



# PROCEEDINGS OF THE THIRTY SECOND MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

**Conducted online via Zoom**

**9 April 2024**



# 32<sup>nd</sup> PEMSEA EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING

19 March 2024, 2:00 PM – 4:30 PM (UTC+8) via Zoom

## PROCEEDINGS

### Introduction

- I. The 32nd PEMSEA Executive Committee (EC) Meeting was conducted virtually on 19 March 2024 via Zoom. Participants of the meeting included the EC members, particularly the Chair and Co-Chair, Intergovernmental Session Chair and Co-Chair, the Technical Session Chair of the EAS Partnership Council (PC), and the Executive Director of the PEMSEA Resource Facility (PRF). Observers from the China PEMSEA Center, Ministry of Environment (MoE) of Cambodia, and Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) of the Philippines also attended the meeting. PRF served as the Secretariat of the meeting.
  
- II. Supporting documents may be found in the Annexes:
  - a. Annex 1: Agenda of the meeting;
  - b. Annex 2: Links to the meeting documents, presentation, and group photo; and
  - c. Annex 3: List of Participants

### **1.0 Opening of the meeting and approval of the meeting agenda (EC/32/DOC/01b)**

- 1.1. The meeting commenced at 2:00 pm (UTC+8). The EAS PC Chair, Dr. Vann Monyneath, welcomed the members of the Executive Committee and provided a brief recap of the key agreements and recommendations of the 31<sup>st</sup> EC Meeting.
  
- 1.2. He emphasized the importance of discussing the ways forward on the preparations for the East Asian Seas (EAS) Congress 2024, providing inputs to the draft 8<sup>th</sup> EAS Ministerial

Declaration, and the provisional program of the 16<sup>th</sup> EAS Partnership Council (PC) Meeting. Lastly, he encouraged the members to actively participate and share their recommendations for each agenda item.

1.3. **Decision:** The agenda was approved.

## **2.0 Updates on the East Asian Seas (EAS) Congress 2024 (EC/32/DOC/02; EC/31/DOC/02a)**

2.1. Ms. Abigail Cruzada, Secretariat Coordinator of the PRF, presented the agenda, highlighting the revised theme and framework program of the EAS Congress 2024 (EASC 2024), the provisional programs of the Opening Ceremony and Ministerial Forum, and proposed roles for the Executive Committee.

2.2. The EAS Congress 2024 will be conducted at the Xiamen International Conference Center Hotel in Xiamen, PR China from 6-8 November 2024. It will be organized by PEMSEA and China through the Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR) and Xiamen Municipal People's Government (Xiamen). In consideration of common objectives and to optimize resources, the Congress will be conducted in collaboration with the World Ocean Week (WOW) in Xiamen, resulting in a joint theme and opening ceremony.

2.3. This historic collaboration commemorates 30 years of initiatives and partnership between PEMSEA and Xiamen. Notably, Xiamen served as one of the two initial demonstration sites for PEMSEA, and continues to serve as a leading example of the successful and progressive application of ICM s in support of the goals of the SDS-SEA.

2.4. During the 31<sup>st</sup> EC Meeting, the theme "Blue Solutions for a Sustainable and Resilient Ocean" was initially chosen, subject to further refinement with the host country.

Subsequent discussions with MNR and Xiamen led to a revised theme, “**Blue Solutions for a Shared Future: One Sustainable and Resilient Ocean**” to

- a. Emphasize the need to scale up collaboration within and outside of the EAS region ;
  - b. Ensure that the theme aligns with both the objectives of the World Ocean Week as a collaborating event with the EAS Congress; and
  - c. Be meaningful and impactful when translated in Chinese;
- 2.5. The theme resonates strongly with the vision and approaches of the Sustainable Development Strategy for the Seas of East Asia (SDS-SEA). Adopted in 2003, and updated in 2015 in response to the adoption of the UN Sustainable Development Goals, the SDS-SEA provides an integrated framework centered on synergizing efforts across sectors and stakeholders to pursue healthy ocean, people and economies in the East Asian region. The SDS-SEA 2023-2027 Implementation Plan outlines priority actions under the four pillars of effective governance, healthy oceans, healthy people and healthy economies to be pursued through strategic partnerships and collaboration.
- 2.6. The EAS Congress 2024 theme captures this emphasis on harnessing collective synergies across governments, organizations, and local communities to secure the sustainability and resilience of our shared ocean resource. The Congress will assess progress made and challenges faced in actualizing regional targets and global commitments, as it looks ahead at pathways for building greater collective action through cooperation, coordination and knowledge exchange amongst various stakeholder groups to secure a sustainable and resilient ocean for a shared future.
- 2.7. Working towards ‘A Shared Future’ reflects the Congress’s key objective for collective results – that through synchronizing efforts in the region a balance between utilizing marine resources, maintaining environmental integrity, and taking into account social imperatives so that it can be enjoyed by all present and future generations is met.

2.8. In line with this, the Secretariat, with inputs from MNR and Xiamen, developed the EAS Congress logo (Figure 1).



Figure 1. EAS Congress 2024 logo

2.9. Four subthemes were developed from the main theme to showcase various enabling conditions in which synergies can be established, maintained, or strengthened to ensure a sustainable, inclusive, and resilient ocean for the region. These subthemes will serve as overarching concepts of the International Conference and will be the basis for PEMSEA partners and collaborators to identify potential sessions that they can organize during the International Conference. The subthemes include:

- a. **Ocean science, policy and practice.** Advancing ocean knowledge and governance by building on integrated approaches and collaborative measures that bridge science, policy formulation and planning, and on-the-ground implementation to secure a healthier ocean.
- b. **Global challenges, local solutions.** Scaling local solutions and community-driven initiatives to combat transboundary and global threats such as climate change, pollution, biodiversity loss, and unsustainable use of resources.
- c. **Innovation and Digitizing Ocean Action.** Harnessing emerging technologies and innovative approaches such as AI, big data, and online knowledge sharing, among

others, to accelerate evidence-based decision-making on sustainable coastal and ocean development.

- d. ***Blue Financing and Investments.*** Mobilizing public and private financing mechanisms to support long-term blue economy growth, marine conservation, and sustainable ocean industries across and beyond the region.

2.10. The EAS Congress 2024 has three objectives:

- a. Showcase positive results and outcomes for replicating and scaling up integrated coastal management (ICM) across the region – whether local blue economy entrepreneurship programs, solid waste management, Eco-DRR, blue carbon, community-led habitat restoration projects or policy instruments like payments for ecosystem services, among others;
- b. Facilitate knowledge exchange among multiple stakeholders pursuing cutting-edge advancements in areas like renewable ocean energy, utilizing AI-powered solid waste systems, crowdsourced monitoring using smartphones and drones, climate adaptive infrastructure designs, blockchain-enabled traceability for responsible fisheries, innovative measures to mitigate marine debris, among others, to promote their wider application in the region utilizing existing partnerships, collaborative arrangements and networks; and
- c. Quantify and consolidate the progress achieved over the past 3 years of implementing SDS-SEA across dozens of distinct indicators tied to habitat, communities, and ecosystems – while also pinpointing specific actions to be elevated moving forward on harder-to-tackle issues.

- 2.11. Expected outcomes of the EAS Congress 2024 include:
- a. Validated and/or novel best practice models and locally optimized solutions for sustaining the ocean while enabling prosperity, with such innovations amplified through regional knowledge sharing;
  - b. Expanded connections between innovators across borders to accelerate the development application of technologies and approaches that drive “triple wins” - environment, social, and economic gains; and
  - c. Renewed momentum and mobilization of partnerships and resources to fulfill the collectively endorsed SDS-SEA vision, with progress gaps overcome through the recalibration of plans and programs based on lessons learned and good practices, and directions outlined through the 8th Ministerial Declaration and other Congress commitments.
- 2.12. Furthermore, the target participants of this year’s Congress will include representatives from PEMSEA Country and Non-Country Partners, other non-PEMSEA countries, the PEMSEA Network of Local Governments (PNLC), PEMSEA Network of Learning Centers (PNLC), academia and research, international organizations, UN agencies, civil society organizations, youth organizations and the private sector, among others.
- 2.13. The PRF Secretariat presented the latest framework program of the EAS Congress 2024 (Table 1.) In consideration of the dates proposed by the host country, several key activities of the EAS Congress will be conducted as pre-Congress events. These include the:
- a. East Asian Seas Youth Forum, which will be organized by PEMSEA in partnership with the Korea National Ocean Science Museum in Uljin, RO Korea on 15-18 April 2024;

- b. 16<sup>th</sup> East Asian Seas (EAS) Partnership Council (PC) meeting, co-organized by the Philippines' Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) on 23-25 July 2024 in Puerto Princesa, Palawan, Philippines; and
- c. The Senior Government Official's meeting, which will be conducted online during the third or last week of October 2024.

Table 1. EAS Congress 2024 Framework Program

April - October	<p><b>PRE-CONGRESS EVENTS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• EAS Youth Forum</li> <li>• 16<sup>th</sup> EAS PC Meeting</li> <li>• Senior Government Official's Meeting</li> </ul>
Whole Day	<p><b>5 NOVEMBER 2024</b></p> <p>Arrival of Participants (Ministers, Country delegations, other participants)</p>
AM	<p><b>6 NOVEMBER 2024</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Opening Ceremony of EAS Congress 2024</li> <li>• Opening of EASC Exhibition (with guided tour of Ministers)</li> <li>• Opening Plenary of the International Conference*</li> <li>• 8<sup>th</sup> EAS Ministerial Forum (by invitation)</li> </ul>
PM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ministerial Luncheon</li> <li>• International Conference Parallel Sessions</li> <li>• Ministerial Field Visit</li> <li>• Ministerial Banquet (for MF invitees only)</li> <li>• Welcome Dinner (for regular participants)</li> </ul>
Whole day	<p><b>7 NOVEMBER 2024</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continuation of International Conference</li> <li>• Partnership Night (Humans of EAS awarding)</li> </ul>
AM	<p><b>8 NOVEMBER 2024</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Closing Plenary of the International Conference</li> <li>• PNLG General Assembly</li> <li>• PNLC General Assembly</li> </ul>
PM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Field Visit</li> </ul>



Whole Day	<b>9 NOVEMBER 2024</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Expected departure of participants</li> </ul>
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2.14. Ms. Cruzada then presented the detailed provisional program for the Opening Ceremony, Ministerial Forum and International Conference (Table 2). This was followed by a short discussion on the budget sources for the implementation of the EAS Congress. To successfully implement the event, the PRF will be utilizing the EAS Congress Trust Fund, registration fees, and sponsorship through session convenors or exhibitors.

2.15. Table 2. Provisional Program for the Opening Ceremony, EAS Congress Exhibition Opening, Ministerial Forum and International Conference.

Date and Time	Activity
(Day 0) 5 November	Arrival of participants, including Ministers and Country delegations
(Day 1) 6 November <b>9:00 -10:00</b>	<b>Opening Ceremony of the EAS Congress 2024 and Xiamen World Ocean Week</b>
9:00-9:10	<b>1.0 Introduction of VIPs</b>  In keeping with the EAS Congress tradition, the Opening Ceremony will commence with the introduction of the VVIPs, particularly the Ministers from the PEMSEA member countries, speakers for the Opening Ceremony and members of the PEMSEA Executive Committee.
<b>9:10-9:15</b>	<b>2.0 Opening Video</b> An opening video will be shown, highlighting the 30 years of progress in the EAS region, the collaboration between Xiamen or XWOW and PEMSEA, and the shared direction and vision of XWOW and EAS Congress 2024 <sup>1</sup>
<b>9:15-9:35</b> (5 mins each max)	<b>3.0 Opening Address</b> To officially open the EAS Congress and XWOW 2024, speeches from high-level officials from the host country, the PEMSEA Executive Committee, and an international speaker will deliver welcome and opening messages.

<sup>1</sup> May still be revised based on available data and information

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● High-level official of PR China (MNR/Vice Premier/Other Minister- TBD)</li> <li>● High-level International Speaker (UN Deputy Secretary General/UN SDG Ambassador-TBD) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- See potential options below</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Representative Country Partner Minister (TBD)<sup>2</sup></li> <li>● Dr. Vann Momyneath Chair of the EAS Partnership Council</li> <li>● Hon. Zhao Long Governor of Fujian Province</li> </ul>
9:35-9:45	<p><b>4.0 Keynote Address “30 Years of Integrated Coastal Management in Xiamen”</b></p> <p>As PEMSEA’s inaugural model site for ICM, Xiamen will share its journey, key lessons, and opportunities on ICM implementation from the past 30 Years.</p> <p>Leader of Xiamen Municipality</p>
9:45-9:50	<p><b>5.0 Presentation of Xiamen Ministerial Declaration</b></p> <p>To introduce the Xiamen Ministerial Declaration, the Chair of the EAS Ministerial Forum (TBC<sup>3</sup>) will present the key elements and commitments to be made by the Ministers of the PEMSEA member countries.</p>
9:50-10:00	<p><b>6.0 Signing of the Xiamen Ministerial Declaration and Group Photo</b></p> <p>The 11 Ministers from the PEMSEA member countries will sign the Xiamen Ministerial Declaration, which will outline commitments for achieving key targets under the PEMSEA Roadmap to 2030 and SDS-SEA Implementation Plan 2023-2027. These commitments will align with country, regional and international initiatives and commitments on Blue Economy, ocean science, and other relevant international sustainable development instruments.</p>
<b>10:00 -10:30</b>	<b>Opening of EAS Congress 2024 Exhibition</b>

<sup>2</sup> Feasibility of Including a representative Minister to deliver a welcome message on behalf of other Ministers is still being discussed

<sup>3</sup> May be the Minister of MNR or the Intergovernmental Session Chair

	Ribbon Cutting Ceremony Guided Tour of Ministers/Heads of Delegation
<b>10:45 – 12:00</b>	<b>Ministerial Forum Proper</b> (by invitation only) <sup>4</sup>
<b>10:45-10:50</b>	<b>1.0 Opening by Moderator and Introduction of Ministers</b>
	<b>2.0 Ministerial Dialogue</b> Aligned with the EAS Congress theme, subthemes, and the MF's dedication to fulfilling the commitments outlined in the Xiamen Ministerial Declaration, the moderated Q&A session will concentrate on various aspects of synergies to bolster a sustainable and resilient EAS. The MC will offer a brief overview of previous commitments made in the Ministerial Forum 2021 and highlight key pertinent and emerging issues in the EAS region. Expanding on this, the MC will pose questions related to different aspects of synergies. These questions will be evenly distributed among the 11 Ministers to ensure equal participation and exposure.
<b>10:50-11:05 (3 mins each max)</b>	(1) Synergy on Ensuring Inclusive Multi Stakeholder Engagement and Science-Policy Interface <i>How can we ensure inclusive decision-making and multisectoral collaboration for sustainable blue development? How can we improve the science-policy interface to ensure that information is effectively communicated and considered? Cite particular new or proven initiatives/mechanisms in your country to ensure equitable participation in the coastal and ocean governance (and water resource management ) process, as well as initiatives on science-driven policies.</i>
<b>11:05-11:15 (3 mins each max)</b>	(2) Synergy on Innovations in Technologies and Approaches <i>With the emergence of AI and other innovative technologies, what do you think are the key capacity-building needs in the region to adopt and implement these innovations in coastal and ocean management effectively? How can we ensure that innovations are culturally appropriate and address actual needs in the countries? Cite examples of key programs or initiatives that leverage innovations related to sustainable coastal and ocean management in your countries.</i>
<b>11:15-11:25 (3 mins each max)</b>	Question 3: Synergy on Blue Financing and Investments <i>What opportunities do you see and how can we mobilize diverse blue financing to support blue economy initiatives in the region? What do you think are the particular areas of coastal and ocean</i>

<sup>4</sup> Regular participants will be given free time to explore the Congress Exhibit

	<i>management/governance that require immediate or more investments? Cite examples of ongoing and/or planned investments, funds or programs in support of blue economy in your countries?</i>
<b>11:25-11:55 (3 mins each max)</b>	<b>3.0 Statements on commitments and aspirations linked with the EAS Congress theme and the Xiamen Ministerial Declaration</b> All the 11 Ministers will be requested to give their respective closing statements, which will focus on their country commitments and aspirations for the EAS region in line with the Xiamen Ministerial Declaration and the overall theme of the EAS Congress.  Speakers: All 11 Ministers
<b>11:55-12:00</b>	<b>4.0 Conclusion by the Moderator</b>
<b>12:00 – 13:30</b>	<b>Ministerial Luncheon</b>
<b>11:30 – 13:00</b>	<b>Lunch break for participants</b>
<b>14:00 – 17:00 11:00 – 12:00</b>	<b>Ministerial Field Trip</b> <b>International Conference (Opening Plenary)</b> The International Conference shall open with a plenary session led by PRF, which will set the tone for the parallel sessions that will follow.
<b>13:00 – 17:00</b>	<b>International Conference Parallel Sessions</b> Parallel sessions shall either be organized by PEMSEA projects or PEMSEA Non-Country Partners and other collaborators
<b>18:30 – 20:30</b>	Welcome Banquet for Ministers and all participants
7 November <b>8:30 -17:30</b>	<b>International Conference (Plenary Session 2*, and Parallel Sessions)</b> <i>*To be discussed</i>
<b>18:30 – 20:30</b>	<b>Partnership Night</b> The partnership night shall be an avenue for EAS Congress participants to converge and network outside of the International Conference proper. The Partnership night shall also include an awarding ceremony for EAS countries who have shown notable efforts in integrating ICM in their plans and policies throughout the years and also honor the top 3 winners of the Humans of EAS.
8 November <b>9:00 – 10:30</b>	<b>International Conference Closing Plenary</b> The closing plenary shall discuss the key results and outcomes over the 2-day conference and identify the immediate key actions in line with the 8 <sup>th</sup> Ministerial Declaration commitments.
<b>10:30 – 12:30</b>	PNLG and PNLC General Assemblies
<b>12:30 – 13:30</b>	Lunch
<b>14:00 – 18:00</b>	Field Visit of EAS Congress Participants

- 2.16. Ms. Kathrine Rose G. Aguilin, PRF Consultant for the 8<sup>th</sup> EAS Ministerial Forum (MF), elaborated on the proposed program for the 8th EAS Ministerial Forum (MF). She highlighted that the 8th EAS MF would have a different structure from previous EAS Congresses and EAS Ministerial Forums, following discussions with the Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR) and the Xiamen Municipal Government. In particular, the MF will consist of two key parts: (1) Ceremonial Signing or Presentation of the Signed EAS Ministerial Declaration during the Opening Ceremony of the Joint EAS Congress and XWOW 2024, and (2) 8th EAS Ministerial Forum or Dialogue. Both events, along with other planned events for the Ministers, are scheduled for November 6, 2024, the first day of the EAS Congress and XWOW.
- 2.17. The inclusion of the Ceremonial Signing of the Ministerial Declaration at the Opening Ceremony, which is open to all participants, aims to highlight and share the commitments to be made by the EAS countries to a larger audience and to set the overarching tone for the International Conference. The proposed format for the 8th EAS Ministerial Forum would also be different, instead of the traditional delivery of country statements, the Secretariat proposed a moderated dialogue/roundtable format. Building on the signed Ministerial Declaration, the Ministerial Dialogue will revolve around the theme, “From Declaration to Delivery: Innovations, Opportunities and Prospects for the EAS Region”, and will focus on three subjects of Synergies:
- a. Synergies in Inclusive Governance- focusing on multistakeholder engagement and science-driven initiatives of the countries;
  - b. Synergies in Innovations- focusing on utilization of various technological innovations or approaches in support of coastal and marine management/development; and
  - c. Synergies in Blue Financing and Investments- focusing on country programs, as well as opportunities and needs on blue financing

- 2.18. To facilitate preparation and consultation with PEMSEA Country Partners, initial questions and potential country speakers relevant to each synergy topic were identified and proposed. The Dialogue will conclude with short country statements of commitment in support of the Ministerial Declaration and the EAS Congress/XWOW 2024 theme.
- 2.19. Ms. Cruzada shared the proposed roles that the members of the PEMSEA Executive Committee can take on during the EAS Congress. Some of the roles identified including speaking engagements and participation during the Opening Ceremony and Ministerial Forum, and serving as keynote speakers or technical advisers for the International Conference.
- 2.20. Moving forward, the next steps for the Congress include continued coordination between PRF, MNR and Xiamen; launching country consultations for the Ministerial Declaration, scaling up online promotions for the EASC 2024, among others.
- 2.21. Following the Secretariat presentation, the Intergovernmental Session Chair and National Focal Point of PEMSEA for PR China, Director General Chen, expressed appreciation for the detailed update on the preparations for the EAS Congress and XWOW, including the MF.
- 2.22. The Intergovernmental Chair highlighted the joint event as a historic collaboration that will showcase 30 years of initiatives and partnership between PEMSEA and Xiamen. The joint event will also showcase Xiamen's success in ICM or coastal and ocean governance, and various initiatives, including addressing marine pollution. The initiative in restoring Yuandang Lake for instance will be included as part of the field visit sites for the EAS Congress and XWOW.
- 2.23. She further underscored the value of incorporating the ceremonial signing of the EAS Ministerial Declaration during the Opening Ceremony in setting the overarching tone of the EAS Congress and XWOW International Conference.

- 2.24. She requested for the EC's support in securing participation from EAS Country Ministers and for the successful organization of the events.
- 2.25. **Discussion Highlights:**
- 2.26. The Executive Committee noted the tight schedule proposed particularly for the opening day of the EAS Congress and XWOW, and requested further review of the program schedule to ensure smooth conduct of the events.
- 2.27. The Council Chair concurred with the selection of speakers for the MF and the emphasis on the need to ensure that the commitments outlined in the Ministerial Declaration will translate into on-the-ground actions.
- 2.28. The Intergovernmental Session Co-Chair agreed with the revised theme and subthemes of the Congress. However, he expressed concern that holding the MF on Day 1 may pose challenges for Ministers, as they might not be able to stay throughout the event and sought clarification on why the MF events are not scheduled on the last day of the EAS Congress/XWOW. Moreover, the Intergovernmental Session Co-Chair sought clarification on the non-inclusion of the Intergovernmental Session Co-Chair in the MF as listed in the proposed roles and responsibilities of EC members.
- 2.29. The Technical Session Chair proposed the inclusion of a youth representative who can provide a statement during the MF or EAS Congress plenary events to highlight the importance of mobilizing the youth in successfully implementing the SDS-SEA. The ED responded that the output of the EAS Youth Forum will be a Call to Action which will be delivered by a representative of the youth delegates during the EAS Congress.
- 2.30. The Council Co-Chair suggested that to facilitate the participation of high-level officials, it would be good to highlight the expected results of the events not only in the Ministerial

Declaration but also in the various information documents for the EAS Congress and XWOW 2024.

- 2.31. The representative from MNR, China provided further clarification on the rationale for combining the EAS Congress and XWOW, citing resource limitations as well as schedule constraints on the part of the MNR Minister and other targeted high-level officials who are also expected to participate during the Opening Ceremony. On behalf of the MNR, she requested for the EC's understanding on the recommendation to move the MF events on the first day.
- 2.32. The PEMSEA ED also clarified that although it is hoped that EAS country ministers will participate in the entire event, their schedules usually only permit attendance for one day. This is a key consideration in scheduling all the Ministers' events on November 6. The PEMSEA ED acknowledge, however, that the timing may be challenging, and further review of the program including conduct of rehearsals will be undertaken to ensure that the proposed programs are carried according to schedule.
- 2.33. Furthermore, the Secretariat will provide an updated list of roles for EC members during the EAS Congress nearer to the Congress dates to take into account various activities especially under the International Conference.
- 2.34. **Conclusion:** The EC expressed their appreciation to the Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR) and the Xiamen Municipal People's Government for co-hosting the EAS Congress 2024. They commended MNR, Xiamen, and PRF for the detailed updates on the preparations for the Congress, particularly in developing the provisional program and structure of the key activities such as the Opening Ceremony, International Conference, and Ministerial Forum. They supported the revised theme, "Blue Synergy for a Shared Future: One Sustainable and Resilient Ocean", the proposed framework program for the EAS Congress 2024, and the provisional programs for the Opening Ceremony and Ministerial Forum, including the identified speakers. The EC raised concern on the



schedule for November 6, particularly in the Opening Ceremony of the EASC 2024 and WOW, and reminded the PRF to ensure the seamless and efficient conduct of the events.

2.35. **Recommendations:**

- 2.36. The PRF and China to further review of the program and schedule, particularly for November 6, to ensure that it is practical, feasible and seamless in terms of the timing and conduct of the events;
- 2.37. The PRF to consider how to include a youth voice (e.g., via the Youth Declaration during the Ministerial Forum proper or some other appropriate avenue during the Congress;
- 2.38. The PRF to facilitate issuance of invitations and confirmation of countries particularly to the EAS Country Ministers, considering the lengthy process of identification and approval of country delegations;
- 2.39. The PRF to begin country consultations on the Ministerial Forum program (including the draft Ministerial program) as soon as possible, and provide a timeline to the EC;
- 2.40. The PRF to update the list of roles of the EC members to ensure that all key activities involving the EC members are considered;
- 2.41. The PRF to ensure that information documents on the EAS Congress and XWOW will highlight the potential impacts or benefits to participating countries to facilitate better engagement of high-level officials, not only at the general Congress level but even in the sub-theme levels.
- 2.42. **Decision:** The EC concurred with the proposed changes to the theme, subthemes, and the proposed framework program of the EAS Congress 2024, subject to refinements to ensure the seamless conduct of the Opening Ceremony and Ministerial Forum on November 6.

### **3.0 8<sup>th</sup> East Asian Seas Ministerial Declaration (EC/32/DOC/03; EC/31/DOC/03a)**

3.1. Ms. Gonzales presented an overview of the zero draft of the 8<sup>th</sup> East Asian Seas (EAS) Ministerial Declaration (MD). The proposed title of the MD is “Strengthening Synergies in the Implementation of the SDS-SEA for Sustainable, Inclusive, and Climate-Resilient Ocean”, which will emphasize the scaling up of synergistic actions to improve SDS-SEA implementation.

3.2. In line with the EASC 2024 theme, The 8<sup>th</sup> Ministerial Declaration aims to:

- a. 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;
- b. 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
- c. Ensure alignment and contribution of the EAS region’s efforts to achieving key international and regional commitments supporting Blue Economy.

3.3. Key elements of the MD include:

- a. Commitments outlined in previous Ministerial Declarations, particularly, the Preah Sihanouk Ministerial Declaration of 2021, which outlined the regional priorities of the PEMSEA Roadmap 2030;

- b. 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;
  - c. 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;
  - d. Recognition of how regional efforts support the bigger global ocean agenda, such as implementing the GBF and ocean-climate action;
  - e. Identification of scaled-up pathways to enhance blue financing and investments to drive sustainable ocean actions;
  - f. 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
  - g. 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;
- 3.4. The PEMSEA ED presented the conceptual framework for the Ministerial Declaration, which will build around on four key components: (1) policy guidance recommendations for the strategic implementation of the SDS-SEA, (2) reporting of progress of implementation, (3) synergistic actions, and (4) country partner commitments form to achieve the 2030 Roadmap. She emphasized the need for setting clear and quantifiable targets. She briefly ran through the preambulatory statements and proposed synergistic actions, which identifies strategies to achieve effective governance, a sustainable, resilient and inclusive blue economy, healthy and resilient oceans, and healthy people.
- 3.5. The EC generally agreed with the proposed framework and direction of the draft MD, and suggested to commence country consultations to gather more substantive inputs to improve the contents of the draft.

- 3.6. The Technical Session Chair raised a concern on the inclusion of the BBNJ and Global Plastic Treaty in the key elements of the MD, and sought clarification on the premise for their inclusion, as these might be outside the scope of PEMSEA's role and advocacy. He advised to be careful with the choice of terms in the MD, such as replacing 'coast' or 'catchment' with 'ocean', as this may broaden the discussion scope outside of the SDS-SEA.
- 3.7. The PEMSEA ED took note of the suggestion and clarified that the inclusion of the BBNJ and Global Plastic Treaty was done to highlight how PEMSEA and its Partners' programs can also contribute to the greater global ocean agenda. The ED raised the suggestion to conduct ad-hoc technical working groups with the country and non-country partners to iron out potentially sensitive statements in the MD.
- 3.8. Ms. Aguilin, the MF consultant, emphasized that similar to previous practices, the Ministerial Declaration will go through several stages of consensus building through the EC and Country Partners, with the goal to come up with a Declaration that has consensus from all.
- 3.9. **Conclusion:** The EC expressed their appreciation to the PRF for developing the initial draft of the 8<sup>th</sup> Ministerial Declaration. They posed no objections to the proposed conceptual framework and the direction of the draft Declaration, but requested for more time to review the specific clauses of the Declaration. The EC also raised the need to ensure that the terminology used in the Ministerial Declaration should be clearly within the scope of PEMSEA's mandate as reference to new treaties and/or ongoing negotiations in the draft zero (i.e. BBNJ and ongoing Global Plastic Treaty negotiations ) may be potentially contentious for some country partners. The PRF clarified that the inclusion of these topics pertain to highlighting how the regional efforts of PEMSEA and its partners can support the global ocean agenda and take note of emerging issues and trends in coastal and ocean development.

3.10. **Recommendations:**

- 3.11. PRF to review the terminology used in the draft Ministerial Declaration, particularly on clauses that are beyond the existing scope of responsibilities of PEMSEA (i.e., BBNJ);
- 3.12. PRF to commence a series of consultations with both the EC and Country Partner Focal Points on the contents of the Ministerial Declaration, with the target to present a second draft of the Declaration by the 16th EAS PC Meeting in July;
- 3.13. PRF to share a schedule of online/email consultations for the Ministerial Declaration;
- 3.14. EC members to review the zero draft of the Ministerial Declaration in detail and submit their initial feedback via email;

**4.0 Future and Emerging Issues in the EAS region (EC/32/DOC/04)**

- 4.1. Ms. Gonzales provided a brief discussion on the emerging issues in the EAS region, and PEMSEA's opportunities to increase collaborations amongst its partners, as well as mobilize resources, to address such issues.
- 4.2. The ED discussed the ongoing transformation of PEMSEA and its sustainability plans. She underscored the importance of keeping the priorities and concerns of country and non-country partners and enhancing the targets of the SDS-SEA Implementation Plan for 2023-2027 by taking note of the current emerging issues and trends in the region (i.e., blue foods, transparency and accountability, digitization of the ocean, etc.).
- 4.3. She also emphasized the need to shift production towards sustainable and resilient practices, and the potential for scaling up citizen science empowerment, and looking into opportunities for PEMSEA to mobilize resources, increase collaboration with other

international organizations and regional bodies to achieve sustainable ocean development.

4.4. Among these, the ED highlighted the following opportunities that PEMSEA may tap into to help the EAS region fulfill its commitments and accelerate progress towards achieving the UN SDGs (Table 3).

4.5. Table 3. New/Untapped funding opportunities for PEMSEA

<b>Funds</b>	<b>Brief Description</b>	<b>Actions for PEMSEA</b>
<b>Global Biodiversity Fund</b>	Status: 2024 discussion will focus on eligibility and methodology for access	Exploring potential accreditation as an implementing agency for coastal GBF
<b>Loss and Damage Fund</b>	First board meeting may take place in the Philippines- focus on administrative concerns	Conduct Baseline report on loss and damage on coastal ecosystems in EAS region/ASEAN?
<b>Natural Capital Accounting</b>	USAID/World Bank regional or bilateral funding	Continue RSOC/NSOC every 3-5 years
<b>Climate Adaptation Fund</b>	Country partner route	Work with other actors to conduct research on climate analytics impact of extreme weather events (more intense typhoons, rainfall variability, increasing temperatures, flooding, etc.) and slow-onset events (sea-level rise) on coastal resources and how to develop and implement critical adaptation strategies
<b>Green Climate Fund</b>		Follow up on regional accreditation application started in 2019

- 4.6. The ED also highlighted the option to secure resources through provision of services outside of project management, including but not limited to, technical advisory services, regional coordination, technical assistance, and certification services (i.e., Blue Carbon, ICM), among others.
- 4.7. The opportunities raised, however, will require tapping significant expertise in PEMSEA. This includes increased engagement with the PEMSEA Non-Country Partners, and the PNLC. The ED requested for more insights from the EC on how to increase PEMSEA's engagements with technical experts within and outside PEMSEA, who can help develop programs or provide support to PEMSEA's existing services to improve resource mobilization for the organization.
- 4.8. The EAS PC Chair commended the Secretariat for looking into ways to increase engagement and collaboration within and outside PEMSEA, and suggested to consider avenues to collaborate with other regional and international organizations with similar goals as PEMSEA, given that recent global ocean discussions emphasize the need to integrate commitments of different global agreements.
- 4.9. Both the Technical Session Chair and the Intergovernmental Session Co-Chair emphasized the need for PEMSEA to increase engagement with the scientific community and the private sector, respectively. They emphasized the importance of engaging with different stakeholders to ensure more robust data on local solutions for evidence-based decision-making, and to promote inclusivity in identifying solutions for the region.
- 4.10. The MNR representative, in lieu of the Intergovernmental Session Chair highlighted the need for PEMSEA to do more in encouraging the Country and Non-Country Partners to collaborate with each other, as currently, both groups seem to be disconnected in their efforts. PEMSEA can increase engagement by utilizing the expertise of the PNLC and NCPs to capacitate local governments and communities. Furthermore, through developing regional programs or trainings, PEMSEA can open up access to more financial channels.

- 4.11. **Conclusion:** The EC expressed their appreciation for the discussion of emerging issues in the region and shared their insights and suggestions, emphasizing the need for more engagement and integration with other organizations, involving local communities, and utilizing scientific evidence in decision-making. They also proposed exploring new services and expanding funding channels, including collaborating with the private sector and NGOs.
- 4.12. **Recommendations:**
- 4.13. PRF to explore ways to collaborate with other regional and international organizations with common objectives as PEMSEA;
- 4.14. PEMSEA to increase engagement with scientific communities that can provide robust data and information to help inform policies and programs to improve local and national management of coastal and marine resources.
- 4.15. Consider strengthening the dialogue amongst Country Partners, Non-Country Partners and the scientific communities to improve relevant data and enhance evidence-based decision-making related to coasts and oceans in the region;
- 4.16. Increase efforts in strengthening the collaboration between Country Partners and Non-Country Partners, and the Partnership Council with the PEMSEA Network of Learning Centers (PNLC) and PEMSEA Network of Local Governments (PNLG). Activities may include developing regional training workshops on common issues and developing targeted programs that can open up access to more financial channels.

## 5.0 16<sup>th</sup> East Asian Seas Partnership Council (EC/32/DOC/05)



- 5.1. Ms. Cruzada provided updates on the preparations for the 16<sup>th</sup> EAS Partnership Council (PC) Meeting and presented the provisional program for the EC's approval.
- 5.2. The 16<sup>th</sup> EAS PC Meeting falls under a Congress year, and shall thus be considered as an event of the EAS Congress 2024. However, considering the need to streamline activities in this year's Congress due to logistical limitations, the PC Meeting shall be conducted as a pre-Congress event on 23-25 July 2024 in Puerto Princesa, Palawan, and shall be jointly organized by the PEMSEA Resource Facility and the Government of the Philippines, through the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR). The DENR serves as the PEMSEA National Focal Point for the Philippines and the host of the PEMSEA Resource Facility.
- 5.3. The Secretariat also presented the pending matters from the previous EC and PC meetings and briefly discussed the key agenda for the 16<sup>th</sup> PC meeting. In line with the objectives of the EAS Congress 2024, the 16<sup>th</sup> EAS PC meeting shall primarily discuss agenda related to the progress report of countries on the first year of implementation of the SDS-SEA Implementation Plan 2023-2027, the 8<sup>th</sup> Ministerial Declaration, and EAS Congress 2024 activities.
- 5.4. The EC generally agreed with the proposed agenda, with the Technical Session Chair expressing his appreciation to the Secretariat for ensuring that adequate time is allotted for the Technical Session discussions. He recommended to discuss with the Secretariat on ways to make the Technical session more engaging and collaborative, to ensure that all participants actively contribute to the agenda discussions.
- 5.5. **Conclusion:** The EC took note of the pending matters for action and the provisional programme of the 16<sup>th</sup> EAS PC Meeting. They posed no objections to the timing and proposed agenda items and expressed their appreciation for providing ample time for discussions, particularly during the Technical Session.

5.6. **Recommendations:**

5.7. The EC recommended that PRF discuss with the Technical Session Chair and Co-Chair on how to make the Technical Session more interactive and engaging (i.e. workshop format).

5.8. **Decision:** The EC approved the dissemination of the provisional agenda to the Partnership Council.

**6.0 Other business**

6.1. **Conclusion:** The PRF Secretariat provided the schedule for the dissemination of the proceedings.

**7.0 Closing of the Meeting**

7.1. The EAS PC Co-Chair provided a summary of the key decisions made and delivered his closing remarks.

7.2. The meeting was adjourned at 16:38 (UTC+8).

## ANNEX 1. Agenda of the meeting

Item	Agenda	Speaker/Presenter	Document
1	Opening of the meeting and approval of the meeting agenda  Group photo	Dr. Vann Monyneath  Chair, East Asian Seas Partnership Council (EAS PC)	EC/32/DOC/01b
2	Updates on the EAS Congress 2024	Ms. Abigail Cruzada Secretariat Coordinator, PRF	EC/32/DOC/02
3	8 <sup>th</sup> Ministerial Declaration	Ms. Aimee Gonzales Executive Director, PRF	EC/32/DOC/03 EC/32/DOC/03a
4	Future and Emerging Issues in the EAS region	Ms. Aimee Gonzales Executive Director, PRF	EC/32/DOC/04
5	16 <sup>th</sup> East Asian Seas Partnership Council Meeting	Ms. Abigail Cruzada Secretariat Coordinator, PRF	EC/32/DOC/05
6	Other business		
7	Closing of the meeting	Usec. Jonas Leones Co-Chair, EAS Partnership Council	

## Annex 2. Meeting documents, presentation and group photo

Meeting Documents: <https://tinyurl.com/EC-32-Updated-Documents>

Presentation: <https://tinyurl.com/EC-32-Presentation>

Group Photo: <https://tinyurl.com/EC-32-Photos>

### ANNEX 3. List of Participants

<i>Name</i>	<i>Designation</i>
<b>PEMSEA Executive Committee</b>	
<i>Dr. Vann Monyneath</i>	EAS PC Chair
<i>Usec. Jonas Leones</i>	EAS PC Co-Chair
<i>Ms. Chen Danhong</i>	Intergovernmental Session Chair
<i>Mr. Le Dai Thang</i>	Intergovernmental Session Co-Chair
<i>Dr. Keita Furukawa</i>	Technical Session Chair
<i>Dr. Suk-jae Kwon</i>	Technical Session Co-Chair
<b>PEMSEA Resource Facility</b>	
<i>Ms. Aimee Gonzales</i>	Executive Director
<i>Ms. Shinji Kim</i>	Head of Planning and Partnership Development
<i>Ms. Nancy Bermas</i>	Regional Project Manager, IRBM
<i>Ms. Abi Cruzada</i>	Secretariat Coordinator
<i>Ms. Maida Aguinaldo</i>	Training and Capacity Development Officer
<i>Ms. Kate Aguilin</i>	Ministerial Forum Consultant
<i>Ms. Daisy Padayao</i>	Project Officer
<i>Ms. Cristine Ingrid Narcise</i>	Results-based Policy & ICM Specialist
<i>Ms. Mary Anne De la Peña</i>	Finance Specialist
<i>Mr. Arsenio Dacaymat, Jr.</i>	IT Assistant
<i>Mr. Rod Corpuz</i>	IT Specialist
<i>Mr. Thomas Bell</i>	Project Officer
<b>Observers</b>	

<b>Name</b>	<b>Designation</b>
<i>Mr. Roath Sith</i>	Deputy Director-General, General Directorate of Environmental Protection, MoE, Cambodia
<i>Ms. Ky Channimol</i>	Staff, National Council for Sustainable Development, Ministry of Environment, Cambodia
<i>Atty. Analiza Rebuelta-Teh</i>	Undersecretary for Undersecretary for Finance, Information Systems and Climate Change, Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR)
<i>Ms. Jeslina Gorospe</i>	Chief, Project Monitoring and Evaluation Division, Foreign-Assisted and Special Projects Service (FASPS), DENR
<i>Ms. Khasmer Marbella</i>	Staff, Foreign-Assisted and Special Projects Service (FASPS), DENR
<i>Ms. Hannah Ritual</i>	Staff, Foreign-Assisted and Special Projects Service (FASPS), DENR
<i>Dr. Wang Shouqiang</i>	Program Director, China PEMSEA Center
<i>Ms. Zhu Xiaotong</i>	Project Assistant, China PEMSEA Center