



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



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**Yellow Sea Saved? China and R. Korea Agree Joint Strategy to Protect
Yellow Sea**

XIAN, CHINA, 19 NOVEMBER, 2009. The future of the Yellow Sea now looks brighter after the Peoples Republic of China and Republic of Korea reached agreement on the environmental management needed to revitalise the sea as detailed in the Strategic Action Programme (SAP) developed under the UNDP/GEF Yellow Sea Large Marine Ecosystem Project (YSLME).

The Yellow Sea situated between the Korean peninsular and mainland China, is one of the most impacted of the all the regional seas, yet it supports highly productive fisheries, a booming aquaculture industry, provides livelihoods and a healthy environment for one of the highest coastal population densities in the world and its vast wetlands sustain immense biodiversity and huge flocks of migratory birds. But growing population and explosive development has exerted increasing pressure on the sea through overexploitation of marine resources, pollution and habitat loss. Fishermen have begun complaining about the declining catches, and the changes brought about by the vast swarms of jellyfish, that cause fishing nets to break and even the capsizing of a trawler. According to the United Nation’s Large Marine Ecosystem Report in 2009 more than 60% of Yellow Sea fish stocks are either overexploited or collapsing, the WWF reports more than 40% of intertidal wetlands have been reclaimed, and the YSLME’s project’s “Environmental status reports” suggested that

the major pollutants including inorganic nitrogen, heavy metals and oils are degrading coastal environments, impacting fisheries production and damaging the ecosystem.

To combat these growing threats, the YSLME project has worked with scientists and governments from both countries to agree the management measures needed to sustain the sea and help its recovery; these include a 30% reduction in fishing effort (cutting both numbers of fishing boat and engine size), a 10% cut in point source pollution every 5 years and strict control of new reclamation. The goal of the SAP is to protect the “ecosystem carrying capacity” of the Yellow Sea so that the ecosystem services, such as provision of food, nutrient absorption, and carbon sequestration, continue to support the vibrant coastal communities. The governments have already shown their commitment to implement major management actions, with several hundred million US dollars being spent every year to tackle the environmental problems.

Mr. Zhanhai ZHANG, Director-General, Department of International Cooperation, State Oceanic Administration, China and Mr. Sang-Pyo SUH, Director, Economic Organization & Environment Division, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, ROK signed the statement of mutual agreement to approve the SAP at an official signing ceremony attended by representatives from United Nations Development Programme and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) participating as observers. The signing marks the beginning of the implementation of the agreed actions and during the next phase of the project DPRK wishes to participate as a full partner.

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