

PROCEEDINGS OF THE 2008 PNLG FORUM

**“Water Resources Protection, Utilization
and Management”**

**Sihanoukville, Cambodia
19-21 November 2008**

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A. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. The 2008 PEMSEA Network of Local Governments (PNLG) forum was held at Sokha Hotel, Sihanoukville, Cambodia, from 19-21 November 2008. It was the seventh of a series of forum conducted since the network was launched in 2001 in RO Korea. The 2008 PNLG Forum was hosted by the Municipal Government of Sihanoukville and focused on the theme “Water Resources Protection, Utilization and Management”.
- 1.2. The forum aimed to a) share good practices and lessons learned in water resources protection, utilization and management; b) discuss strategies on strengthening water governance and capacity, and b) identify strategies for sustaining the network and expanding its role to support local ICM implementation and scaling up.
- 1.3. The forum was jointly organized by the Municipal Government of Sihanoukville, PEMSEA and the PNLG Secretariat. Eight local business enterprises provided in-kind contribution for the organization of the forum.
- 1.4. Twenty two local governments from 9 countries across the region participated in the forum in addition to regional experts/resource speakers from the International Council on Local Environmental Initiatives (ICLEI) Southeast Asia Secretariat, Phnom Penh Water Supply Authority (PPWSA), Macao Water Supply Co., Ltd., Marine Environmental Research and Innovative Technology (MERIT) of the City University of Hong Kong, Coastal and Ocean Management Institute (COMI) of Xiamen University and Oil Spill Response and East Asia Response Ltd. (OSRL EARL).
- 1.5. Representatives from international and national agencies in Cambodia as well as from the academe also participated in the forum.
- 1.6. The forum was divided into 3 major parts: the opening ceremony, the general assembly meeting and the technical workshop. The forum was concluded by a field trip to key areas in Sihanoukville.
- 1.7. The meeting agenda and full list of participants is attached as Annex 1 and 2.

OPENING CEREMONY

- 1.8. The opening ceremony was well attended by national and local government representatives and experts, as well as the media, in addition to the invited experts and participants from other countries and agencies.

- 1.9. The opening remarks were delivered by Mr. S bong Sarath and Prof. Raphael PM Lotilla on behalf of the Municipal Government of Sihanoukville and PEMSEA Resource Facility, respectively. Both speakers emphasized the importance of the PNLG as a platform for local governments to discuss issues of common concerns as well as opportunities to strengthen their relationships and governance mechanisms.
- 1.10. In his keynote address, Dr. Mok Mareth, Senior Minister and Minister of the Environment emphasized that since the health and growth of a nation is anchored in its water resources, water resource management must be considered within the broader framework of economic and social development. Dr. Mok highlighted the critical role of the local governments in implementing national policies, strategies and programs on water resources management.
- 1.11. The full text of the Opening Ceremony speeches may be found in Annex 3.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY MEETING

- 1.12. The General Assembly meeting was chaired by Mr. Pan Shi Jian, Vice Mayor of Xiamen and PNLG President. Mr. Pan updated the meeting on what transpired since the conduct of the 2007 PNLG Forum in Danang, which included a) the conduct of the First Executive Committee Meeting in Xiamen (PR China) on 4 November 2007; b) recognition of Guimaras Province (Philippines) as ICM parallel site; c) completion of site evaluation of Thua Thien Hue Province (Vietnam) for ICM parallel site development; d) participation of PNLG in the East Asian Seas Partnership Council Meeting held in Tokyo (Japan) in July 2008, and e) publication of the papers presented in the 2007 PNLG Forum as well as the PNLG Charter in the December 2007 issue of Tropical Coasts.
- 1.13. One of the highlights of the General Assembly was the formal induction of Guimaras Province (Philippines) as the newest member of the Network. Guimaras Province is the 24th member local government of the PNLG. The Honorable Felipe Hilan Nava, Governor of Guimaras, signed the PNLG Charter on behalf of the Province. Governor Nava, expressed Guimaras' commitment to uphold the vision and mission of the PNLG; contribute to achieving the objectives of the Network and abide by its Code of Conduct.
- 1.14. The PNLG Secretariat presented its report to the General Assembly focusing on the 2009 work programme and budget, which the meeting reviewed and adopted.
- 1.15. The following are the highlights of the discussion:
 - Representation of PNLG in the EASPC – Dr. Chua Thia-Eng, Chair of the EASPC, referred to the provision of the PNLG Charter where it is stipulated that the network should be represented in the EASPC. By becoming a non-country partner of the Council, the voice of the local government will be heard and in the process will provide them the

opportunity to demonstrate their relevant contributions in the local implementation of the Sustainable Development Strategy for the Seas of East Asia. The network will also derive benefit from networking with country and other non-country partners. It was suggested that the PNLG will submit a formal application for its inclusion as non-country partner of the Council. Deliberation will be made during the EASPC Executive Committee meeting in July 2009 for endorsement in the next Council meeting.

- Expanding the membership of PNLG – There are two categories of membership – the local governments being the regular or core members and associate members, which may include local government units outside of East Asia, local government associations, NGOs, universities and academic institutions and the private sector. The PNLG recognizes the importance of involving stakeholders in all aspects of its work at the local level. Expanding the membership will not only strengthen the network but will also enhance support for capacity development. The members agreed to endeavor to promote the PNLG to other relevant groups and organizations including the private sector.
- 2009 work programme and budget – The PNLG Charter stipulates that the incumbent officers of the PNLG shall hold office for 3 years or until their successors are elected. The terms of office of the current officers will end in 2009. On a separate meeting with Prof. Lotilla, Mr. Pan conveyed his concern about the future programs and direction of the PNLG and suggested that the PNLG Secretariat in coordination with PEMSEA will convene a meeting to discuss this matter in addition to other concerns, such as the institutional strengthening of the PNLG Secretariat. It was agreed that the second PNLG Executive Committee meeting will be organized to discuss the actions required from the General Assembly meeting, including the election of officers; strengthening of the PNLG Secretariat and plan for the conduct of the 2009 Forum in Bataan (Philippines).
- Strengthening the networking process within countries and publicizing PNLG across the region – Mr. Le Van Thu, representative from Thua Thien Hue Province (Vietnam), mentioned that the implementation of Prime Minister's Decision 158 to scale up ICM in 14 coastal provinces in Vietnam will be greatly facilitated if there is participation of relevant ministries, such as the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment in the PNLG forum. The PNLG can serve as a platform for information sharing between the national and local governments and in the process would allow the national governments to be made aware of the needs and concerns of the local governments. In the succeeding PNLG forums, relevant agencies at the national level will be notified and invited to participate.

Consideration will also be made in establishing a network of ICM alumni, which comprises of practitioners who participated in PEMSEA's training/internship programs and are directly or indirectly involved in ICM implementation. The ICM alumni can be linked with the National

Task Force for ICM to be established at the different countries or the Regional Task Force depending on their level of competence and expertise.

Dr. Fan Xiaojun, Executive Director of Macao Water, mentioned that the forthcoming 2009 Macao International Environmental Cooperation Forum and Exhibition can serve as a venue to promote the PNLG since the said gathering will involve local government partners from across China.

Recruiting local government members from the region is not seen as a challenge among the members. Nam Dinh Province and Thanh Hoa Province (Vietnam) had expressed interest to become members of the PNLG.

- 1.16. The Municipal Government of Sihanoukville handed over the PNLG flag to the Province of Bataan (Philippines) who confirmed its commitment to host the 2009 Forum and carry on the tradition of rotating the hosting of the PNLG Forum among the member local governments. The 2009 PNLG Forum will be held as one of the side events of the East Asian Seas Congress 2009 in Manila (Philippines).

PNLG TECHNICAL WORKSHOP

- 1.17. The Technical Workshop comprised of 3 sessions with 14 paper presentations. Session 1 tackled local water governance and transforming policy into action. Session 2 featured good water resource management practices from 5 PEMSEA ICM sites. Session 3 highlighted capacity development support for local governments.

Sessions 1 and 2

- 1.18. The presentations in Sessions 1 and 2 and the panel discussions provided a wealth of information on water resource use, protection and management as well as very useful insights for the local governments to take heed of.
 - PEMSEA showed the relevance of the Framework for Sustainable Development for Coastal Areas through ICM in strengthening local government's approach to sustainable management of water resources. The integrated water resources management, which represents a paradigm shift in the governance of water use and supply management, was presented in particular, as a tool that can be applied within the framework of ICM.
 - ICLEI shared its experiences in pioneering a local water governance reform in Baguio City (Philippines). The initiative revolved on shifting the water reform agenda from sectoral to integrated water governance. The operationalization and institutionalization of the program called Sustainable Water Integrated Management and Governance has provided the necessary mechanism for managing the water resources of the city in an integrated manner.

- PPWSA showed its exemplary performance in initiating a culture of change within the organization and transforming a decrepit water supply system into a model public sector water utility that provides round the clock drinking water to Phnom Penh's inhabitants. Only a quarter of the population used to receive piped water in 1993. Water service now covers 90 per cent of Phnom Penh area and its population. It was emphasized that the support from the Government of Cambodia and its development agencies is crucial in allowing tariff restructuring and rendering PPWSA operational and financial autonomy.
- Macao Water highlighted its experiences in achieving sustainable water supply through private and public partnership. The partnership started in 1985 when Sino-French Holdings Ltd. bought 85 per cent of Macao Water and signed a 25-year concession contract with the Macao government. The partnership boosted the utility's performance and infrastructures producing a 24 hour supply of safe drinking water to Macao residents in less than 5 years. By the 1990s, the entire water treatment and distribution system has been fully automated. Sino-French Holdings' successful experience in Macao has become an example of a good PPP model that is worthy of replication to the rest of China and in the region.
- The case studies from the 5 ICM sites demonstrated the different approaches taken by local governments in water management. Despite the differences, all have a common goal, that is, to establish a water resource management system that serves society's needs efficiently and equitably, at the same time promoting the sustainable conservation of water resources.

Bali (Indonesia) utilized a traditional system called *Subak* in managing its water resources, particularly for agriculture. *Subak* is a socio-agriculture-religious community custom organization with the authority to ensure equity of water allocation among its members. There are 1,610 *Subaks* in the whole of Bali Province. The system also facilitated the involvement of the local government, the communities and other sectors that significantly use water resources.

Selangor (Malaysia) utilized an integrated river basin management approach in ensuring sufficient and clean water supply, in improving storm water management as well as protecting and conserving the fireflies' habitat, which are touted to indicate good water quality.

The Shihwa Lake (RO Korea) experience focused on improving the water quality of the lake through the construction of tidal power plant to increase seawater exchange and in managing non-point pollution sources for long-term watershed management.

Chonburi (Thailand) and Danang (Vietnam) are addressing challenges in water use management through the implementation of priority action programs identified in their respective coastal strategies. Activities

ranged from raising awareness and building capacity on waste management within the communities and along the watershed areas and promoting sustainable water use to address potential water shortage problem.

- 1.19. The discussion revolved on the notion that there is water crisis and that water issues are not simple and solving them does not involve a one-size-fits-all scenario. Different approaches in water management can therefore be adopted based on local conditions. An integrated water resource management approach involving relevant agencies and sectors should be a common element in any program.

Session 3

- 1.20. The special session on capacity development was convened to highlight the training opportunities, technologies and technical support/services that are available to the member local governments.
 - The experience of Guimaras in responding to the 11 August 2006 oil spill disaster had provided the necessary introduction for OSRL EARL's topic, which focused on the role of the local governments in building capacities for oil spill preparedness and response. Prior to the forum, OSRL EARL requested PEMSEA's assistance to circulate to the member local governments a self-assessment questionnaire, which is designed to assist local governments determine their level of oil spill preparedness and response. The results of the survey, which will be made available, can be used by the local governments as guide in the development of their respective action plans in alignment with their country's national oil spill contingency plan. A provincial oil spill contingency plan is seen as critical for local governments to develop since it is where the operational issues and challenges lie. The local governments will be requested to complete the self-assessment questionnaires and submit them to PEMSEA.
 - MERIT, one of the eight "Areas of Excellence" in Hong Kong and PEMSEA's first "Regional Center of Excellence" shared its variety of novel approaches, technologies and available services that can be utilized by local governments for monitoring environmental changes. MERIT emphasized that the novel technologies are easy to apply and are cost-effective. With appropriate technical training, local governments should be able to utilize these technologies in their effort to monitor changes in the coastal and marine environment and resources. As PEMSEA's RCOE, MERIT expressed its commitment to provide the necessary assistance through research/scientific collaborations and short-term/informal and formal trainings in its area of expertise.
 - Korea Maritime Institute outlined the experiences and evolution of the application of the total pollution load management system (TPLMS) in Masan Bay, an enclosed bay in RO Korea characterized by heavy pollution loading from land-based activities. TPLMS was introduced in

2005 in conjunction with the setting up of appropriate strategies and policy alternatives to support its effective implementation. Stakeholders' participation was a major component of the program. The establishment of a Community Advisory Council had been helpful in alleviating emerging issues like use conflicts.

- The Coastal and Ocean Management Institute of Xiamen University, has taken advantage of its experiences in providing the necessary scientific and technical support to the Xiamen ICM program in its effort to strengthen its research and training capacity on ocean and coastal governance. COMI is offering the first graduate program on marine affairs in China and is providing opportunities to prospective students from the region to avail of scholarships, either from the Chinese Government or from Xiamen University. COMI agreed to have a special arrangement with PEMSEA wherein those qualified applicants recommended by the ICM sites will be considered as priority.

1.21. The following points were discussed:

- PEMSEA will act as an interface in linking the local government needs with relevant partner institutions.
- One of the criteria in the selection of potential candidates for the various training opportunities will be direct involvement or support to ICM program implementation. Candidates can, for instance, complete their course works in Xiamen then conduct their special research at their respective sites.
- Partner institutions will endeavor to share knowledge and advice concerning good practices on governance and scientific/technical aspects of their work that may benefit the local governments, including the transferability of technologies to the various sites.
- PEMSEA will continuously promote opportunities to the local governments through web linkages with key partners and local government websites, where available.

1.22. In closing, the participants appreciated the effort of the Municipal Government of Sihanoukville in organizing the PNLG forum and recognized unanimously the value of the forum in providing the right venue for knowledge sharing and networking.

1.23. The representative from RO Korea announced the hosting of the 4th East Asian Seas Congress in 2012 by the Government of the Republic of Korea in conjunction with the Yeosu Expo, which will carry the theme "The Living Ocean and Coast", and invited the PNLG to visit RO Korea in 2012.

1.24. The Provincial Government of Chonburi (Thailand) on the other hand announced its intent to host the 2010 PNLG Forum, which the network accepted with pleasure.

Annex 1. 2008 PNLG Forum Program

2008 PNLG FORUM 19-21 November 2008 Sihanoukville, Cambodia “Water Resources Protection, Utilization and Management”	
PROGRAM	
18 November, Tuesday	
1400 – 1700	Arrival of participants Early registration
19 November, Wednesday	
Opening Ceremony	
0800 – 0900	Registration
0900 – 0915	Acknowledgements of Important Guests and Participants
0915 – 0925	Welcoming Remarks Hon. S bong Sarath Governor Municipal Government of Sihanoukville, Cambodia
0925 – 0935	Opening Remaks Prof. Raphael P.M. Lotilla Executive Director PEMSEA Resource Facility
0935 – 1000	Keynote Address H.E. Dr. Mok Mareth Senior Minister, Royal Government of Cambodia Minister, Ministry of the Environment, Cambodia
1000 – 1015	Group Photo
1015 – 1030	Coffee/Tea Break
General Assembly of the PNLG Chair: Hon. Pan Shi-Jian, PNLG President and Vice-Mayor, Xiamen Municipality (China) Co-Vhair: Hon. Enrique T. Garcia, Jr., PNLG Vice President and Governor, Bataan Province (Philippines)	
1030 – 1045	Report of the PNLG Secretariat <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First Executive Committee Meeting • Inclusion of PNLG as non-country partner of the East Asian Seas Partnership Council • Contribution in the implementation of the Sustainable Development Strategy for the Seas of East Asia Dr. Zhou Lumin Head, PNLG Secretariat
1045 – 1100	Induction of Guimaras Province (Philippines) as New PNLG Member Signing of PNLG Charter
1100 – 1110	Statement of Guimaras Hon. Felipe Hilan A. Nava Governor Guimaras Province, Philippines

1110 – 1130	Review and Adoption of 2009 PNLG Annual Work Programme Dr. Zhou Lumin Head, PNLG Secretariat
1130 – 1230	Discussion
1230 – 1400	Lunch
Technical Workshop	
Session 1: Local Water Governance – From Policy to Practice Chair: Dr. Chua Thia-Eng Chair, East Asian Seas Partnership Council	
1400 – 1420	The Framework for Sustainable Development of Coastal Areas – Addressing Water Use and Supply Management through Integrated Coastal Management Mr. Stephen Adrian Ross Chief Technical Officer PEMSEA Resource Facility
1420 – 1440	Sustainable Water Integrated Management and Governance Mr. Victorino E. Aquitania Regional Director International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives (ICLEI) Southeast Asia
1440 – 1500	The Phnom Penh Water Supply Authority Experience H.E. Ek Sonn Chan General Director Phnom Penh Water Supply Authority, Cambodia
1500 – 1520	Achieving Sustainable Water Supply in Macao, China - A 25-year Partnership with the Private Sector Dr. Fan Xiaojun Executive Director Macao Water Supply Co., Ltd., Macao, SAR China
1520 – 1535	Coffee/Tea Break
1535 – 1645	Facilitated Discussion <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Challenges and opportunities in local water governance • Innovative approaches/practices and technologies for water resource management at the local level • Addressing water resource management within the framework of integrated coastal management and integration with other similar frameworks (e.g., IWRM) Identification of Priority/Strategic Actions for Local Governments on Water Governance and Management
1645 – 1700	Summary and Recommendations
1900 – 2100	Dinner Reception Host: Sihanoukville Municipal Government
20 November, Thursday	
Session 2 – Good Water Resource Management Practices from the PEMSEA ICM Sites Chair: Prof. Raphael P.M. Lotilla Executive Director, PEMSEA Resource Facility	
0830 – 0845	Recap of previous day's activities and outputs Introduction to present day's activities Sihanoukville PMO
0845 – 0900	Case Study 1 (China)
0900 – 0915	Case Study 2 (Indonesia)
0915 – 0930	Case Study 3 (Malaysia)
0930 – 0945	Case Study 4 (Philippines)
0945 – 1000	Case Study 5 (RO Korea)
1000 – 1015	Case Study 6 (Thailand)
1015 – 1030	Case Study 7 (Vietnam)

1030 – 1045	Coffee/Tea Break
1045 – 1145	Facilitated Discussion Integration of Identified Strategies/Approaches on Water Governance and Management into the Sustainable Development for Coastal Areas/Integrated Coastal Management Framework
1145 – 1200	Summary and Recommendations
1200 – 1400	Lunch
Special Session – Capacity Development Support for Local Governments Chair: Mr. S. Adrian Ross Chief Technical Officer, PEMSEA Resource facility	
1400 - 1415	Responding to an Oil Spill Disaster: The Case of Guimaras Island, Philippines Engr. Evan Anthony Arias Supervising Planner Provincial Planning and Development Office Guimaras Province, Philippines
1415 – 1430	The Role of Local Governments in Building Oil Spill Preparedness and Response Capability Capt. Daniel Chan Regional Advocacy Coordinator Oil Spill Response and East Asia Response Limited Singapore
1430 – 1445	Novel Approaches and Technology in Environmental Management for a New Era Prof. Rudolf Wu Director Centre for Marine Environmental Research and Innovative Technology Hong Kong, SAR China
1445 – 1500	Pollution Total Load Management System (PTLMS) for Masan Bay, RO Korea Dr. Won Keun Chang Senior Researcher Korea Maritime Institute, RO Korea
1500 – 1515	ICM Research and Training Dr. Xue Xiongzhi Vice President Coastal and Ocean Management Institute, Xiamen University, PR China
1515 – 1530	Coffee/Tea Break
1530 – 1645	Dialogue on Capacity Needs of Local Governments
1645 – 1700	Summary and Recommendations
1700 – 1730	Closing
Evening	Free time
21 November, Friday	
Field Trip	
0730 – 1600	Sites to be Visited <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sihanoukville Autonomous Port • Sewage Treatment Facility • Stung Hav Freshwater Reservoir • Occheauteal Beach • Angkor Cambrew • Ean Yean Pagoda
1900 – 2100	Farewell Dinner Host: PEMSEA Resource Facility
22 November, Saturday – Departure of participants and guests	

Annex 2: List of Participants – 2008 PNLG Forum

CAMBODIA

MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT

Dr. Mok Mareth
Senior Minister, Minister of Environment

Mr. Long Rithirak
Deputy Director General

Mr. Kim Nong
Deputy Director
Education Department

Mr. Yin Sam Ray
Deputy Director
Planning and Legal Affairs

Mr. Hak Channy
Director
Wetland and Coastal Management
Department

Mr. Kosal Kuch
Finance Department
Koh Kong
Ministry of Environment

Mr. He Simen
Officer
Ministry of Environment

Mr. Vin Bunnang
Deputy Education (Cameraman)
MOE

OTHER MINISTRIES

Hon. Vann Sophana
Director
Inspector's Headquarter
Forestry Administration

Mr. Tang Sochettra
Mine and Energy
Ministry of Industry, Mines and Energy

Mr. Bunnak Hang
Urban Planning and Construction
Ministry of Land Management

Mr. Seng Tong
Vice Chief
Office of Flood Forecasting
Ministry of Water Resources and Meteorology

Mr. Sam Monorom
Deputy Director of Local Administrative
Ministry of Interior

ACADEME

Mr. Seak Sophat
Senior Lecturer/Researcher
Royal University of Phnom Penh

Mr. Hoy Sereivanthanak Reasey
Senior Lecturer/Researcher
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Dr. Kunthy Sok
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Royal University of Agriculture

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Mr. Va Moeun
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Hon. Sbong Sarath
Governor
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Mr. Prak Sihara
Deputy Governor and PMO Director
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Mr. Chev Kimheng
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Mr. Meas Vuthy
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Mr. Phai Phan

Deputy Governor
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Mr. Chin Sarin

Deputy Governor
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Deputy Governor
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Ms. Prak Chan Sokha

Deputy Governor
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Hon. Sar loeun

Deputy Governor
Koh Kong Province

Mr. Shuong Sivvuth

Deputy Governor
Kampot Province

Mr. Leng Loeng

Vice Governor
Kep City

Mr. Sam Sam Arth

Chief of Cabinet
Sihanoukville Municipal Hall

Mr. Sok Phan

Vice Chief of Cabinet
Sihanoukville Municipal Hall

Mr. Norng Soyeth

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Marketing Department
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Mr. Ravoun Laykaing

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Mr. Duong Sam Art

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Director
Department of Environment

Mr. Neou Ratana

Director of Agriculture Department
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Department of Environment
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Mr. Prak Chanroeun

Director
Department of Industry, Mine and Energy

Mr. Ang Chandara

Director
Department of Water Resources and
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Mr. Kung Somphors

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Water Supply Treatment Plan

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Department of Public Works and Transports
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Mr. Hun Phy

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Mittapheap District

Mr. Chheng Leang

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Annex 3



2008 PNLG Forum

“Water Resources Protection, Utilization and Management”
Sihanoukville, Cambodia • 19-21 November 2008



Hon. S bong Sarath
Governor of Sihanoukville
Municipal Government of Sihanoukville,
Cambodia

Welcome Message

National, International distinguished guest, all the participants, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Welcome to the Beach town of Cambodia-Sihanoukville!

On behalf of the Municipal Government of Sihanoukville and the Local Organizing Committee (LOC), I am pleased to welcome you to participate in the subject forum, which the local government is cordially hosting and jointly organizing with PEMSEA and the PNLG Secretariat.

We are glad that this forum on “**Water Resource Protection, Utilization and Management**” for PEMSEA Network of Local Government for Sustainable Coastal Development (PNLG) is held in Sihanoukville. This is such a good opportunity for the representatives from the participating countries at the international and national and municipal level and our partner in the region to discuss measures on how we can implement the SDS-SEA for protecting the marine environment.

As you maybe aware, Sihanoukville (City of Charm) has gained high reputation in Cambodia for its pristine beaches. It is important to note that currently, the tourism industry of Sihanoukville is concentrated near beach area. And that tourism industry in Sihanoukville is an important sector in the national economy of Cambodia. It is also the only deepwater seaport, and a home to Ream National Park, the country only the marine national park which was established in 1995.

As situated in the favorable and potential geographical area endowed with the natural resources, Sihanoukville has been determined by the Royal Government of Cambodia as one of the strategic poles for the development of national economy.

However, Sihanoukville's coastal resources and environment face various threats from different sources. These threats include pollution, over-exploitation of resources, destructive fishing, habitat degradation and uncontrolled development.

One again, I would like to avail myself of this opportunity to wish you everyone, peace, prosperity, an enjoyable stay in Sihanoukville! May you achieve the objectives of the 2008 PNLG Forum and have a fruitful discussion and successful field trip during the forum events.

Thank you!



Keynote Speech of Dr. MOK Mareth
Senior Minister, Minister of the Environment
19 November 2008, Sokha Hotel, Sihanoukville, Cambodia

Our distinguished guests:

- Prof. Raphael Lotilla, the Executive Director of the PEMSEA Resource Facility;
- Dr. Chua Thia-Eng, Council Chair of the EAS Partnership Council and my long time friend;
- Hon. Pan Shi-Jian, PNLG President and Vice-Mayor, Xiamen Municipality (China)
- Governor Sbong Sarath of the host of the Municipality of Sihanoukville,
- Honorable Governors, Mayors, Regents, Directors of Cabinets from the region;
- Our expert speakers, representatives from national and local agencies, provinces and municipalities;
- Our colleagues from the international organizations;
- Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen.

It is an honor and a privilege to be with you all on this year's forum of the PEMSEA Network of Local Governments Forum for Sustainable Coastal Development. On behalf of the Ministry of Environment and the Royal Government of Cambodia, I would like to express our sincere appreciation to the PNLG Secretariat, the PEMSEA Resource Facility and the Municipal Government of Sihanoukville for organizing this important event. Getting us all here in Sihanoukville is no easy task. For those who have worked hard to make this happen, my sincerest appreciation.

Ladies and Gentlemen

In economic terms, the World Bank projects that private water management could be worth \$1 trillion by 2021. In the May 2000 issue of *Fortune* magazine, it predicted that water is about to become 'one of the world's great business opportunities', and that 'it promises to be to the 21st century what oil was to the 20th'. For now, however, developing countries have yet to recognize this potential.

In the 1970's, the idea of buying bottled water - the idea of paying for something that is abundant - is unthinkable. More than 20 years later, the unthinkable has happened. All things considered – from production of bottled water to distribution, I will not be surprised if a liter of bottled water is more expensive than the liter of gasoline.

People fear drinking contaminated water but do not seem to care about the daily wastes and pollution which render drinking water, unsafe. Many people would always choose the easy way out – they would rather pay for bottled water than clean up their environment and set up the necessary infrastructures and facilities to have access to safe drinking water in a sustainable manner.

This year's theme on "Water Resources Utilization and Management" is very timely, as countries walk halfway towards the supposed fulfillment of the Millennium Development Goals. Time is catching up on us and there is every reason to be concerned, that we are still far to be getting there. It is estimated that about 640 million people in Asia still have no access to water, which creates a serious problem on food security in many Asian developing countries since nearly 90 per cent of total water use is consumed by the agricultural sector. Similarly, productivity, health and poverty will have terrible consequences on the lives of more than 2 billion people who do not have access to sanitation.

Ironically, East Asia has one of the world's substantial volume of freshwater from major rivers including the Mekong, Yellow and Red River, among others. With a watershed area of about 6.25 million square kilometers, it can not be denied that region's socio-political and economic lifeline is anchored on its water resources.

Within the context of sustainable coastal development, water resource management will remain to be a critical factor, particularly in urbanizing coastal areas. With increasing tourism initiatives, port and shipping industries and oil exploration, it is expected that by 2015, rate of urban population in developing Asian countries, will increase by 27 per cent, and by 2025, this will have grown by 60 percent, creating more challenges in terms of water management. Without getting any farther, Sihanoukville is now experiencing this trend.

The issue of water resources utilization and management can not be taken in isolation. It is a broad management concern that touches several equally challenging concerns such as pollution, sanitation, food security, hazard and habitat protection, among others.

More importantly, the governance aspect which answers the fundamental questions of policy, legislation, institutional arrangements, capacity and information dissemination, are critical concerns in managing water resources in the region. From what I see, it is unfortunate that governance has not matured well enough to accommodate a faster response rate to manage water resources. For many officials, water management still takes the backseat. Management intervention still remains to be reactive – we only act faster in times of crisis.

In an effort to move away from this mentality, Cambodia's commitment to pursuing a sustainable management of water resources is exemplified in the Rectangular Strategy and National Strategic Development Plan. These strategic plans identify the water sector's contribution in poverty alleviation through:

- (1) improved rural livelihoods, and nutrition through better water management in agriculture and fisheries
- (2) improved access to safe drinking water and sanitation
- (3) improved disaster prevention measures
- (4) sustained conservation of aquatic ecosystems and biodiversity for the benefit of future generations

These areas are very much consistent with the Sustainable Framework for Coastal Development thru Integrated Coastal Management.

Recently, the Royal Government also enacted the Law on Water Resources Management of the Kingdom of Cambodia which promotes the integrated approach to water resources management. We believe that the problem on water management is more complex and can not be solved by a single sector alone. Many countries such as the Philippines, Singapore and other countries, are way ahead when it comes to water resources management, but I would like to think that we are getting there. Through this forum, we hope that we will learn from other countries' experiences.

There should be more venues like this where local governments and stakeholders can articulate their needs and come up with concrete actions that can be implemented in the region.

In as much as water resources management and utilization are important aspects in attaining the objectives of international agreements and national commitments, national government should make a stronger effort to ensure that policies and programs at the national level should find their way to communities, municipalities, provinces and regencies to generate benefits at the local level.

Macro level policies and pronouncements should find resonance in local implementation. Local governments are in close contact with the stakeholders and are able to reach out and provide immediate support to stakeholders. You are the ones in the front line when emergencies happen. You are the ones who truly understand the situation on the ground. You are the ones who talk to people everyday.

There is an urgent need to bridge the gap between policy making and implementation through decentralization and deconcentration, giving the local governments not only the administrative powers but the "power of the purse" so that they have the financial capacity to act accordingly.

In the same manner, donors and the private sector should provide the necessary resources that would promote sustainable water use, protection and management. Private sectors, in particular, can make a huge difference by investing in infrastructures to promote access to water in coastal communities. Donor agencies should also ensure

that support is channeled to priorities of countries and not only towards the direction of funding agencies' visions. Many resources are wasted when stakeholders are excluded from the processes of consultations and implementation.

But these are easier said than done. It takes a lot of effort in convincing national and local agencies, private sectors and donors to put water resources as top priority. Water management requires strong leadership, conviction and competence.

The next two days should provide us with the strategic direction for all PNLG members, so that when you go back to your countries and localities, we all have a clear path on which way to go in managing our water resources in our respective countries. The time has come for us to stop talking and do more walking.

Local governments are the key to creating changes and pushing forward changes on water resources management. If the political scientists are correct, the local governments are the key to preventing the disaster. We hope that this year's forum will form part of that effort, no matter how small that may seem. Let us be part of the solution.

Now, I would like to declare the PLNG Forum OPEN.

Thank you and good luck!