

PEMSEA News

PEMSEA Staff Pay Tribute to Dr. Chua Thia-Eng

Manila, Philippines – After more than 13 years of service as Regional Programme Director of PEMSEA, Dr. Chua Thia-Eng officially retires on 31 December 2007.

As a special tribute to and celebration of his inspiring leadership and contribution to the East Asian Seas region, staff of the Regional Programme Office presented a brass sculpture of a fisher to Dr. Chua, who has served not only as a manager, but as a teacher and mentor to all those associated with the project. Indeed, it is difficult to envision PEMSEA without Dr. Chua. In his message to staff, however, Dr. Chua stated that he is confident that PEMSEA has established a strong foundation that will enable its continuous growth and success. He is also optimistic that whoever will be the PEMSEA Resource Facility (PRF) Executive Director will bring PEMSEA to a higher level of service to the region.

Under his leadership, PEMSEA has progressed in a number of areas, including: the successful establishment and operation of integrated coastal management (ICM) demonstration and parallel sites in various countries of the region; the establishment of the PEMSEA Network of Local Governments; the creation of the Sustainable Development Strategy for the Seas of East Asia (SDS-SEA) as the region's blueprint for coastal and ocean management; the adoption of the SDS-SEA with the signing of the Putrajaya Declaration by 12 State members; and the transformation of PEMSEA from a project-oriented entity into a regional collaborative mechanism for the implementation of the SDS-SEA with the signing of the Haikou Partnership Agreement by 11 Country Partners and the Partnership Operating Arrangements by 15 non-Country Partners.

During his career, Dr. Chua has authored more than 200 papers, articles and a number of books on coastal and ocean management. His recent publication entitled *The Dynamics of Integrated Coastal Management* is considered one of the key resource materials for academicians, coastal managers and policymakers.

Prior to becoming PEMSEA's RPD, Dr. Chua has served various academic institutions — University of Singapore, Science University of Malaysia and the University of the Philippines. He has also played significant roles in various international and UN organizations by managing regional projects under the GEF, UNDP, IMO, FAO, USAID, ICLARM and NACA, and was the founder of the Asian Fisheries Society (AFS) and Malaysia Society of Marine Sciences. A recipient of several awards from societies and government for his dedicated service to the East Asian Region, Dr. Chua continues to be a member of the Research Council of the Ocean Policy Research Foundation (OPRF) of Japan and associate editor of the *Journal of Ocean and Coastal Management*.

While Dr. Chua exits as the RPD of PEMSEA, his service to PEMSEA and the region continues, being the elected Chair of the East Asian Seas Partnership Council.

Again, from all PEMSEA staff, we wish Dr. Chua all the best in his much deserved retirement.

Workshop for the Sustainable Development of East Asian Seas Concludes with Work Programs

Manila, Philippines – In preparation for the next phase of PEMSEA, 56 participants composed of Project Management Office (PMO) Directors and National Focal Points (NFPs) from 11 countries across the region were brought together in a workshop held in Manila from 12-15 December 2007. Representatives from proposed ICM sites, such as Guimaras Province, Philippines, and Thua-Thien Hue, Vietnam, also participated in the workshop.

In addition to facilitating good communication and fostering camaraderie among the PMO Directors, NFPs, and PEMSEA Resource Facility, the workshop also aimed at promoting cross-learning, identifying opportunities and constraints to sustainable coastal development, as well as identifying strategies and approaches in ICM scaling up and replication that would contribute to the implementation of the SDS-SEA. The various presentations, workshops and open discussions were a basis for the refinement of the three-year work programs that had been previously prepared at ICM sites and national levels.

The presence of Senator Pia Cayetano, Chair of the Philippine Senate Committee on Environment and Natural Resources; Governor Enrique Garcia, Jr, Province of Bataan, Philippines, and Vice President of the PEMSEA Network of Local Governments for Sustainable Coastal Development; Governor Felipe Hilan A. Nava, Province of Guimaras, Philippines; and Undersecretary Teresita Castillo of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, Philippines, during the workshop demonstrated the desire to share experiences and good practices for improving ocean and coastal governance among the national and local governments across the region.

The PMO Directors and NFPs, in coordination with PEMSEA will further refine and finalize the three-year work programs in consideration of the results of the discussions. It is expected that the work programs will incorporate strategies to ensure that the 20 percent target of the region's coastline is covered by ICM programs by 2015.

The PMO Directors and NFPs are considered as the prime movers in project implementation and coordination at the various ICM sites and participating countries of PEMSEA. They have contributed significantly over the past years in helping PEMSEA achieve its goals, particularly in laying the groundwork for ICM scaling up.

Quest for a Better Life: No Mean Feat for Communities

Stung Hav, Cambodia – It has been a busy year for the Stung Hav fishery community as the people seek to find the balance between sustainable livelihood and fishery resource management and protection. For an offsite fishing community which has limited access to basic services, infrastructures and opportunities, searching for the balance is not easy, especially if the “challenges” side appears heavier.

Funded under the Small Grants Programme-PEMSEA Joint Communiqué, the Sustainable Coastal Resource Management project in Stung Hav was implemented in 2006 to protect and rehabilitate the existing fishery resources. The project was targeted to benefit about 12,000 community members in Stung Hav district, Sihanoukville, Cambodia.

Following the approval of the project, community members conducted a series of activities including conservation and rehabilitation of mangrove areas, restoration of a freshwater reservoir and the implementation of sustainable livelihood projects. Information, education and communication campaigns were also started to encourage greater stakeholder participation in project activities.

During the second half of 2007, a mangrove reforestation initiative was widely participated by more than 600 students, teachers, local authorities and community members. Through such activities, an estimated 184,000 mangrove seedlings, covering about 18 hectares, were planted in Sangkat Oh Tress and Sangkat Tomnub Rolok.

Aside from this, the Department of Fishery worked with the fishery community in conducting a survey to determine the best site for the establishment of a protected area. Fifty fish cages made of concrete, which will also serve as artificial reefs, were put up in the protected area. The initiative was developed to encourage community members to guard the fishing grounds against illegal fishers, while allowing low impact fishing efforts. Months following the installation of these reefs, community members attest that there was significant increase in the fish catch in the surrounding areas, consequently increasing the income among fishers.

Water for life

Freshwater supply is also limited in the community. Under the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) TRAC fund and through the Global Environment Facility Small Grants Programme, a 5.97 hectare freshwater reservoir is being constructed to provide the community with adequate supply for domestic and agriculture use. As part of the rehabilitation process, reforestation of the area will be undertaken to increase water retention capacity. In addition, ceramic water purifiers have been distributed. This has facilitated access to safe drinking water supply, and reductions in the purchase of bottled water and the time- and energy-consuming efforts of boiling water.

Supporting these initiatives is a series of information, education and communication campaigns, which aim to create awareness among the community members on the importance of caring for their coastal and marine resources. One hundred copies of a community regulation book on prohibited and permitted activities were distributed and 400 leaflets were produced and distributed to community members.

The fishing community has also conducted training on fishery regulation to local fishers in 03 Sangkat, Khan Stung Hav. Billboards were set up in Sangkat Oh Tress and Sangkat Tomnub Rolok to inform people of the mangrove and fishery management practices.

But these achievements do not come easy. Mangrove planting, for instance, is continually thwarted by expansion of industries and the needs among communities for firewood. The establishment of the

freshwater reservoir was also initially hounded by land claims. In the process, the community deals with these issues through continuous dialogues and negotiations to gain community support.

The past two years is only the start of a new effort to strike the balance between sustainable coastal and marine management and livelihood development. For coastal communities such as Stung Hav, it signals a new hope that with community involvement, sustainable development is possible. It is no mean feat, but it's possible.

For more information on the SGP-PEMSEA Joint Communiqué, download the brochure from the PEMSEA Website (<http://www.pemsea.org>).

ANAK-Balayan's Collaborative Approach in Promoting Environmental Education

Batangas, Philippines – For almost three years now, a group of dedicated members and leaders of ANAK-Balayan has been visiting schools and communities in Batangas Province, Philippines, in an effort to impart environmental information. Currently, environmental education in public schools is subsumed under science and technology classes but discussions are sometimes limited. This may perhaps explain the limited appreciation of students when it comes to applying practical environmental management skills in their daily lives.

“We discussed with the schools how we can involve the students in the activities of the Federation and we are fortunate that they agreed to provide us with time to present some basic environmental concepts,” Filmoore Gadon, Federation President of Ang Nagkakaisang Mamamayang Kostal ng Balayan (ANAK-Balayan) said. He added that the schools usually provide the necessary logistical requirements while the Federation develops the content of these education campaigns.

“Our approach is to conduct these information and education campaigns with a mix of formal and informal techniques. Aside from conducting room-to-room discussions, we make it a habit to involve students in community activities, such as cleanups, information drives and fund-raising activities. People will easily grasp concepts if these are used in actual activities,” he added.

One such example is the series of activities done in celebration of the International Coastal Cleanup in September 2007. Using the results of the water quality monitoring conducted with the Batangas Provincial Government-Environment and Natural Resources Office (PG-ENRO), the Federation enticed various sectors of Balayan to join the coastal cleanup by simplifying and disseminating information. Although dissemination of results is regularly facilitated during the meetings of its member organizations, the Federation took advantage of the occasion to elevate the level of concern into concrete action. Aside from mobilizing about 760 community members during the municipal-wide cleanup, a seminar on biodiversity conservation was also conducted. The activity culminated in a competition for best material developed from recyclables, designed to encourage ingenuity and instill the habit of recycling.

Today, the Federation continues to conduct information campaigns on basic environmental education activities and also targets women and out-of-school youth in their activities. Through its member organization at the local level and initiatives to engage a multitude of stakeholders from business organizations to local schools, the Federation is able to make a concerted effort to promote sustainable coastal management in Balayan.

“We hope that we can get the other municipalities and the residents from the upland area to implement similar initiatives in the future. We cannot disregard the impact of activities in nearby municipalities. Even if we conduct cleanups everyday, wastes from other municipalities will just come to us, so they also need to start looking after their own coasts.”

The initiatives of ANAK-Balayan in information, education and communication campaigns are also being strengthened by the continuous process of learning and capacity building among leaders and IEC officials. During the second half of 2007, a series of leadership and skills training were held to enhance the spirit of volunteerism and how such changes can have a “domino effect” in the municipality.

ANAK-Balayan is a recipient of a project grant in support of multisectoral partnership building for the sustainable development of the municipal waters of Balayan, under the GEF Small Grants Programme (SGP)-PEMSEA joint communiqué.

For more information on the SGP-PEMSEA Joint Communiqué, download the brochure from the PEMSEA Website (<http://www.pemsea.org>).

XWOW: Demonstrating Continued Commitment to Sustainable Coastal Development

Xiamen, PR China – Xiamen continues to play a significant role in promoting sustainable coastal development not only in the East Asian region but also globally. The Municipal Government of Xiamen, United Nations Development Programme China, State Oceanic Administration, China Communications and Transportation Association and PEMSEA jointly organized the 2007 Xiamen World Ocean Week (XWOW), 2 to 6 November 2007. The successful conclusion of the XWOW marked another milestone in Xiamen's string of achievements, particularly highlighting its role in catalyzing discussions on issues related to sustainable coastal development.

The XWOW focused on the theme, "Sustainable Development and Utilization of the Oceans." The event was composed of the Conference proper focusing on the Scientific Development and Utilization of the Oceans and three separate forums on Seawater Utilization and Coastal Cities Development, the China Cruise and Yacht Development Conference and the 3rd Forum on the Development of Marine Economy of the West Coast of Taiwan Straits. The XWOW was attended by approximately 400 participants from 33 countries, which included local government officials from various countries, representatives from government agencies, international organizations, industries and private sector and the academe.

Topics discussed ranged from regional ocean governance and marine policy, climate change and sea level rise, integrated coastal management (ICM) and ecosystem-based management, sustainable use of seawater, and the technical aspects of seawater utilization. In particular, policies and measures as well as recent developments and technologies in seawater utilization, including their application in coastal cities, were discussed. The XWOW's theme is very timely as water supply, its availability and sustainable utilization, is considered one of the limiting factors in the economic development of coastal cities.

Xiamen's effort to make XWOW an annual affair ensures that emerging issues affecting the sustainable development of the coastal areas will be discussed and strategies and actions to move forward are identified. PEMSEA will continue providing support to this worthwhile initiative as part of its commitment to promote sustainable coastal development in East Asia.

Charting the Future Course of the PNLG

Xiamen, PR China – The PEMSEA Network of Local Governments for Sustainable Coastal Development (PNLG) is consistently gaining recognition as an advocacy group for local governments particularly for its critical role in promoting ICM as an effective management framework to achieve sustainable coastal development. In view of the anticipated expansion of the network in parallel with scaling up of ICM programs in the East Asian region, charting its future course was the main focus of the First Executive Committee meeting held on 4 November 2007 in Xiamen, PR China.

The meeting was co-chaired by the president and vice president of the network, Vice Mayor Pan Shi-Jian (Xiamen) and Governor Enrique Garcia, Jr (Bataan Province, Philippines), respectively. The meeting was also attended by PEMSEA, representatives from Sihanoukville, Cambodia (the host government of the 2008 PNLG Forum), and the PNLG Secretariat.

The provisions of the PNLG Charter were reviewed to ensure its timeliness and appropriateness in view of the inevitable expansion of the Network. Discussions were focused on the membership, the obligations of the members as well as the critical role of the Executive Committee in providing policy guidance in steering the network forward. The proposal of the Sihanoukville Municipal Government in the organization of the 2008 PNLG Forum was also discussed. The date of the forum was tentatively set for 17-19 November 2008 focusing on the theme, “Water Resources Protection, Utilization and Management.”

Finally, to keep pace with the Network’s expansion as well as requirements, actions were identified for the efficient operationalization of the PNLG Secretariat, which has been playing the lead role in coordinating the implementation of the Network’s annual work programme.

PRF Secretariat Services Set to Work

Quezon City, Philippines – After several months of rigorous recruitment, the PEMSEA Resource Facility (PRF) Secretariat Services is now fully operational. The PRF Secretariat Services is set to work to provide secretariat support to the PEMSEA regional mechanism, which includes the EAS Partnership Council, the Ministerial Forum, the Regional Partnership Fund, the EAS Congress and the PEMSEA Resource Facility. Moreover, the PRF Secretariat will also facilitate knowledge transfer and capacity building as well as monitor, evaluate and report on adopted work programs and time-bound targets related to the implementation of the Sustainable Development Strategy for the Seas of East Asia (SDS-SEA).

Recognizing the significance of the PRF, PEMSEA Country Partners have expressed their commitment and support to the PRF Secretariat Services. The Governments of PR China, Japan, and RO Korea in particular have provided financial support for the operation of the PRF Secretariat Services. Equally significant, the Government of the Philippines, which has hosted the PEMSEA secretariat since 1994, through the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), has constructed a new addition to the PEMSEA Office Building.

To ensure efficient operations, the PRF Secretariat has initiated a number of activities in the 4th quarter of 2007, such as drafting a communication plan in support of the SDS-SEA implementation, preparing work plans and schedules for the organization of the EAS Congress 2009, organizing and conducting a meeting of the Executive Committee, and planning the Second EAS Partnership Council Meeting in July 2008.

Exercising Partnerships in the YSLME

Guangzhou, PR China – The 4th Project Steering Committee (PSC) meeting of the Yellow Sea Large Marine Ecosystem (YSLME) Project was held on 29-30 November 2007 at Dong Fang Hotel in Guangzhou, to review the achievements and endorse the work programme and budget for 2008.

The meeting was concluded with the endorsement of the YSLME work programme and budget for 2008. The YSLME Project will be focusing on the formulation of the Strategic Action Programme (SAP) and the Yellow Sea Commission in 2008.

YSLME Project has been in operation since 2005 and is focused on the reduction of environmental stress in the Yellow Sea. The YSLME Project became a PEMSEA Partner and a member of the EAS Partnership Council during the East Asian Seas Congress 2006, with the signing of the Partnership Operating Arrangements.

PEMSEA Resource Facility was represented by Dr. Won-Tae Shin at the meeting.

Cross-sectoral Collaboration in the South China Sea Project

Bangkok, Thailand – The Third Regional Scientific Conference of the UNEP/GEF South China Sea Project was successfully convened in Bangkok, Thailand, from 28-30th November 2007.

Around 200 participants attended the conference, including members of the Regional Working Group, expert members, mayors and governors of the sites, site managers, national coordinators of the GEF Small Grants Programme, representatives of nongovernmental and international organizations, and PEMSEA.

A panel discussion titled “National Benefit and Achievements” showcased sub-projects from China, Indonesia, Cambodia, Thailand and Philippines. Through the panel discussion, several national benefits and achievements by the SCS Project were pointed out, such as contributions to the development of National Action Plans for marine habitats, enhancement of scientific knowledge on marine habitats, strengthening of linkage between scientific research and policy development, enhancement of public awareness on marine habitats, and development of cross-sectoral collaboration.

The SCS Project and the GEF SGP launched a partnership to promote community involvement in support of the implementation of the Regional Strategic Action Programme (SAP) for the South China Sea during the closing session of the Conference. The partnership is aimed at building the capacity of nongovernmental and community-based organizations, and coastal communities to implement the SAP at the local level. The SCS Project focuses on reversing environmental degradation in the South China Sea and Gulf of Thailand.

PEMSEA Resource Facility representative, Ms. Kazumi Wakita, participated in the conference.

Forging Partnerships to Save Coral Reefs

Quezon City, Philippines – The Marine Science Institute (MSI) of the University of the Philippines organized a Synthesis Panel Meeting on 30 October 2007 to present an overview of the Coral Reef Targeted Research and Capacity Building for Management (CRTR) Program, its history, progress and plans. The CRTR is a leading coral reef research initiative that provides a coordinated approach to credible, factual and scientifically-proven knowledge for improved coral reef management. It is a research and capacity-building partnership between the Global Environment Facility, The World Bank, the University of Queensland (Australia), the United States National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and approximately 40 research institutes and other partners around the globe.

Associated with the CRTR are regional Centers of Excellence which serve as convening locations for each of the CRTR Working Groups, tackling various core research areas of the program such as coral bleaching, connectivity, coral diseases, coral restoration and remediation, remote sensing and modeling and decision-support. MSI's Bolinao Marine Laboratory, the Centre of Excellence in Southeast Asia, was given the privilege to present the issues, progress and impacts related its research priorities focusing on coral reef identification and taxonomy, coral diseases and marine microbiology and connectivity and populations of economically important reef species.

PEMSEA participated in the meeting together with other GEF-funded projects, such as the Coral Reef Rehabilitation and Management Project (Indonesia) and the Mindanao Rural Development Program (Philippines). The meeting provided a venue for discussions where possible networking and partnerships can be forged in relation to coral reef research and management. One area of interest for PEMSEA, aside from taking advantage of the capacity-building opportunities provided by the CRTR program, is the possible linkage with the Local Government Initiative (LGI), which aims to improve governance by educating and helping local governments to adopt reef-friendly practices. The PEMSEA Network of Local Governments for Sustainable Coastal Development (PNLG) hopes to benefit from the “demonstration effect” that LGI is targeting to achieve by making available best practices guidelines on coral reef management to other local governments.

PEMSEA on Air: "Manila Bay: Challenges and Opportunities"

Manila, Philippines – The challenges and opportunities in the restoration and management of Manila Bay was the focus of the Kalikasan, Kaunlaran! (KK!) radio program on DZRH-AM last 28 November 2007.

Ms. Maricor Ebarvia-Bautista, PEMSEA Technical Officer for Environmental Investment, joined Ms. Marilou Erni, Executive Director, Petron Foundation and President of Bataan Coastal Care Foundation, Inc., and Ms. Eva Matibag, Wastewater Department Manager, Manila Water as panelists of the radio program. Dr. Cora Claudio, President of EARTH Institute Asia, facilitated the discussion.

Manila Bay priority concerns discussed during the program included water pollution, habitat restoration, livelihood programs, and hazard and risk management.

Ms. Matibag of Manila Water, a local water franchise that provides water and sewerage services to 5.1 million Metro Manila residents, mentioned that, currently, only 10 percent of Metro Manila residents are connected to a sewerage system. The GEF/World Bank-funded Manila Third Sewerage Project (MTSP) is hoped to increase access to a sewerage system to 30 percent by 2010. Ms. Matibag encouraged residents not connected to the sewerage system to avail of Manila Water's free desludging services.

One of Petron Foundation's corporate social responsibility initiatives is in the Province of Bataan where one of Petron's refineries is located. Together with PEMSEA, members of the private sector in the Bataan economic zone, the local government and civil society groups, Petron Foundation formed the Bataan Coastal Care Foundation which undertakes the implementation of an integrated coastal management (ICM) program in partnership with the province. The need for synchronization of activities of the various stakeholders along with private sector commitment was emphasized by Ms. Erni in order to effectively address primary concerns such as habitat restoration and livelihood programs.

Hazards, both natural and man-made, and the lack of government capacity were identified by Ms. Ebarvia-Bautista as some of the major issues that PEMSEA is addressing through technical assistance and private-public partnerships (PPPs). By providing risk assessment studies, governments are able to identify which of the many related coastal concerns should be prioritized, while PPP enables governments to tap other sources of environmental funding. The implementation of the Manila Bay Coastal Strategy has resulted in several programs and projects, including risk assessments, coastal use zoning plans, an oil spill contingency plan and the recently launched Manila Bay Area Environmental Atlas.

NOWPAP in Action

NOWPAP shares some of the milestones it has achieved in the last quarter of 2007, including the conclusion of the 12th Intergovernmental Meeting participated in by partner organizations, the finalization of the NOWPAP Regional Action Plan on Marine Litter, and its contribution in the fight against the recent oil spill in the Republic of Korea.

Joining Hands in Fighting the Oil Spill in RO Korea

PR China, Japan and Russia joined hands in fighting the worst oil spill incident in Korean history after by activating the Northwest Pacific Action Plan's Regional Oil Spill Contingency Plan on 10 December 2007. With the assistance from NOWPAP's Marine Environmental Emergency Preparedness and Response Regional Activity Centre (MERRAC) and the NOWPAP Regional Coordinating Unit, China has sent a ship with experts and sorbents on board and Japan has dispatched a team of experts to join the international efforts to help clean up oil spilled off the coast of Taean, Republic of Korea. Since the response operations at sea have come to end and the clean up efforts are now focusing on the shore, NOWPAP deactivated the contingency plan on 14 January 2008. Realizing the risk of oil spills in the region and importance of cooperation among members, NOWPAP plans to have the second joint oil spill exercise in October 2008 in China.

Marine Litter Activity: Moving to the Next Phase

After more than two years since its inception, the NOWPAP Marine Litter Activity (MALITA) is progressing towards the end of the activity with much success. At a meeting held on 20–21 November in Toyama, Japan, the NOWPAP Regional Action Plan on Marine Litter (RAP MALI) was finalized. The finalization of RAP MALI is one of the important outcomes of the NOWPAP MALITA.

During the MALITA implementation, NOWPAP has convened several regional workshops and working meetings, set up a marine litter database, compiled regional overviews on the marine litter situation and related legislation and policies, developed a number of guidelines and brochures and launched International Coastal Cleanup campaigns in all the member countries. Those outcomes will be further reflected during the implementation of RAP MALI in the years to come

Twelfth IGM held in Xiamen

The 12th Intergovernmental Meeting of NOWPAP was held on 23–25 October 2007 in Xiamen, PR China. Representatives of the NOWPAP member states (PR China, Japan, Republic of Korea and Russian Federation), UNEP Regional Seas Programme and NOWPAP partners, namely, COBSEA, IOC/WESTPAC, PEMSEA and YSLME participated in the meeting. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea attended the meeting as an observer. The meeting adopted the report of the Executive Director of UNEP on the progress in the implementation of NOWPAP during the 2006–2007 biennium and approved the work plan and budget for 2008–2009. The meeting also approved in principle the NOWPAP Regional Action Plan on Marine Litter, as a major outcome of the NOWPAP Marine Litter Activity (MALITA). The meeting reviewed the evaluation report on the four Regional Activity Centres (RACs) aimed at improving the effectiveness and efficiency of the RACs. A Regional Oil and Hazardous and Noxious Substances (HNS) Spill Contingency Plan was also adopted at the meeting.