



Left: Xiamen is granted the PEMSEA Leadership Award during the 2019 PNLG Forum on Nov 1. Central and right: Foreign delegates listen to speeches at the forum. LIN YUYANG / FOR CHINA DAILY



# Maritime sustainable development in focus

Around 300,000 people expected to attend weeklong event in Xiamen, Fujian province

By SOPHIE HE in Xiamen  
sophiehe@chinadailyhk.com

Government officials and renowned scholars gathered in Fujian's coastal city of Xiamen on Nov 1 to attend the 2019 Xiamen International Ocean Forum: the first Forum on Building a Maritime Community with a Shared Future, where they shared views about the maritime community with a shared future.

The forum also kick-started the 2019 World Ocean Week in Xiamen. It runs through Nov 7 and features the theme "Blue Partnership for a Maritime Community with a Shared Future".

More than 60 supporting activities are scheduled for the weeklong event, which is expected to attract more than 300,000 visitors.

About 500 guests from 40 countries and regions attended the 2019 Xiamen International Ocean Forum, a reflection of China's positive attitude and action toward the 2030 sustainable development agenda.

At the opening ceremony of the forum, Xiamen's vice-mayor Zhang Yigong welcomed all guests to the forum and World Ocean Week. He said Xiamen has been a portal for opening-up and international cooperation since ancient times.

Xiamen has been dedicated to developing ocean-related technologies and emerging industries. It spares no effort to secure the city's leading position in developing an ocean economy in Fujian and the



Li Dejin, vice-governor of Fujian province, speaks at the opening ceremony of the 2019 World Ocean Week. LIN YUYANG / FOR CHINA DAILY

entire nation, according to the vice-mayor.

"The ocean is an important platform for us to cooperate in aspects of economics, trade, science and technology. Different governments, enterprises, scientific research institutions and communities are working together to cope with challenges, to share marine development achievements and to conduct policy communications," Wang Hong, chief of the State Oceanic Administration of China, told the forum.

In April, the central authorities proposed an important initiative of building a "maritime community with a shared future". This is fundamental to China's participation in global ocean governance and the core of China's deepening blue partnership with coastal countries, Wang said.

He stressed that China's development cannot be separated from the world. The Chinese government has always valued and appreciated the "blue partners"

who respect each other, trust each other and help each other.

"We advocate sharing benefits as well as responsibilities under the principles of mutual respect and mutual assistance. We are willing to share China's solutions and contribute China's strength in blue growth, marine science and technology, personnel training, marine international cooperation and global ocean governance," Wang said.

In Grenada, fishing has been important for local food security since

precolonial times, according to Alvin Martin Da Breo, the country's minister of climate resilience, environment, forestry, fisheries, disaster management and information.

He told the forum that Grenada is a small archipelago state located in the southeastern Caribbean with a landmass of roughly 348 square kilometers. However, Grenada has an exclusive economic zone of 24,153 sq km, which is about 70 times that.

"We therefore are exploring the opportunities provided for the sus-

tainable exploitation of our marine resources," said the minister. He added that fisheries are economically important to Grenada, representing approximately 1.5 percent of the nation's gross domestic product.

As Grenada strives to develop a "blue economy", it is eager to learn from the experience of its Chinese counterparts in the management and economic development of fisheries and other marine sectors.

"I applaud China's leadership in helping developing countries achieve their full potential.

"This is further evidenced by the fact that last week, Grenada hosted the China-Caribbean conference on the Belt and Road Initiative," the minister said.

Li Dejin, vice-governor of Fujian province, said the forum aims to apply the concepts of a maritime community with a shared future and the BRI.

Li said: "We need to coordinate the developments between land and sea to achieve a harmonious and win-win situation between human and ocean."

The vice-governor said he was glad to see so many experts and scholars gather in Xiamen. Their dialogue on advanced marine development will be beneficial to the development of marine-related emerging industries.

He said that Fujian is a coastal province, so "the ocean sits in the heart of Fujian's history, present and future and is closely connected to Fujian's economic, social and cultural developments".

"Now, marine development has ushered in a new period of strategic opportunities. With unprecedented openness, Fujian will embrace these new opportunities and embark on a new voyage of harmonious development between human and ocean," Li said.



From left: Experts deliver speeches at the 2019 Xiamen International Ocean Forum. LIN YUYANG / FOR CHINA DAILY



## Local governments urged to unite in defense of marine environment

By SOPHIE HE in Xiamen

The annual forum of the PEMSEA Network of Local Governments for Sustainable Coastal Development was held in Xiamen on Nov 1, alongside the 2019 World Ocean Week.

The PEMSEA, also known as Partnerships in Environmental Management for the Seas of East Asia, is a non-governmental organization working to foster healthy and resilient oceans, coasts, communities and economies across the region.

The PEMSEA Network of Local Governments, or PNLG, holds annual forums in different member cities each year.

This year, more than 150 delegates from China, Cambodia, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Thailand, Timor Leste, Vietnam and Myanmar participated in the forum. There they exchanged experiences through case studies, meetings as well as a field trip.

Hong Huasheng, chief scientist of the Coastal and Ocean Management Institute of Xiamen University, told

Xiamen is a reflection of China's green development practice. There are more success stories like Xiamen in China..."

Zhang Yigong, vice-mayor of Xiamen

the forum how Xiamen has achieved sustainable development through integrated coastal management.

In view of Xiamen's dedication to promoting integrated coastal management, Chua Thia-Eng, chair emeritus of East Asian Seas Partnership Council, awarded the city the PEMSEA Leadership Award.

Zhang Yigong, vice-mayor of Xiamen, received the award on behalf of the city government.

He said: "Xiamen is a reflection of China's green development prac-

tice. There are more success stories like Xiamen in China and within the seas of East Asia."

Pan Shijian, chair emeritus of the PNLG and former vice-mayor of Xiamen, read out the PNLG Initiative on Jointly Preventing and Treating Marine Debris.

With marine debris becoming a global problem and posing a severe threat to the marine environment, Pan said the PNLG recognizes the importance of strengthening marine debris prevention and treatment.

Due to the connectivity of the ocean and the fact that coastal cities are usually located near estuaries — the last barrier for debris to enter the sea — delegates urged all coastal cities to play their part in preventing and treating marine debris.

PNLG called on members to cooperate in different areas to support marine waste prevention.

The forum also called for more coastal cities to join the PNLG network, share their experiences, strengthen cooperation and work together for the realization of a cleaner and healthier ocean.

## Conservation key to financial security

By SOPHIE HE in Xiamen

Governments of various countries and regions should make joint efforts to improve the marine environment to realize sustainable development, experts said at the 2019 Xiamen International Ocean Forum on Nov 1.

Zhang Haiwen, director-general of the China Institute for Marine Affairs of the Ministry of Natural Resources, told the forum that oceans are facing challenges from humans, micro-plastic waste and excessive exploitation. This includes coastal zones which have destroyed the ecosystem and overfishing, which has exhausted resources.

She said oceans have been considered a huge challenge to humanity as they can bring disasters, and people still don't know much about the ocean.

Zhang said that oceans need to be jointly governed in order to achieve sustainable development.

She noted that China has participated in global ocean governance and contributed its wisdom and proposals. For the current global ocean governance system, China advocates reforms, instead of replacing it with a brand new one.

The Chinese government recently allocated 5.69 billion yuan (\$808.55 million) to support the restoration of ecologically damaged coastal wetlands, coastlines and islands in 18 coastal cities. A total of 3,600 hectares of wetlands and 150 kilometers of coastlines have been restored.

Xiamen has established an evaluation mechanism for marine ecological conservation. It has acted on a series of measures, including the protection of fishery resources and conservation of island ecosystems, according to Zhang.

Aimee Gonzales, executive direct-



Zhang Haiwen (top), director-general of the China Institute for Marine Affairs of the Ministry of Natural Resources, and Noraini Binti Roslan (above), mayor of Subang Jaya in Malaysia, talk with the media during the Xiamen International Ocean Forum. LIN YUYANG / FOR CHINA DAILY

or of the Partnerships in Environmental Management for the Seas of East Asia (PEMSEA), said that in terms of the "blue economy" solutions and partnerships in East Asia, international common laws have been introduced and "we have the

building blocks for the blue economy".

"The idea of the blue economy is to ensure that whatever production we do, taking resources from the ocean is done in a sustainable way," Gonzales said.

The PEMSEA is a regional mechanism to collaborate on coastal and ocean governance. That means, "to look at the laws and implement how we can deliver integrated coastal management," she explained.

Noraini Binti Roslan, president of PEMSEA Network of Local Governments for Sustainable Coastal Development and mayor of Subang Jaya in Malaysia, said that in the fields of ocean development, management and planning, Malaysia has been in communication with the Xiamen city government, and scientists all over China.

"Xiamen in particular and the Chinese government in general, together with Malaysia should go deeper in marine debris and pollution control and in aquaculture control of fisheries so that we can enjoy cleaner ocean areas," Roslan said.