

FOREWORD

This publication is the result of the Anambas Expedition carried out around the Indonesian islands of Anambas in March 2002 aboard the Indonesian research vessel Baruna Jaya VIII. The Expedition was the result of the agreement attached in the Workshop on Managing Potential Conflicts in the South China Sea. The Anambas Biodiversity Expedition was participated by 29 experts and researchers from Malaysia, The Philippines, China, Chinese-Taipei, Thailand, Vietnam, Singapore and Indonesia.

The Expedition was the first of its kind, organized voluntarily by the participating authorities in the Workshop on Managing Potential Conflicts in the South China Sea. The expenses for the Anambas Expedition were contributed voluntarily by the participating authorities.

The Expedition was intended to identify the biodiversity resources in the South China Sea with the hope and expectation that the knowledge and the findings of the Expedition would contribute significantly to the knowledge of biodiversity and living resources in the South China Sea. It was also hoped that the joint expedition would promote co-operation in the area, regardless of disputes that may exist in or regarding the specific area of the South China Sea.

The South China Sea workshop Process on Managing Potential Conflicts in the area started in 1990. So far, it has held 13 yearly workshops in Indonesia, participated by all the littoral South China Sea authorities, namely Brunei Darussalam, Indonesia, Malaysia, The Philippines, China, Chinese-Taipei, Thailand, Vietnam, Singapore, Cambodia and Laos. In addition, numerous meetings of the various TWGs and GEMs (Group of Experts Meetings) have also been organized and held in various locations and cities around the South China Sea. Depending on the topics being discussed, some experts from outside of the region had also been invited from time to time as resource persons. From its inception until 2001, the process had been supported by Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) through the South China Sea Informal Working Group at the University of British Columbia in Vancouver. After that, the process had been carried out with the supports of the authorities around the South China Sea.

The aims of the workshop processes were to promote dialog among the participating authorities, to develop confidence building process, and to devise co-operative efforts among the participants. It was understood that to avoid confrontation, the authorities in the area must learn to co-operate, devising co-operative efforts in which every authority could participate; and an inclusive approach was regarded as one of the ways of converting potential conflicts from confrontation to co-operation that would benefit everyone.

The Workshop Process is informal in nature and attended by the participants in their personal capacities. The Workshop has established five Technical Working Groups and several Experts Groups Meetings, thus expanding the networks of co-operative efforts in the South China Sea area in various fields. The five Technical Working Groups (TWGs) are: the TWG on marine Scientific Research, the TWG on Resources Assessment, the TWG on Marine Environmental Protection, the TWG on Safety of Navigation, Shipping and communication and the TWG on Legal Matters. Each of the TWG has devised a number of co-operative efforts in their respective fields. The Anambas Biodiversity Expedition was one of the co-operative efforts designed by the TWG on Marine Scientific Research.

The Anambas Expedition is expected to be followed by the Palawan Expedition in 2004. It is hoped that the Expedition will augment scientific knowledge of the biodiversity in the area as well as foster the co-operative spirits in the region. It is also hoped that co-operative efforts which have been or are being designed by other TWGs would also be implemented in due course.

The Centre for Southeast Asian Studies in Jakarta which has initiated the idea and convened the various Workshops, TWGs and Expert Group Meetings, in co-operation with the various authorities and institutions around the South China Sea area, is proud to welcome this publication. As the Director of the Centre, I would like to express my appreciation to all the experts and researchers who have contributed significantly to this Expedition, as well as to all authorities and institutions that have contributed to this effort.

I hope that this publication will be useful to all well-intentioned people and authorities.

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Director

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