number of side events were also organized.

With over 30 Workshops and Seminars the EAS Congress helped to establish a region-wide platform for dialogue, meaningful knowledge exchange, stimulated new ideas and formulated purposeful recommendations. As Dr. Chua Thia-Eng mentioned in his welcome message: "The partnerships developed over the years serve on the key factor to the successful organization of the Congress."

The International Ocean Institute experts present at the Conference contributed actively to the workshops and interactive roundtables offering an opportunity to present the IOI views and policy, interact with other stakeholders and inform existing challenges facing the world and the region.

Mrs. Masako Bannai Otsuka (IOI-Japan) discussed how eco-tourism in small islands can benefit the local people in a sustainable manner, highlighting experiences on Bonin and Myakojima islands.

Dr. Iouri Oliounine (IOI Executive Director) outlined the role of NGOs in meeting the MDGs objectives by presenting a joint paper prepared by the IOI President, Dr. A. Behnam and Dr. I. Oliounine entitled "MDGs and IOI - A Stakeholder Contribution to Achieving the Millennium Development Goals". He described the IOI activities with direct bearing on the MDGs. Such as those related to the eradication poverty and hunger, the promotion of gender equality, ensuring of environmental sustainability and setting up a global partnership for development. Dr. I. Oliounine, who co-chaired the workshop "Safer coasts: living with risks", outlined the role of NGOs in the aftermath of natural disasters, which



Participants at the East Asian Seas congress.

includes providing assistance to communities and unbiased information, organization of education and training and performing risk assessment.



Some of the participants of the joint IOI/IOC Seminar on Capacity Building organised in conjunction with the EAS Congress.

Dr. Cherdasak Virapat (IOI-Thailand) presented on the Thai Government's response to the 2004 Indian Ocean Tsunami including establishing a national disaster warning centre to coordinate the work of government agencies. The Centre also assisted the Government in developing a national master plan for combatting disasters.

Dr. Russell Reichelt also presented to the Conference the summary of the outcomes of the discussions under the Theme "Applying management-related science and technology". He presented the theme's conclusions, emphasizing that, inter alia:

developing GIS databases and maps encourages a consensus approach and a shared vision for conservation and practical measures to achieve sustainable resource use and management; applying innovative approaches and technologies in the sustainable use and management of ecosystems has proved to be successful and practical; and new approaches and technologies should be adopted and adapted for specific regional needs.

Speaking about regime building in coastal areas and ocean governance Dr. Russell Reichelt (IOI Board Member from Australia) presented the findings of a survey on education in coastal and ocean governance, noting that 71% of institutions surveyed around the world have reported engagement in education and training in these areas. He stressed that the purpose of education is to raise awareness of the importance of effective ocean governance, build capacity to implement effective governance, encourage leadership, and promote the idea of "sufficient consensus" for action.

Professor R. Rajagopalan (IOI-India) gave a talk on women and youth activities in sustainable coastal management. He presented factors which adversely affect the coastal communities such as marine pollution, decline in fish catch, coastal environment degradation due to urban infrastructural development, etc. He described the ways in which the IOI addresses the problems of coastal communities, recounted the successes, failures and lessons learnt.

Professor R. South (IOI-Australia) spoke about policies for sustainable management of coral reefs. His report attempted to create ways of sharing lessons among SIDS and to assist government leaders and decision-makers in small island states in the development of the necessary policies to enable them to effectively manage and conserve their coral reefs. He outlined the guiding principles for the development of coral reef policies and concluded with a guide of partnerships that can assist governments in the development of policies.

Dr. Noel Brown (IOI Board Member from the USA) presented the role of the coastal city in marine environment protection and sustainable oceans governance. He emphasized that one of the most profound and pervasive demographic shifts of the 20th century was the large scale and sustained movement of populations from rural to urban areas and from inland to coastal cities. He explained the influence of coastal cities on the coastal environment and determined the ways of more effective engagement of coastal cities in the protection of marine environment and the sustainable use of its resources in meeting the challenge of Global Oceans Governance.

Old friends of IOI, Prof. Gunnar Kullenberg, its former Executive Director, and Prof. Alexander Yankov, former IOI Board member from Bulgaria, were also among key participants of the Conference.

We are very thankful to the IOI-China staff for assisting in operating the IOI information booth during the Conference. The booth was well attended by participants and the IOI promotional materials were distributed.

Finally, jointly with the IOC the Institute organized a side event under the title “Capacity Development in Marine Science and Operational Oceanography”. The side event was organized in the form of roundtable exchange of views and experiences. Six experts of the IOI took part in the activity.

More information about the Congress and the Summary of the decisions can be found online at <http://www.iisd.ca/YMB/EASC2006>.

IOInforma is a news and information bulletin of the International Ocean Institute (IOI). Any feedback or request for information should be sent to the IOI Headquarters, P.O. Box 3, Gzira GZR1000 MALTA, or by email: ioihq@ioihq.org.mt