



**UNDP/GEF PROJECT ENTITLED “REDUCING ENVIRONMENTAL STRESS IN THE
YELLOW SEA LARGE MARINE ECOSYSTEM”**

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**The Regional Conference on Parliamentary Roles in
Protection of Marine Environment and
Sustainable Use of Marine Resources in the Yellow Sea**
Qingdao, China, 28-30 March 2006

Report of the Meeting



Summary of the Regional Conference on Parliamentary Roles in Protection of Marine Environment and Sustainable Use of Marine Resources in the Yellow Sea

The “Regional Conference on Parliamentary Roles in Protection of Marine Environment and Sustainable Use of Marine Resources in the Yellow Sea” was organised in Qingdao, China, from 28-30 March 2006, as one of public awareness activities of the UNDP/GEF Project on “Reducing Environmental Stress in the Yellow Sea Large Marine Ecosystem (YSLME).”

The Conference was attended by 51 participants from the participating countries of the YSLME project, including 14 members from the parliamentary organisations. The list of participants is attached as Annex I.

1. Opening of the Meeting

- 1.1 On behalf of the UNDP/GEF Yellow Sea Project, Mr. JIANG Yihang opened the meeting and welcomed the members of the National People’s Congress of China and the National Assembly of Republic of Korea (ROK). He also welcomed all the government officials and marine environment experts who attended the conference. Mr. Jiang mentioned that the Yellow Sea faces serious environmental problems due to the rapid development in the countries bordering the Yellow Sea. Mr. JIANG emphasised that the parliamentary bodies in the participating countries play an important role to protect the Yellow Sea ecosystem and enhance the sustainable use of its marine resources.
- 1.2 On behalf of the Government of China, Mr. LI Haiqing extended a warm welcome to all the participants from China and Republic of Korea. Mr. Li appreciated the initiative taken by the National Assembly of Republic of Korea and the National People’s Congress of China in organising the conference to address the serious environmental degradation in the Yellow Sea. He believed that the special responsibilities of the parliaments in both countries would ensure the development of effective strategic actions to protect the marine environment and sustainable use of the marine resources in the Yellow Sea. Mr. Li also informed the Meeting about the establishment of the “Yellow Sea Partnership,” with the active participation of the partners from UN organisations, international and local NGOs, and research institutes. Mr. Li extended his appreciation to the China Ocean News for its hard work in organising the conference.
- 1.3 On behalf of the National Assembly of Republic of Korea, Mr. YOO Jay-Kun expressed his sincere appreciation to all the participants who had committed their time to attend this meeting. Mr. Yoo stated that it is necessary to enhance the co-operation between ROK and China, and strengthen the efforts for environmental protection and sustainable use of marine resources in the Yellow Sea. Mr. Yoo pointed out the possible actions to be taken in the future by both countries, including enacting relevant domestic laws required for the implementation of the strategic plan under the YSLME Project, harmonising the domestic laws in the participating countries, and raising the awareness of all stakeholders to the Yellow Sea’s environmental problems. Mr. Yoo also hoped to develop this meeting into a regular forum for ROK and China to exchange views, enhance mutual understanding, and address the environmental problems in the Yellow Sea.
- 1.4 On behalf of the Shangdong Provincial Government, Mr. LIU Yuanlin welcomed all the participants to the meeting. Mr. Liu presented the continuous efforts made by the Shangdong province for protecting the Yellow Sea’s environment, explaining various

countermeasures such as the closure of the paper mills factories that were major polluters to environment, the construction of wastewater treatment plants, and the ban on catching fish in certain areas and periods to prevent overfishing. Having stressed that the Shandong Province will continue its efforts for marine protection, Mr. Liu expressed the hope to see more contribution from the countries bordering the Yellow Sea in protecting the marine resources and environment of the Yellow Sea.

- 1.5 On behalf of the Municipal Government of Qingdao, Mr. LIU Zansong gave the participants a warm welcome to Qingdao. Mr. Liu discussed the challenge that the Yellow Sea's coastal communities face in protecting marine resources and achieving sustainable development. To overcome the problems, Mr. Liu explained that the Qingdao Municipal Government developed a strategic plan with focus on marine industry, port economy, and tourism development. Mr. Liu mentioned that the protection of the marine environment is crucial for Qingdao to become more prosperous as one of the most important port cities in the country.

2. Speeches and Presentations

2.1 Plenary Presentation 1: Environmental Stress in the Yellow Sea

- 2.1.1 Mr. Randall PURCELL chaired the session, and he thanked all the participants, especially the members of the parliaments in China and ROK, for their commitment to the meeting. Mr. Purcell emphasised the significance of this meeting as it is the first activity for the Global Environment Facility (GEF) funded projects, where the parliamentary members gathered and discussed environmental issues. The session was chaired by Mr. Purcell.
- 2.1.2 Mr. HU Dunxin made a presentation on the Yellow Sea thermodynamics and its impact on the marine ecosystem and resources. He discussed the forces and conditions which determine the thermodynamic structure in the Yellow Sea, providing a number of findings from scientific studies. Mr. Hu also explained the paradox in understanding the thermodynamics in the Yellow Sea, and discussed the roles of the thermodynamics in the marine ecosystem and environment.
- 2.1.3 Mr. JE Jong Geel gave a keynote speech on the status and trends of the marine environment and resources in the Yellow Sea. He described the vulnerability of the Yellow Sea to environmental stresses due to its semi-enclosed characteristics and shallowness. Mr. Je noted the importance to collect the data and information on the distribution, interaction, and potential yields of marine resources in the region. Having indicated the responsibilities of the parliaments in order to maintain the sustainability of the Yellow Sea ecosystem, Mr. Je hoped to establish a regular forum of the parliamentary members in ROK and China to share the vision, knowledge, and experiences to achieve sustainable development in the Yellow Sea.
- 2.1.4 Following the presentations, a panel discussion was held to discuss environmental stresses in the Yellow Sea.
- 2.1.5 Describing serious environmental problems observed in the Yellow Sea, Mr. IM Jong In emphasised the importance of integrated management and international co-operation for protecting the marine environment and sustainable use of marine and coastal resources. As a key factor for the successful management and co-operation, Mr. Im pointed out the need to collect scientific data and strengthen collaboration among stakeholders within the framework of both bilateral and multilateral co-operation. In addition, Mr. Im stated that the participation of the Democratic People's

Republic of Korea in the relevant activities is crucial for more effective conservation of the marine environment in the Yellow Sea.

- 2.1.6 Mr. XIANG Jianhai recognised the conflicts between economic development and ecosystem protection in the Yellow Sea, and suggested to strengthen monitoring activities on human-induced ecological disorder. He stated that this activity would enable ecosystem management to be more science-based. Mr. Xiang also stated that co-operation among the Yellow Sea bordering countries is vital for better understanding as well as better management of the Yellow Sea ecosystem in order to reduce its environmental stresses.
- 2.1.7 Recognising the complexity of transboundary environmental problems in the Yellow Sea ecosystem, Mr. KIM Myeoung Ju reiterated that it is necessary for ROK and China to strengthen their co-operation to address this difficult issue. In this regard, Mr. Kim believed that the YSLME project is an excellent mechanism to facilitate such international co-operation. Mr. Kim suggested that both countries should take advantage of this regional framework and reinforce joint endeavours in scientific research as well as in management activities.
- 2.1.8 Mr. HU Dunxin encouraged everyone to enhance communication between policymakers and natural scientists. He stated that close communication and consultation with the experts in the region would enable the policymakers to devise ecosystem-based, environmentally-sustainable plans to effectively manage and reduce the development stress on the Yellow Sea's environment.

2.2 Plenary Presentation 2: Yellow Sea Large Ecosystem and Its Economic Value

- 2.2.1 Mr. SHIN Ki Nam chaired the session, giving a brief review of the previous session, and introducing the focal topics in this session. After the introduction from Mr. Shin, four speakers gave their presentation.
- 2.2.2 Mr. NI Yuefeng gave a keynote speech, addressing the marine environment legislations in China, with special reference to the Yellow Sea. He also described reinforcing the protection of the marine ecology and the mechanisms to control the pollution. Mr. Ni discussed the measures taken by the Chinese government to enhance environmental protection of the Yellow Sea. In addition, he discussed China's continuous efforts and legal basis not only to improve marine disaster prevention and alleviation in the Yellow Sea, but also to strengthen the control of pollutants.
- 2.2.3 Mr. HUH Hyung-Tack explained the YSLME's transboundary environmental issues, such as the decline of fish stocks, water pollution, and loss of biodiversity and habitats. To address these problems, Mr. Huh recommended priority actions, including ecosystem-based fisheries management, scientific oceanic investigation, and long-term water quality monitoring. In addition, Mr. Huh explained the YSLME Project as a mechanism to develop ecosystem-based, environmentally sustainable management strategies.
- 2.2.4 Mr. ENDO Isao discussed the economic aspects of conservation activities. Introducing the concept and application of economic valuation, Mr. Endo emphasised the importance of incorporating economic consideration into policymaking processes. Mr. Endo mentioned that the benefit-cost information of conservation activities can help decision-makers devise more efficient policies.

2.2.5 Mr. CHO Dong-Oh addressed economic development and its dependency on the marine ecosystem. Citing the experiences and lessons learned from Korean cases, Mr. Cho examined how the National Economic Development Plans of Korea negatively impacted the country's marine and coastal environment. Mr. Cho stated that the Korean government has improved its efforts to realise ecosystem-based management, based on the lessons learned.

2.3 Plenary Presentation 3: Parliamentary Roles in Environmental Management in the Yellow Sea

2.3.1 After providing a brief review of the previous two sessions, Mr. XIANG Jianhai, the Session Chairperson, introduced the topics to be discussed. Mr. Xiang invited the speakers to give their presentation, and informed the meeting about each speakers' professional background and field of expertise.

2.3.2 Mr. TANG Qisheng presented an overview of the YSLME Project. After introducing the concept of Large Marine Ecosystem (LME), Mr. Tang described the objectives, history, and latest development of the YSLME Project. Mr. Tang also discussed the current situation of overexploitation of marine and coastal resources in the Yellow Sea, provided various scientific data and information. Mr. Tang expressed his belief that the Project will greatly contribute to restoring the depleted biomass and conserving the integrity of highly fluctuating ecosystems in the Yellow Sea.

2.3.3 Mr. HAN Kwang Won provided an in-depth explanation about the institutional and financial considerations for management of marine environments. He carefully examined the institutional arrangement in ROK for protection of the marine environment and its resources. Recognising that the YSLME Project is an optimal option to preserve the Yellow Sea, Mr. Han emphasised that the Korean parliament will strongly support the Project through enacting relevant laws and investing necessary funds.

2.4 Panel Discussion 1: Continuation of Parliamentary Involvement in Marine Environment Protection

2.4.1 Ms. SUH Hae Suk, the Panel Chairperson, introduced the topics to be addressed in this session. She proposed to discuss how to implement the action plan to preserve the Yellow Sea ecosystem, in conjunction with the roles and efforts made by the parliaments. The panel members presented their views and comments in line with the Chairperson's proposal.

2.4.2 Mr. MAI Kangsen stated his opinion that the parliaments should pay more attention to conservation of the Yellow Sea ecosystem, expressing concern about its further degradation due to the rapid economic development in the region. Mr. Mai stated that exchanging more ideas will enable the parliamentarians to deepen their understanding of the current situation of the ecosystem and to devise better countermeasures to address the environmental problems. Mr. Mai suggested establishing regular communication channels between the two parliaments in order to increase their interaction.

2.4.3 Mr. LEE Won Young stated that it would be necessary to establish a co-operative network between the two parliaments in order to encourage active dialogue. Mr. Lee suggested that the parliamentary members in this network meet on a regular basis to exchange their views and discuss better solutions. Mr. Lee further emphasised that the Parliamentary Conference could be an effective mechanism to secure such

regular dialogues between the two parliaments, and offered to host the second Conference in Republic of Korea next year.

- 2.4.4 Mr. KIM Choon Jin, supported Mr. LEE Wong Young's idea to formulate a network between the two parliaments, and proposed to invite other countries in the region to participate. Mr. Kim suggested establishing the "Eastern Asia Parliamentary Forum" which includes not only ROK and China, but also Democratic People's Republic of Korea and Japan. Mr. Kim believed that the Forum would help in promoting peace and prosperity in the region, through deepening mutual understanding and co-operation.
- 2.4.5 Mr. JIANG Yihang informed the meeting about the result of an "Informal Meeting" which was held to discuss the "Regular Meetings of the Parliamentary Members." In this Informal Meeting, attended by Mr. XIANG Jianhai, Mr. JE Jong Geel, Mr. LI Haiqing, Mr. HAN Gi Jun, and Mr. JIANG Yihang, a plan for the Regular Meetings was proposed. The proposal was described in detail in Section 3 of this meeting summary.
- 2.4.6 In addition to having the regular meetings between the parliamentary members, Mr. LI Haiqing made the following suggestions: (i) organise the meeting with local governments for a wider stakeholder participation; (ii) enhance the interaction between scientists and government officials for better ecosystem-based policymaking; and (iii) examine good practices in the region or other regions to address the transboundary marine environmental problems. Mr. Li stated that these activities would improve the policymaking ability and secure more participation from a wide range of stakeholders.

2.5 Panel Discussion 2: NGOs, Industry and Local Community's Involvement in the Conservation and Public Participation Activities

- 2.5.1 Mr. HU Dunxin chaired the second panel discussion, and introduced the topics to be addressed in this Panel Discussion. The panel members were invited to present their thoughts on the involvement and co-operation with various stakeholders, including NGOs, industries, and local communities.
- 2.5.2 Ms. KIM Sun Mi stated that it is important for all stakeholders to act co-operatively in combating the transboundary environmental problems in the Yellow Sea. In addition, Ms. Kim stated that it would be necessary to take actions locally. In this regard, she believed that local NGOs and industries can play a vital role. Ms. Kim mentioned that the governments should co-ordinate or strengthen co-operation with these key stakeholders to utilise their expertise and knowledge in a more concerted and effective manner.
- 2.5.3 For successful co-operation and implementation of conservation activities in the Yellow Sea, Mr. LI Haiqing presented three key phrases: (i) partnership among different stakeholders; (ii) combination of the two decision-making approaches, i.e. top-down and bottom-up; and (iii) objectivity of policymaking. Mr. Li provided examples in which these three key concepts were exercised and as a result, the successful outcomes were produced. Mr. Li believed that the involvement of NGOs and industry will ensure a balanced approach for conservation, and therefore, he strongly encouraged their active participation.
- 2.5.4 Mr. JE Jong Geel presented the lessons learned from a case in ROK where local communities and NGOs were actively involved in the conservation of the local marine and coastal environment. Citing pollution caused by the development of industrial

complexes as an example, Mr. Je explained how local residents and NGOs responded to the problem and took actions which successfully led to the formulation of the “Wetland Conservation Act” in 1998. Based on this experience, Mr. Je emphasised the need to encourage more participation from various stakeholders, and proposed to invite NGOs to participate in next year’s Parliamentary Conference.

3. Proposal for the Regular Meetings of the Parliamentary Members

3.1 During the conference, an informal meeting was organised to discuss potential continuation of the outcomes from this conference and to hold regular meetings of the parliamentary members for marine environment protection and sustainable use of marine resources. It was agreed by the Informal Meeting that:

- The parliamentary conference should be organised annually, with certain flexibilities, on a rotating basis for the venue;
- The next meeting will be organised in Republic of Korea;
- It was agreed that the host country should cover the local costs to organise such meetings. The visiting parliamentarians should cover their own travel costs. Partial financial support will be provided by the UNDP/GEF Yellow Sea project (YSLME);
- The Project Management Office (PMO) of the YSLME will provide secretariat support to the conference.

3.2 The conference considered and agreed with the suggestions of the Informal Meeting. The specific topics and activities of the next conference will be determined after discussion among the representatives of the parliamentary members, relevant government officials in China and ROK, and the PMO. Possible activities for the next conference may include the following:

- Agree and announce the official establishment of the Regular Meetings of the Parliament Members between China and Republic of Korea;
- Share the latest findings and information from scientific research and investigations on the status and trend of the marine and coastal environment in the Yellow Sea;
- Discuss and agree on possible co-operative actions to address the environmental problems in the Yellow Sea; and
- Explore the possibility of expanding the membership of the Regular Meetings to other countries and/or stakeholders.

4. Summary of the Meeting Outcomes

4.1 Common Understandings

4.1.1 It was recognised by all the participants, including the members of parliamentary organisations, the National People’s Congress of China and the National Assembly of the Republic of Korea, that:

- The Yellow Sea, situated between the Chinese coast and the Korean Peninsula, is an important global resource that provides food, resources and livelihood to the people in the region;

- The marine and coastal ecosystems in the Yellow Sea are under threat from serious environmental degradation, due to expansion of population and economic activities in the region;
- To address environmental problems in the Yellow Sea area, China and Republic of Korea have continued extensive co-operation in marine environment monitoring and research. It is still necessary to reduce environmental stress on the Yellow Sea ecosystem, and to initiate necessary actions leading to the long-term sustainability of the resources and environment of the Yellow Sea through continued regional and international co-operative actions. In this context, the UNDP/GEF Project on “Reducing Environmental Stress in the Yellow Sea Large Marine Ecosystem (YSLME)” is providing an effective mechanism to enhance the co-operative efforts;
- Successful co-operation in protection of marine environment and sustainable use of marine and coastal resources in the Yellow Sea requires the active participation of all stakeholders who are utilising resources, and/or have responsibilities in managing the marine environment in the Yellow Sea;
- The National People’s Congress of China and the National Assembly of Republic of Korea, as one of the key stakeholders of the Yellow Sea, play important roles in exercising their authority in approving national and international regulations, national infrastructure, and budget;
- It is essential to strengthen closer co-operation between the parliaments in order to protect the marine environment and promote the sustainable use of marine resources in the Yellow Sea, for the mutual benefits of our people and for long-term friendly relations amongst the countries in the region; and
- It is vital to involve and encourage the participation of a broader range of stakeholder groups so that all their expertise and experiences will be effectively utilised to design and formulate appropriate policies and programmes for conservation of the Yellow Sea’s ecosystem.

4.2 Common Goals

- 4.2.1 All participants confirmed their common goals in protecting the marine environment and sustainable use of marine and coastal resources, in order to:
- Increase the scientific knowledge and understanding about the status and trend of the marine ecosystem in the Yellow Sea;
 - Reduce the adverse environmental threats and impacts of development activities on the marine environment in the Yellow Sea;
 - Promote the environmentally-sustainable management and use of the marine and coastal resources in the Yellow Sea
 - Initiate necessary actions leading to the long-term sustainability of the resources and environment of the Yellow Sea; and
 - Foster mutual knowledge and understanding between the peoples of their common environment.

4.3 Regional Co-operation

4.3.1 To achieve the common goals, participants agreed to seek closer regional co-operation to:

- Encourage wider and more active participation of all stakeholders in the protection of marine environment and sustainable use of marine and coastal resources, and enhance national co-ordination amongst all relevant ministries, local governments, research institutions and non-governmental organizations (NGOs);
- Harmonise, as necessary and appropriate, the relevant national legislations concerning protection of marine environment, and consider strengthening national institutional arrangements to meet the requirements of marine environment protection and sustainable use of marine resources, following the recommendations in the Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis and Strategic Action Programme that will be prepared by the YSLME project;
- Suggest to consider initiating preparation, negotiation and finally, approval, by the legislative bodies in the participating countries, a regional agreement for protecting the marine environment in the Yellow Sea;
- Initiate and maintain regional mechanisms to ensure and enhance effective dialogue and co-operation for protecting the marine environment and sustainable use of marine and coastal resources in the Yellow Sea; and
- Secure finances for sustainable protection of the marine environment and managing the marine and coastal resources in the Yellow Sea.

4.4 Framework for Regional Co-operation

4.4.1 All participants expressed their confidence that the partnership among the parliamentary functions in the participating countries will be greatly strengthened if regular dialogue and consultations are organised and maintained, in particular through holding regular conferences between the National People's Congress of China, the National Assembly of Republic of Korea and other relevant countries at a later stage.

4.4.2 Participants also recognised the importance of wider participation of all stakeholders in the protection of the marine environment in the Yellow Sea, and will engage themselves in promoting participation of all levels of governmental agencies, legislative bodies, relevant institutions and local communities.

4.4.3 Finally, all participants agreed to commit their efforts to make the Yellow Sea,

a sea of friendship,
a sea of co-operation,
a sea of peace, and
a sea of prosperity.

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