



MEMORANDUM

FOR : **The Directors,**
Biodiversity Management Bureau
Climate Change Service
Ecosystems Research and Development Bureau
Environmental Management Bureau
Forest Management Bureau

FROM : **The OIC-Director**
Policy and Planning Service

SUBJECT : **7th EAST ASIAN SEAS (EAS) MINISTERIAL FORUM
DECLARATION**

DATE : **06 JUL 2021**

This refers to the Memorandum from the Undersecretary for Finance, Information Systems and Climate Change regarding the first (1st) draft of the 7th East Asian Seas (EAS) Ministerial Forum Declaration, which will be signed in the 2021 East Asian Seas Congress to be held virtually on 1-2 December 2021.

The EAS Congress and Ministerial Forum is a triennial international platform that advances commitment and cooperation towards the achievement of our shared vision of a sustainable EAS region.

The theme for the first (1st) draft of the 7th East Asian Seas (EAS) Ministerial Forum Declaration is “Charting a Blue Development Agenda: Healthy Ocean Ecosystems and Shared Economic Prosperity.” It recognizes the challenges brought about the pandemic as well as the opportunity posed by this disruption to usher in new norms through the pursuit of the Partnerships in the Environmental Management for East Asia (PEMSEA) Roadmap 2030.

In this regard, may we request for your comments/inputs/suggestions on the attached 1st draft of the 7th East Asian Seas Ministerial Forum Declaration **on or before 12 July 2021** for our consolidation. Also provided are guidance documents on the Ministerial Declaration for your reference.

For your information and appropriate action, please.


MELINDA C. CAPISTRANO



Republic of the Philippines
Department of Environment and Natural Resources
Visayas Avenue, Diliman, Quezon City
Tel. No. 929-6626 to 29; 929-6633 to 35
926-7041 to 43; 929-6252; 929-1669
Website: <http://www.denr.gov.ph>/E-mail: web@denr.gov.ph

MEMORANDUM

TO : **MELINDA C. CAPISTRANO**
OIC, Director
Policy and Planning Service (PPS)

ATTENTION : **EDILBERTO D. LEONARDO**
Undersecretary and concurrent BMB Director

ENGR. WILLIAM P. CUNADO
Director, Environmental Management Bureau (EMB)

ELENIDA DR. BASUG
OIC, Director, Climate Change Service (CCS)

FROM : **THE UNDERSECRETARY FOR FINANCE, INFORMATION
SYSTEMS AND CLIMATE CHANGE SERVICE & PEMSEA
NATIONAL FOCAL POINT, PHILIPPINES**

SUBJECT : **7th EAS MINISTERIAL FORUM DECLARATION**

As Lead and Members of the Ministerial and Major-Plenaries Committee for the East Asian Seas (EAS) Congress per S.O. No. 2021-257, may we refer you to the attached letter from the Partnerships in Environmental Management for the Seas of East Asia (PEMSEA) furnishing us a copy of the draft Ministerial Declaration, final form of which will be signed by eleven (11) partner-countries, including the Philippines, on December 2, 2021, right after the East Asian Seas (EAS) Congress.

An Introductory Document is also being provided to have a better understanding of the key elements of the draft Declaration. Comments, inputs and suggestions on the draft Declaration are being requested (from the Philippines). Please note that the comments and inputs are expected to be a consolidation and synthesis, to include those from other relevant offices, government and non-government agencies and institutions, as discussed and agreed during the June 10, 2021 meeting.

To ensure that the Philippines' perspectives are reflected in the Declaration, kindly submit the synthesis to the DENR Congress Secretariat: adirector@bmb.gov.ph/cmd@bmb.gov.ph and wjobien@gmail.com/misfaspo@gmail.com, by **July 13, 2021** in time for consolidation with the other countries' comments by PEMSEA, and presented in the forthcoming Partnership Council Meeting.

For your appropriate action.


ATTY. ANALIZA REBUERTA-TEH

cc: - USec Jonas R. Leones, PPIA
- ASec Marcial C. Amaro, Jr., PPFAPs
- Dir. Wilfredo J. Obien, FASPS



25 June 2021

Atty. Analiza Rebueta-Teh
Undersecretary
Department of Environment and Natural Resources
DENR Compound, Visayas Avenue, Diliman
Quezon City

Dear Undersecretary Teh,

**Subject: First Draft of the 7th EAS Ministerial Forum Declaration:
1st Round of PEMSEA Partners Consultation**

Greetings from the PEMSEA Resource Facility!

I am pleased to inform you that the PRF in collaboration with the Ministry of Environment of Cambodia has already initiated the preparations for the 7th EAS Ministerial Forum which is scheduled to take place virtually on December 2, 2021.

Building on the suggestions of the 26th expanded Executive Committee Meeting conducted last 30 March 2021 and with further inputs and guidance from the members of the Executive Committee, I am pleased to provide herewith the following documents:

- (a) 1st Draft of 7th Ministerial Forum Declaration; and
- (b) Introductory Guidance Document on the Draft Ministerial Declaration

Carrying the theme, "Charting a Blue Development Agenda: Healthy Ocean Ecosystems and Shared Economic Prosperity", the draft Declaration recognized the challenges brought forth by the global pandemic and its cascading impacts on blue economy sectors and on people's livelihood and welfare, as well as the opportunity to usher in a new norm through the pursuit of PEMSEA Roadmap 2030 that is anchored on a sustainable blue development agenda. Building on the gains as well as lessons learned through the SDS-SEA implementation and in line with global and previous EAS Ministerial commitments, the draft Declaration outlines the region's strategic objectives and commitment in support of blue-green recovery, the roadmap's priority agenda, and the reaffirmation of support to SDS-SEA implementation and organizational stability of the PRF.

To facilitate better understanding of the key elements of the draft Declaration, please refer to the attached introductory document. This document provides guidance on the development of PEMSEA's strategic actions and definition of terminologies used in the draft Declaration, as well as a timetable for the finalization of the Ministerial Declaration.

In line with this, we invite all PEMSEA Country and Non-Country Partners to review and provide further inputs or suggestions on the attached draft. The 1st Round of Consultation will run from June 28 to July 15, 2021. Initial feedback or inputs that will be generated from the consultation will be consolidated by the PRF for further discussion during the EAS Partnership Council Meeting scheduled on July 28-29, 2021.

Partnerships in Environmental Management for the Seas of East Asia

DENR Compound, Visayas Avenue,
Quezon City 1100, Philippines
PO Box 2502 Quezon City 1165, Philippines

T: +632.8929.2992
E: info@pemsea.org
F: +632.8426.3849

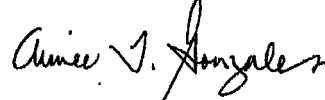
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Should you require further information or assistance from the PRF during your discussions or consultation, please do not hesitate to let us know. More information and formal invitation on the Ministerial Forum will be released as we further roll out the preparations for the 7th EAS Ministerial Forum.

Thank you.

Yours sincerely,



Aimee T. Gonzales
Executive Director
PEMSEA

Attachments:

- (1) 1st Draft of 7th Ministerial Declaration
- (2) Introductory Guidance Document on the Draft Ministerial Declaration

Introduction to the First Draft of the 7th Ministerial Declaration

Taking into consideration the suggestions of the 26th expanded Executive Committee Meeting conducted last 30 March 2021, and further inputs and guidance from the members of the Executive Committee, the PEMSEA Resource Facility with support of a legal consultant developed the 1st Draft of the 7th Ministerial Declaration. Carrying the theme, "Charting a Blue Development Agenda: Healthy Ocean Ecosystems and Shared Economic Prosperity", the draft Declaration recognized the challenges brought forth by the global pandemic and its cascading impacts on blue economy sectors and on people's livelihood and welfare, as well as the opportunity to usher in a new norm that is anchored on a sustainable blue development agenda.

Below is the organizing framework to guide the development of PEMSEA's strategic actions:

Sustainable Development Strategy for the Seas of East Asia (SDS-SEA) – originally drafted in 2003, it was updated in 2015 to take into account new international commitments such as UNSDGs, UNFCCC, Paris Climate Agreement and Aichi Biodiversity Targets and the Sendai Framework. SDS-SEA is a living fundamental document that we update as new and emerging issues arise.

PEMSEA Roadmap to 2030 is our decadal strategic roadmap that takes into account the global pandemic and new and emerging opportunities with the UN Decade of Ocean Science, Post-2020 Biodiversity Framework, and the UN Decade of Ecosystem Restoration. The end goal of having sustainable development of the Seas of East Asia is too ambitious to achieve in 9 years so we break them down into four elements: shared economic prosperity, healthy ocean ecosystems, resilient communities and green recovery/development preferably with measurable targets that all countries have already signed on to:

Blue economy is the pathway or the road to achieve the above which needs to be strengthened, paved, and nurtured.

The concept is not new to the PEMSEA partnership. At the 4th Ministerial Forum on SDS-SEA, Changwon, RO Korea, 12 July 2012, PEMSEA adopted the following definition expressed in the Changwon Declaration

"Blue Economy - practical ocean-based economic model using green infrastructure and technologies, innovative financing mechanisms and proactive institutional arrangements for meeting the twin goals of protecting our oceans and coasts and enhancing its potential contribution to sustainable development, including improving human well-being, and reducing environmental risks and ecological scarcities."

Sustainable Development Strategy for the Seas of East Asia (SDS-SEA) Implementation Plan is the vehicle, with the PEMSEA countries as the owners and passengers ensuring that the vehicle is moving. We are currently implementing SDS-SEA Implementation Plan 2018-2022. The recent mid-term review indicates that while we have made some progress, we still have a lot of ongoing action/targets to complete.

The proposed **SDS-SEA Implementation Plan 2023-2027** takes into account the results of the mid-term review and will spell out the actions to operationalize the roadmap and help secure its ambition. The plan will identify expected outcomes, indicators and targeted actions and timelines for priority programs that contribute to the sustainable development of oceans and coasts and

blue economy growth in the region for five years (2023-2027). It will be based on and informed by country and non-country partners priorities on coastal, marine and transboundary programs.

The plan could be clustered around key themes, such as, but not limited to climate change, circular economy, sustainable financing and blue economy and will reflect integrated management solutions (e.g., integrated coastal management, integrated river basin management, integrated transport management) and implemented through partnerships.

The proposed implementation plan will review and update action programs of the SDS-SEA (2015) taking into account new and emerging issues/approaches as well as other existing and upcoming international and regional commitments and targets to which countries of the region have subscribed.

The plan will also guide the development of the PEMSEA Network of Local Governments Strategic Action Plan (SAP 2022- 2026/2030) as well as the PEMSEA Network of Learning Centers Training and Capacity Development Plan.

PEMSEA- Partnership (through the Ministerial Declaration) is the driver setting the direction and steering the vehicle in the right direction to reach the destination

PEMSEA Resource Facility (PRF) is the mechanic to retool, re-oil, fix the vehicle. A PRF Operational Plan and annual workplan and budget will also be prepared to guide the partnership and PRF.

Below are some explanatory notes to guide your review of the document.

1. Definition of terminologies used

Blue Development Agenda/Path – Underpinned by the commitment in the Changwon and succeeding EAS MF Declarations, this term is proposed to describe our adherence to the blue economy principle which incorporates sustainable, inclusive and resilient pathway to blue economy to secure our vision of healthy ocean, people and economies for the region

Blue/Green recovery strategy – the term was coined and made popular by the Friends of Ocean Action which promotes the implementation of UNSDG 14 (life below water) during and post global pandemic.

2. References to country commitments to existing international agreements (UN SDGs) are identified in SDS-SEA Implementation Plan 2018-2022. Other global actions from 2021-2030 that are proposed to be recognized so the EAS region is one and aligned with the global ocean agenda with links to blue economy, include:

- United Nations Proclamation of a Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development (2021-2030),
- Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework, and
- UN Decade of Ecosystem Restoration

3. The following background documents are also offered as reference:

- SDS-SEA 2015
- SDS-SEA Implementation Plan 2018-2022 mid-term review
- PEMSEA Accomplishment Report 2020
- EAS Post-2020 Futures Report and Strategy
- 26th Executive Committee Meeting Proceedings

4. Proposed timeline for finalizing the Ministerial Declaration:

TARGET SCHEDULE	ACTIVITY
June 28 to July 15, 2021	➤ 1 st Round of Consultation on First Draft of Ministerial Declaration with Country Partners and EC members
July 29, 2021	➤ 13 th EAS Partnership Council Meeting to review inputs from the 1 st Round of Consultation and provide further suggestions for the enhancement of the First Draft, and adopt the proposed Work Plan and Schedule for Finalization of MF Declaration
August 2021	➤ 2 nd Round of Consultation on 2 nd Draft of Ministerial Declaration
September 2021	➤ 3 rd Round of Consultation on 3 rd Draft of Ministerial Declaration
October 2021	➤ Final Draft of the Ministerial Declaration
Last week of November 2021	➤ Senior Government Officials Meeting (SGOM) to formally confirm country concurrence and endorse the Final Draft of the Ministerial Declaration for signature at the 7 th EAS Ministerial Forum
December 2, 2021	➤ 7 th Ministerial Forum to formally adopt the Ministerial Declaration

Should you have questions and require more clarification, please do not hesitate to contact Karen See, PRF Secretariat Services Coordinator at ksee@pemsea.org

MINISTERIAL DECLARATION
CHARTING A BLUE DEVELOPMENT AGENDA: HEALTHY OCEAN ECOSYSTEMS AND SHARED ECONOMIC PROSPERITY

We, the representatives of eleven countries bordering the Seas of East Asia, have virtually gathered this ___ day of December to review the progress in the implementation of the Sustainable Development Strategy in the Seas of East Asia; respond to the global call for a green recovery strategy post COVID-19 pandemic, anchored on a blue development agenda; and chart our actions in the new decade to promote healthy ocean ecosystems and shared economic prosperity.

We recognize that the current COVID-19 pandemic has created a global crisis that necessitated the implementation of travel restrictions and health protocols that resulted in disruptions, if not closure of business operations, particularly in the trade, travel, tourism, and fisheries industries, plunging GDPs across the region and affecting the economy and the lives and livelihood of the people;

We acknowledge that the COVID 19 crisis presents an opportunity for the region to reset and re-engineer the patterns of consumption and production through a blue development agenda, which promotes policies, actions and investments that have positive impact on the coasts and ocean, while improving the economy and addressing health and other socioeconomic concerns;

We note that the East Asian Seas is an important economic and ecological area, hosting nine of the world's busiest container-shipping seaports, producing 80% of the world's aquaculture and 40 million tons of annual fish catch, home to a third of the world's coral reefs, mangroves and seagrass beds, and supported by large volumes of water, sediment and nutrients discharge from land and river systems;

We recognize that blue economy, is a critical driver in transitioning to a new normal where coastal and marine ecosystems play significant roles in a post-pandemic world by creating employment and influencing responsible consumption, production and investment while protecting natural capital, enhancing resiliency and resource efficiency, and reducing carbon footprint.

We recall our commitment to Blue Economy in the Changwon Ministerial Declaration 2012 and we have taken initiatives to implement strategies to protect our oceans and coasts and enhance their potential contribution to sustainable development, including improving human well-being, and reducing environmental risks and ecological scarcities.

We are mindful of the impact of climate change to the ocean ecosystems such as acidification, deoxygenation, sea level rise and warming and support the global climate goal of reaching Net Zero Carbon development by 2050, pursuant to the Paris Climate Agreement, mitigation and adaptation as crucial underlying principles in our strategies and actions to accelerate blue economy.

We are encouraged by PEMSEA's achievements and are pleased to report that through our combined efforts and initiatives, we have achieved 40 percent integrated coastal management (ICM) coverage of the region's coastline and contiguous watershed areas, of the region, surpassing the 25 percent target coverage by 2021; and have implemented policies, action plans and programs on coastal, river and ocean management, using ICM as a mechanism to promote blue economy.

We are motivated by the recognition of PEMSEA by key development and country partners as a model for regional ocean governance and partnerships, which places PEMSEA in a position to take on greater role in contributing to achieving global and regional commitments such as the UN Sustainable Development Goals, UN Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Paris Climate Agreement, Convention on Biological Diversity, and Sendai Framework, which were confirmed through the Danang Compact and the Iloilo Declaration.

We welcome the United Nations proclamation of a Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development (2021-2030), the post 2020 Biodiversity Framework, the UN Decade of Ecosystem Restoration and commits to align the SDS-SEA implementation to support global efforts in reversing the cycle of decline in ocean health and work with other stakeholders to ensure that ocean science fully support countries in creating improved conditions for sustainable blue development path in the region.

We affirm the SDS-SEA as the regional framework which serves as the essential foundation of commitment by PEMSEA partners for collaborative and inclusive actions on priority governance and management programs to address the challenges to sustainable development, restore ecosystem health and enhance resilience and productivity.

We are grateful to our non-country partners, development partners, collaborators and funders who continue to align their programs to provide policy, technical and financial support to achieve the SDS-SEA vision and goals.

PEMSEA Roadmap to 2030

We will pursue the PEMSEA Roadmap 2030, anchored on the blue development agenda and in response to the call for the blue/green recovery post-pandemic through the strengthened and enhanced implementation of the Sustainable Development Strategy of the Seas of East Asia (SDS-SEA), using integrated management solutions and strategic partnerships framework.

We will commit to the following goals and strategic objectives as we pursue blue-green recovery to build back better, greener and healthier coastal and marine economy:

1. support blue-green recovery action to build back the economy through increased coastal investments and generate green or nature-based jobs;
2. strengthen coastal resilience and adaptive capacity including the protection and restoration of ocean ecosystems to achieve healthy and productive oceans for the efficient delivery of ecosystem services such as shoreline and coastal protection, climate regulation, carbon sequestration; provisioning services of raw materials, food and other resources; and economic support services to trade, transportation, tourism, recreation, energy and other ocean industries and cultural services; and
3. mainstream circular economy and promote sustainable consumption and production initiatives to reduce pollution of all kinds, in particular from land-based activities, including marine debris and nutrient pollution.
4. Increase economic benefits to PEMSEA Country Partners from the sustainable use of marine resources, including through sustainable management of fisheries, aquaculture and tourism; and

5. adopt innovative sustainable financing mechanisms to finance blue economic activities;

We instruct the PEMSEA Resource Facility to coordinate the development of the following priorities in the agenda for the PEMSEA roadmap 2030:

1. formulate, adopt and implement mutually supportive SDS-SEA Implementation Plan for 2023-2027 to integrate blue/green economic recovery plan and blue economy priorities that will serve as the vehicle for inclusive and collaborative action for the achievement of the goals and strategic objectives set forth herein, in accordance with our development priorities and capacities;
2. set out action plans to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and protect the oceans from the impact of climate change such as ocean acidification, deoxygenation, sea level rise and warming;
3. implement adaptation strategies for improved coastal resilience to address climate change and other environmental threats, and improve sustainable resource management to enable ecosystems to adapt to changing conditions and build back better from disastrous events including climate hazards and disasters;
4. develop partnerships with local governments, communities, the private sector, international organizations and development partners, academe, financial institutions, technology providers, and investors to promote the transition to blue economy pathway, using ICM as foundational mechanism, and improve livelihoods across a range of sectors, while ensuring the sustainable use of marine and coastal resources;
5. improve the quality of data and information collection, analysis and dissemination on climate, economic and coastal and marine environment through the State of the Coasts reporting mechanism to provide the basis for evidence-based well-informed decision making;
6. assist country partners in the development of project pipelines and proposals targeting financial and technical assistance from GEF and other potential sources of support;
7. regularly update the EAS Partnership Council on the progress of executing the SDS-SEA Implementation Plan 2023-2027 at the regional, national and local levels to achieve its goals and strategic objectives.

PEMSEA RESOURCE FACILITY (PRF) Sustainability

We recognize the invaluable secretariat and technical support provided by the PRF in ensuring the implementation of the SDS-SEA, the targets under the various Ministerial Declarations as well as the relevant global targets. We reaffirm our support to its organizational and financial sustainability as it performs its leadership and coordination functions, secure access to financial and human resources, regional expertise and knowledge, and implement adaptive management strategies that are essential to enable the PRF to face up to the challenges in the performance of its functions.

Conclusion

COVID 19 has brought the once hectic and bustling areas of economic activities to a slow down, giving the environment and people a chance to reset and regenerate. As the world adjust and work to manage the global pandemic and resulting economic crises, PEMSEA should take the opportunity usher in a new norm in the region. For the Seas of East Asia region, this means charting a blue development agenda for a more responsible stewardship and strengthened ocean governance in order to build back better coastal economies and communities and healthier oceans.