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Balance between Development and the Seas



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The world celebrates the World Ocean Day on 8th June every year with hundreds of events, in recognition of the alarming state of marine environments across the globe. This is of great relevance for Southeast Asia, where the marine environment faces threats ranging from plastic pollution, unsustainable exploitation of marine resources to illegal, unregulated and unreported (IUU) fishing. The Philippine government ordered in April the temporary closure of Boracay, a tourist island south of Manila, due to the environmental damage caused by unsustainable practices in the tourist industry. Boracay is not an isolated case in the region as Maya Bay of Thailand will also be shut down from June to September this year. They highlight the perennial dilemma between economic development and environmental sustainability facing developing countries like many in Southeast Asia.

The seas are of vital importance for states and people in Southeast Asia, and the region cannot afford to let the marine environment continue to degrade. People rely on the seas to pro-

vide food and jobs. Fish and seafood account for more than half of the animal protein in-take of Indonesian and Vietnamese people. According to the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), fisheries including the primary and secondary sectors employ around two million people in Thailand. Marine economy accounts for a substantive percentage in the national gross domestic product (GDP) of Southeast Asian countries. FAO statistics show that capture fisheries and aquaculture contribute around 25 percent of Vietnam's GDP, 18 percent of that of Myanmar. Tourism accounts for over 8 percent of the Philippines' GDP, with coastal and marine tourism as a key component, according to the Philippine government.

The consequences of unsustainable growth in the marine economic sectors like fisheries, aquaculture, tourism and resource extraction industries are increasingly seen. A majority of fishing grounds in the region are overfished, with many facing a high risk of depletion. IUU threatens the livelihoods of

local fishing communities in the long term as the US and European Union which are the primary export markets for Southeast Asian fisheries are tightening regulation on the traceability of fish imports. Unchecked expansion of tourism has caused serious environmental challenges, from discharge of untreated sewage by restaurants and hotels to mounting plastic garbage on the beaches and in the waters. In particular, tackling plastic pollution has become an urgent issue, with four regional countries identified to be among the top marine polluters in the world, namely Indonesia, the Philippines, Thailand and Vietnam. Apart from polluting the marine environment, excessive plastic waste increases the concerns for food safety and public health as toxic chemicals released during plastic dissolution contaminate fish and seafood supply.

Curbing marine environmental degradation has therefore become an important agenda for national governments in Southeast Asia. While contingent measures like the two aforementioned cases re-

flect the recognition of the necessity and urgency to tackle coastal and marine pollution, transformation of unsustainable models of economic development as well as people's lifestyle is necessary for ensuring effective and sustainable protection of the marine environment. Although temporary shutdown of tourist islands provides a breathing space for the seas to recover, it disrupts the livelihood of local communities relying on tourism, which may give rise to opposition to government decisions aimed at strengthening marine environmental protection. Supportive policies and frameworks are needed to mitigate the potential negative impacts of the policies on the communities and individuals concerned and support them to prepare for the changes, such as offering incentives to encourage sustainable practices in sea-based industries and providing related assistance and services like new vocational training.

In addition, changes in people's mindsets and conducts are essential, like refraining from using sin-

gle-use plastics and minimising adverse impacts on marine habitats. Efforts should be made to increase public awareness and provide guidance for environmentally sustainable behaviours, for which a multi-stakeholder approach that involves not only national and local governments but also societal actors like civil society groups and non-governmental organisations will be helpful.

Unregulated emission of pollutants, excessive exploitation of marine resources including fish stocks, and other unsustainable aspects of human development have far exceeded the carrying capacity of the seas. As a consequence, we are seeing heavy marine environmental pollution in many parts of the region, which in turn adversely affects the development and well-being of states and people. A balance therefore needs to be restored between economic growth and our seas by promoting responsible production and consumption, as is prescribed in Goal 12 of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG).

Suggested Readings

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CLIMATE CHANGE, ENVIRONMENTAL SECURITY AND NATURAL DISASTERS

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Climate change might be making allergy season longer, experts say

Today
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More than 160,000 people, organisations pledged to tackle climate change: Masagos

Vanessa Lim, Channel NewsAsia
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Britain's strategy to meet climate change targets not sufficient - lawmakers

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Singapore set for third straight haze-free year

Audrey Tan and Luke Anthony Tan, The Straits Times
19 May 2018

China's Xi urges end to waste and irrational consumption in eco push - Xinhua

David Stanway and William Maclean, Reuters
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Terrorism, climate change top agenda for G20 in Buenos Aires

AFP, The Nation
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The carbon footprint of global tourism

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Anthropogenic warming exacerbates European soil moisture droughts

L. Samaniego et al., Nature Climate Change, Vol. 8, 2018

EVENTS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

5th International Marine Conservation Congress

22–29 June 2018
Kuching, Malaysia

Asia-Pacific Climate Week

11–13 July 2018
Singapore



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ENERGY SECURITY

NEWS AND COMMENTARIES

Geopolitical implications of U.S. oil and gas in the global market'

Samantha Gross, Brookings
22 May 2018

Call for nuclear revival in power-hungry Philippines

Reuters, The Straits Times
24 May 2018

Uganda signs agreement with China on nuclear energy

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OPEC's relevance grows despite shale

Matt Piotrowski, The Fuse
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U.S. gas to China: Positive energy for bilateral relations

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Philippines to import diesel from Russia

Nestor Corrales, East Asia Forum
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World Nuclear Exhibition 2018

26-28 June 2018
Paris, France

6th International Conference on Nuclear and Renewable Energy Resources

30 September- 3 October 2018
Jeju, South Korea

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The future of nuclear power in China

Mark Hibbs,
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International Atomic Energy Agency,
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The Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity (TEEB) for agriculture & food: Scientific and economic foundations report

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Let them eat kale: The misplaced narrative of food access

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From raising crop yields to lowering diabetes: Start-ups get funding boost at Future Food Asia Awards

Gary Scattergood,
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An integrated system for real-time monitoring of rice production and climate risks

Eisen Bernardo,
Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR)
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China is breeding chickens on the blockchain to improve food safety

Jiefei Liu,
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Whitehorse company pitches off-grid hydroponics to improve Northern food security

Jackie McKay,
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1 June 2018

Pollinating insects: Commission proposes actions to stop their decline

European Commission
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Qatar 'stronger than ever' one year after blockade: Deputy PM

Nyshka Chandran,
CNBC News
3 June 2018

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45th Session of the Committee on World Food Security (CFS 45)

15-20 October 2018
Rome, Italy

3rd International Conference On Agricultural Engineering and Food Security

12-13 November 2018
Frankfurt, Germany



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HEALTH SECURITY



Courtesy of Flickr account of CDC Global and used under a creative commons license.

Theresa May under pressure over childhood obesity as MPs back crackdown on junk food ads

Lizzy Buchan, The Independent
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Communicating risk in public health emergencies

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Integrating neglected tropical diseases into global health and development

World Health Organisation, Geneva: World Health Organisation
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Taiwan's exclusion from the WHA is a detriment to global health

Lee Bo-yi, Chang Ting-yu and Wu Yeh-min, The News Lens
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Here's what happens when a Catholic hospital won't try to save you

Molly Redden, Huffington Post
25 May 2018

Opinion: Beware of fake news on global health

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23 May 2018

A surprising reason to worry about low birth rates

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Why hospitals in Asia need to be 'climate smart'

Hannah Fernandez, Eco-Business
24 May 2018

The only Northern Irish woman with a choice about abortion? Arlene Foster

Stella Creasy, The Guardian
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7th International Public Health Conference

28-30 August 2018
Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

8th International Conference on Health, Well-being and Society

20-21 September 2018
London, UK



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HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE AND DISASTER RELIEF

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'They're killing them': Burundians flee in fear of president's power play

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War crimes court due to start probes in Central African Republic - UN

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Why we should be cautious about the 'game-changer' Ebola vaccine

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Africa's next civil war could be in Cameroon

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Misery as strategy: The human cost of conflict

Caroline Flintoft,
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The forgotten dead of Puerto Rico

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The Washington Post
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Hudaïda: Feared coalition attack 'will destroy Yemen's lifeline'

Al Jazeera News
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At least 7 dead, 296 injured in Guatemala volcano eruption

The Straits Times
4 June 2018

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Containing the shock waves from Venezuela

Caroline Flintoft,
Report no. 65,
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The signal code: Ethical obligations for humanitarian information activities

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Humanitarian Congress

4-5 October 2018
Berlin, Germany

Global Humanitarian Technology Conference

18-21 October 2018
San Jose, USA

TRANSNATIONAL CRIME



Courtesy of Flickr account of USASOC News Service and used under a creative commons license.

Why some countries are more corrupt than others

Delisa Shannon and Noah Friedman,
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Mediterranean migrant arrivals reach 27,482 in 2018; Deaths reach 636

International Organization for Migration (IOM)
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How Malaysian voters defied the odds and ousted corruption

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Smuggled timber, trafficked eels: Agencies ramp up fight against environmental crime

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The surprising link between climate change and human trafficking

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Fewer than 1% of more than 28,000 irregular asylum seekers have

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Peter Zimonjic,
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Thailand seeks ASEAN-wide cooperation on illegal fishing policies

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Rise in drug arrests among teenagers prompts 'county lines' concerns

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Combating wildlife trafficking: Opportunities exist to improve the use of financial reward

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2018 International Academic Conference on Organized Crime and Gender

11-13 July 2018
Florence, Italy

Tackling Modern Slavery & Human Trafficking: Working in Partnership to Disrupt Criminal Networks, Improve Identification and Deliver Sustained Support for Victims

6 September 2018
London, United Kingdom

WATER SECURITY



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Climate-resilient water management: An operational framework from South Asia

A.J. James, Aditya V. Bahadur and Shilp Verma,
Action on Climate Today (ACT) Learning Paper, Oxford Policy Management
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Special report: Al Ain farm tackles food and water security by pairing fish with watermelons

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Balochistan approves cloud seeding project for drought-hit areas

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FIU and UNESCO tackle global water issues

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Hydropower in Cambodia could threaten food security of region

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Drought in Hong Kong: city's dry spell continues but experts say high temperatures and low reservoir levels don't tell full story

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1st International Conference on Water Security

17–20 June 2018
Toronto, Canada

Water Security and Climate Change Conference 2018

3-7 December 2018
Nairobi, Kenya



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