

RP hosts East Asian Seas Congress

By ELLALYN B. DE VERA

The Philippines will have an opportunity to gain the assistance of neighboring countries in managing its coastal areas and seas as the country hosts the East Asian Seas (EAS) Congress in Manila next year.

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) and the Partnerships in Environmental Management for the Seas of East Asia (PEMSEA) recently signed a memorandum of agreement formalizing the Philippines' hosting of the EAS Congress from Nov. 23-27, 2009, which aims to sustain efforts to protect and manage the country's seas and coastal areas.

Philippine-based PEMSEA is a regional program of the Global Environment Facility (GEF) whose member-countries include Cambodia, China, North Korea, Indonesia, Japan, Laos, South Korea, Singapore, Thailand, Timor Leste, and Vietnam.

"The 2009 Congress will be a bigger event and assembly on the sustainable management of the coastal and ocean environment than before since every country is now aware that the sustainable use of coastal and marine resources in each country benefits the whole region," DENR Secretary Jose "Lito" L. Atienza Jr. said.

The DENR chief cited that this year's program will focus on the condition of Philippine water resources to realize efforts that will ensure the sustainability of properly managing



R.P. HOSTS EAST ASIAN SEAS CONGRESS. Environment and Natural Resources Secretary Jose 'Lito' L. Atienza Jr. (seated, left) signs an agreement with Partnerships in Environmental Management for the Seas of East Asia (PEMSEA) Executive Director Raphael Lotilla (seated, right) formalizing the country's hosting of the 3rd East Asian Seas Congress from Nov. 23-27, 2009. Looking on are PEMSEA Chief Technical Officer Stephen Adrian Ross, Gen. Nicomedes Ena from the Bureau of Customs, and United Nations Development Program (UNDP) representative Kyo Naka. Atienza said the 3rd East Asian Seas Congress 'promises to be an even bigger event and assembly on the sustainable management of the coastal and ocean environment.'

the country's bodies of water.

"PEMSEA aims to manage all of these waters around us properly, so PEMSEA being stationed in the Philippines is a most natural develop-

ment. PEMSEA is something that the department is fully committed to, and we will work doubly hard together to be effective in our objectives," Atienza said.