

Development of the 8th Ministerial Declaration

1.0 Background

- 1.1 This document provides a background on the development of the 8th Ministerial Declaration, which shall be signed and approved by Ministers of the PEMSEA Country Partners during the Opening Ceremony of the East Asian Seas (EAS) Congress 2024.
- 1.2 The East Asian Seas (EAS) Ministerial Forum (MF) serves as the highest platform for strategic direction within the PEMSEA mechanism. Held every three (3) years alongside the East Asian Seas Congress (EASC), the EAS MF shapes the region's medium- and long-term course and priorities. In particular, it provides policy directions and commitments for improving and strengthening the implementation of the Strategic Development Strategy for the Seas of East Asia (SDS-SEA) (PEMSEA Rules of Governance, Rule 17, Sec. 17.2).
- 1.3 Unlike previous EAS Ministerial Forums, the 8th MF including the signing of the Ministerial Declaration will be undertaken as part of the Opening Ceremony and Day 1 of the EAS Congress 2024 on 6 November 2024.
- 1.4 The Ministerial Declarations in the past have tackled serious global ocean commitments to promote sustainable ocean development, climate resilience, healthy biodiversity, and a blue economy with targets and commitments to action. However, achieving these interlinked objectives requires accelerated progress through synergistic pathways that harness collective efforts and multiply impacts.
- 1.5 Building upon previous EAS Ministerial Declarations and in line with the PEMSEA Roadmap 2030 and Sustainable Development Strategy for the Seas of East Asia (SDS-SEA) Implementation Plan (IP) 2023-2027, the EAS Congress 2024 aims to accelerate progress by forging "Blue Synergies" or actionable strategies that leverage cross-sectoral synergies through enhanced responsible governance, innovation and recognize scalability, blue investment and financing, and equity.

2.0 Key Objectives of the 8th Ministerial Declaration

2.1 In line with the EAS Congress theme, “Blue Synergy for a Shared Future: One Sustainable and Resilient Ocean”, the 8th MF and Ministerial Declaration aims to:

- Highlight the progress made to date by the EAS region through the PEMSEA partnership in delivering the PEMSEA Roadmap to 2030 and the SDS-SEA Implementation Plan 2023-2027;
- Catalyze synergies for a sustainable and resilient East Asian Seas, particularly focusing on advancing ocean knowledge and integrated approaches to ocean governance, scaling local actions and solutions to address persistent and emerging transboundary challenges, strengthening evidence-based decision-making by leveraging innovative technologies and approaches, and identifying blue financing and investments; and
- Ensure alignment and contribution of the EAS region’s efforts to achieving key international and regional commitments supporting Blue Economy.

3.0 Draft 8th Ministerial Declaration

3.1 The 8th Ministerial Declaration will build upon

- 3.1.1 Commitments outlined in previous Ministerial Declarations, particularly, the Preah Sihanouk Ministerial Declaration of 2021, which outlined the regional priorities of the PEMSEA Roadmap 2030;
- 3.1.2 PEMSEA and Country partners’ progress in achieving the targets of Year 1 of the 2023-2027 SDS-SEA Implementation plan, as well as the last two years of the 2018-2022 SDS-SEA Implementation Plan;
- 3.1.3 Countries’ progress in implementing relevant ocean targets of regional and global commitments such as the UN Sustainable Development Goals, Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, and Paris Agreement, among others;
- 3.1.4 Recognition of how regional efforts support the bigger global ocean agenda, such as implementing the GBF and ocean-climate action;
- 3.1.5 Identification of scaled-up pathways to enhance blue financing and investments to drive sustainable ocean actions;
- 3.1.6 New and emerging issues and trends in innovation and technology that will impact the EAS Region (i.e. AI, digitalization of ocean data, slow-onset climate impacts, blue foods to address nutritional deficiency and well being etc.); and
- 3.1.7 Strengthening existing partnerships and capacitating strategic multi-stakeholder cooperation between and among governments, the private sector, academe, civil society organizations, and the youth and other vulnerable groups;

3.2 The conceptual framework and zero draft of the 8th Ministerial Declaration can be found in the supporting document (EC/32/DOC/03a).

4.0 Actions requested from the Executive Committee

4.1 Provide comments and suggestions to refine and agree on the conceptual framework and key elements of the 8th Ministerial Declaration

4.2 Provide comments and suggestions to develop the draft one of the 8th Ministerial Declaration, particularly in:

- Defining 'synergistic' actions
- Ensuring value add and new elements particularly in capturing new and emerging issues/approaches to strengthen/enhance the implementation of SDS-SEA or address gaps, if there are any
- setting targets with clear indicators and timelines under Commitments