

Chair's Report for the Forum for Ocean Policy Institutes in East Asia

Mr. Hiroshi Terashima

Dr. Chua Thia-Eng

The Forum for Ocean Policy Institutes in East Asia hosted by Ocean Policy Research Foundation (OPRF) was held on February 28-29, 2008 at Nippon Founding Building, Tokyo, Japan.

The purpose of the forum was to promote exchange of the information and explore area of cooperation amongst ocean policy institutes in the region on the current status and challenges regarding ocean and coastal management in East Asia. Representatives from 6 institutes got together and discussed issues of common interest, including identifying roles of ocean policy institutes and possible networking in promoting effective ocean governance in East Asia and areas for further collaboration among them.

The following are the summary report of the Forum:

Eleven participants from China, Japan, Indonesia, Malaysia, R.O.Korea, Singapore including a resource person attended the Forum (Annex 1). The Forum which was chaired by Mr. Hiroshi Terashima and co-chaired by Dr. Chua Thia-Eng was conducted following the items of the agenda (Annex 2). The representatives of the six institutes made presentation on the status and initiatives of coastal and ocean governance in their respective countries, roles as well as activities of their institutes.

The participants also discussed the need and prospects for a regional network of ocean policy institutes. The participants unanimously agreed for the establishment of a regional network for promoting regional cooperation in coastal and ocean governance. The following specifics were also agreed upon:

(1) Nature of the Network

The network should be informal, flexible and non-governmental. Participants should be voluntary and inclusive while activities should focus on research/academic issues. Self-sustaining mechanism for the network should also be explored.

(2) Purpose of the Network

The network is to be established for 1) pragmatic and efficient exchange of information and experience preliminarily through website linkage and network meetings; 2) collaborative researches

on common issues and current concerns through flexible bilateral or multi-lateral cooperative mechanism(s); and 3) capacity development.

(3) Organization of the Network

The network will start first in a small scale with the present six institutional members and gradually expand its membership by absorbing other voluntary institutional members. The coverage of the region will be East Asia. As mentioned in the nature of the network, membership is open for the relevant interested institutes. Individuals with high regional influence and government officials could also be invited on his/her personal capacity as resource persons. A focal person should be appointed by each institute as the representative of the institute while a contact person should also be assigned for maintaining communication with the secretariat / members and other matters related to the day to day operation of the network.

(4) Operation of the Network

- Organization---The Ocean Policy Research Foundation of Japan will serve as the coordinator, and provides the secretariat support for the first three years.

- Coverage of activities---Network activities can include those related to academic / research, advocacy and policy. Some topics such as the management of potential conflicts, management of trans-boundary ocean resources, management of EEZ and High Sea including the problems of MPAs in disputed areas, etc were proposed. But no conclusion was reached.

- Activities---Information, experience and knowledge exchange is a continuous activity of the network. Initially, the substance of exchange could include individual research projects, ocean and coastal policy, related legislations, activities of national NGOs related to coastal and ocean governance as well as other regional or global activities undertaken. For the short-term, the Forum agreed to:

- 1 establish a Network Homepage

OPRF agreed to develop the homepage to be linked with the website of each participating institution.

- 2 Regular meeting

The forum for Ocean Policy Institutes will be held annually, but the period could be flexible according to the schedules of the relevant ocean events. It is recommended to set up a main topic for each forum. The next forum will be hosted by MIMA in November of 2008.

3 Collaboration with other global or regional organizations

The network might carry out collaborations with several global or regional organizations or programs, such as PEMPEA, International Ocean Governance network (IOGN) of the Nippon Foundation and so on. Specific level of cooperation can be decided upon further consultation with the concerned parties.

The activities for the medium term and long term will be discussed further according to the development of the network.

- Financing---At the starting stage, the OPRF will contribute to the operation of the secretariat. As to the collaborative researches in the future, sponsorship should be sought from other sources.

Mutual supporting mechanism was also discussed. For the regular meeting, the participant will pay their own airfares while the host institute will provide accommodation, food, local transport, hospitality and meeting support. For the participants who have financial difficulty, the secretariat will find the way to provide helps.

(5) Naming of the Network

The Forum agreed to give an appropriate name to the network and stress that the acronym should be easy to pronounced and easy to remember. The OPRF will explore a suitable name for the Network for the concurrence of all members.