

CLIMATE CHANGE,  
ENVIRONMENTAL  
SECURITY AND  
NATURAL DISASTERS  
page 3

ENERGY SECURITY  
page 3

FOOD SECURITY  
page 4

HEALTH SECURITY  
page 5

PEACE, HUMAN  
SECURITY AND  
DEVELOPMENT  
page 5

TRANSNATIONAL  
CRIME  
page 6

HUMANITARIAN  
ASSISTANCE AND  
DISASTER RELIEF  
page 7

WATER SECURITY  
page 8

## Protecting the Seas for Sustainable Ocean-Based Economies



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The United Nations has concluded the first-ever global Ocean Conference from 5 - 9 June 2017 by highlighting the world leaders' commitment to sustainable ocean-based economies and poverty eradication. The summit was galvanized to support political commitments for the implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14: Life Below Water. More than 6000 participants representing state agencies, environmental activists, corporations, artists, and philanthropists took part in the meeting. The forum wrapped up with the adoption of a 14-point Call for Action which briefly outlines the strategies and priorities of the state agencies in the sustainable governance of blue waters. As part of the conference outcomes, the UN has developed a registry for more than 1,300 voluntary pledges from diverse actors who would like to contribute to the collective efforts in protecting the seas.

### Southeast Asia and its marine environment

As global attention is garnered toward ocean issues, it is timely for Southeast Asian states to re-centre the marine protection discourse in the regional policy debates. The Southeast Asian seas are a body of water connecting nations and providing access to mar-

kets. The sea-lanes also sustain approximately 6.5 million fishers' livelihoods and provide seafood-based proteins for more than 120 million people in the region. However, overfishing, poaching of endangered sea-creatures, climate change, poor governance, and coral reef destruction threaten marine ecosystems and compromise the economic security of people who depend on it.

### South China Sea under threat

An important marine environment under grave threat is the South China Sea. The politically contested area accounts for 12% of the total global fishing catch and it provides more than four million jobs for the local fishers from China, the Philippines, and Malaysia. However, scientific evidence assembled by researchers from the University of British Columbia and the University of Wollongong show the deterioration of coral reefs at a rate of 16% in the last decade alone. The coral reef degradation is coupled with the loss of ocean biodiversity that is predicted to reach 59% by 2045.

Diverse regional mechanisms are already in place to stop the adverse impacts of marine environmental degradation. For example, Partnerships in Environmental Management of Seas in

East Asia, the ASEAN Working Group on Coastal and Marine Environment, the ASEAN Maritime Forum, the UN-led Coordinating Body on the Seas of East Asia, and the Coral Triangle Initiative. The most important issue is, therefore, to strengthen the existing mechanisms with new and bolder commitments while ensuring prompt implementation of policy commitments.

### Cooperation between Science and Policy

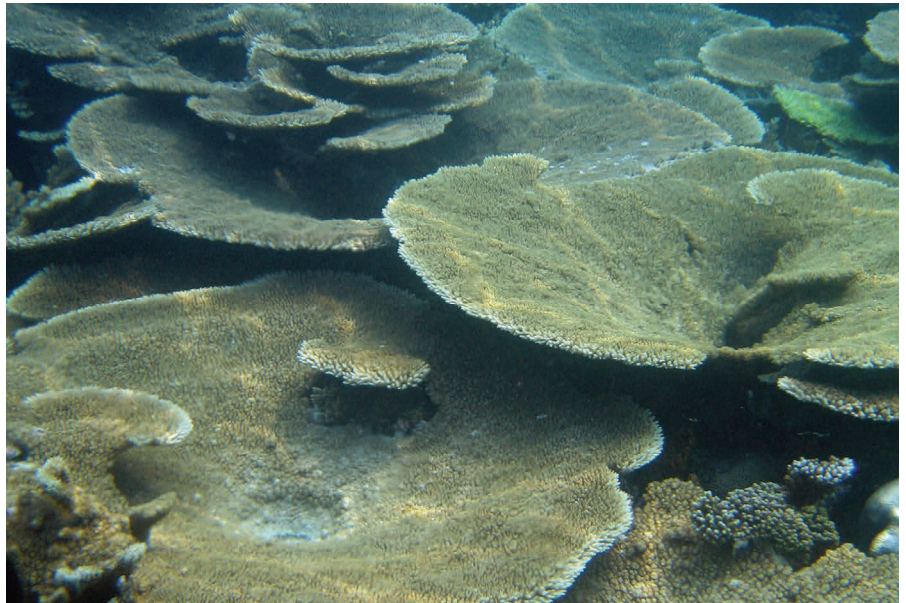
Another significant problem is the gap between the role of science and policy making. Evidence-based policy making is important yet difficult to accomplish when scientists fail to understand how the policy process works. Policy makers usually face a situation where they are forced to make decisions quickly based on limited information. Paul Carney, a Professor of Politics, based at the University of Stirling, explains that scientists' responsibility is to produce knowledge and to present it in a form that is intelligible to policy makers. He further states that sci-

entists need to focus on long-term strategies by forming a coalition of like-minded experts. Thus, they will be able to collectively look for opportunities to influence and raise attention to evidence-based solutions.

### Way Forward

Finally, protecting the seas can only be attained by ensuring the

sustainability of small scale fishers' livelihoods. A sound marine protection policy has to take both environmental and social justice notions into consideration to create a win-win solution for diverse actors and interests.



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### Suggested Readings:

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## CLIMATE CHANGE, ENVIRONMENTAL SECURITY AND NATURAL DISASTERS

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#### US vows commitment to Arctic climate change research

*The Straits Times*  
9 May 2017

#### Climate change: China vows to defend Paris agreement

*BBC*  
9 May 2017

#### Rising seas set to double coastal flooding by 2050: Study

*The Straits Times*  
19 May 2017

#### Great Barrier Reef 2050 plan no longer achievable due to climate change, experts say

*Michael Slezak,*  
*The Guardian*  
24 May 2017

#### As US weighs climate pullout, UN wants world to be more ambitious

*Channel News Asia,*  
*AFP*  
31 May 2017

#### Finding oil palm alternative could be key to haze issue

*Jose Montesclaros,*  
*Channel NewsAsia*  
31 May 2017

#### Marine environmental governance in the South China Sea

*Rini Astuti,*  
*RSIS Commentaries*  
5 June 2017



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#### Global trends in climate change legislation and litigation

*Michal Nachmany,*  
*Sam Fankhauser, Joana Setzer,*  
*Grantham Research Institute on Climate Change and the Environment*  
2017

#### Global Catastrophic Risks 2017

*Global Challenges Foundation*  
2017

### EVENTS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

#### Biodiversity and Health in the Face of Climate Change

27–29 June 2017  
Bonn, Germany

#### 2017 Environment and Emergencies Forum

26–28 September 2017  
Nairobi, Kenya

## ENERGY SECURITY

### NEWS AND COMMENTARIES

#### China hails breakthrough in tapping gas from 'ice'

*The Straits Times*  
20 May 2017

#### Renewable energy growth continues, powering jobs especially in Asia

*The Japan Times*  
25 May 2017

#### A tiny island off Singapore may hold answers to energy's future

*Today*  
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#### Fragile future for US nuclear power

*Matt McGrath,*  
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*Merrit Kennedy,*  
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*David Brown,*  
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## EVENTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

**Lecture by Prof Edward Waller on Nuclear Safety-Security Interface and Emergency Preparedness and Response**  
19 June 2017  
Singapore

**World Nuclear Association Symposium 2017**  
13–15 September 2017  
London, UK

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**The transformation of ASEAN: Energy security implications**  
*Andrew Pickford,*  
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**Global energy infrastructure performance index report**  
*World Economic Forum*  
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## FOOD SECURITY



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**Building a climate-resilient city: Agriculture and food security**  
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*Evonne Yiu,*  
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*Rep. Gabriel H. Bordado Jr,*  
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5 June 2017

**Qatar row: Economic impact threatens food, flights and football**  
*Simon Atkinson,*  
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*Collins Nnabuike,*  
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**New partnership pursues sustainable rice**  
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**Call for papers: Seventh International Conference on Food Studies**  
26 June 2017  
Rome, Italy

**World Agricultural Forum 2017**  
6–7 July 2017  
Singapore

## HEALTH SECURITY



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### NEWS & COMMENTARIES

#### Brazil calls off Zika emergency

AFP, Channel NewsAsia  
12 May 2017

#### New report recommends priority actions to achieve global health security

National Academies of Science, Engineering, and Medicine, EurekaAlert!  
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#### After Ebola and Zika, most countries still not prepared for a pandemic

The World Bank  
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#### Trump budget's cuts to international aid put global health security at risk

Dr Ana Rita Sousa Sequeira, The Conversation  
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#### Improving health security in the Pacific

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1 June 2017

#### How hospitals can avoid security pitfalls in health apps

Bill Siwicki, Healthcare IT News  
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#### Universal healthcare changes: Public participation needed

Post reporters, Bangkok Post  
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#### Task force tells Congress health IT security is in critical condition

Sean Gallagher, Ars Technica  
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2017

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2017

### EVENTS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

#### Workshop: Using M&E to Improve the Effectiveness of Global Health Programs

28 July 2017  
Washington D.C., USA

#### Triangle Global Health 2017 Annual Conference—Making a Difference: Global Health and Its Social, Economic, and Political Impact

28 September 2017  
North Carolina, USA

## PEACE, HUMAN SECURITY AND DEVELOPMENT

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#### Double bombing hits Thailand's violence-plagued south

Al Jazeera  
9 May 2017

#### Sri Lanka police blamed for not stopping attacks on Muslims

Associated Press (syndicated by Washington Post)  
24 May 2017



Courtesy of Flickr account of U.S. Pacific Fleet and used under a creative commons license.

### Diplomats in Sri Lanka urge government action against anti-Muslim attacks

Reuters  
1 June 2017

### Marawi Crisis Worries ASEAN Neighbours

Straits Times (reprinting Jakarta Post, The Nation, and Philippine Daily Enquirer)  
3 June 2017

### Marawi siege may pose 'decades of problems' for ASEAN

The Straits Times  
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### Death toll In Kabul Blast surpasses 150, Afghan president Says

NPR  
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### Nagorno-Karabakh's gathering war clouds

International Crisis Group  
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Sarah Smith,  
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### International Conference on Peace and Conflict Management

25 August 2017  
Colombo, Sri Lanka

### 19th International Conference on Humanitarian Rights and International Criminal Law

23–24 November 2017  
Havana, Cuba

## TRANSNATIONAL CRIME



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### Study links deforestation to drug trafficking in Central America

Arizona State University  
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### Cuba warns of human trafficking risk due to frosty US ties

Channel NewsAsia  
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### Thai-Japanese pact to fight illegal fishing traceability will help consumers choose

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### Tackling transnational crime

Mazwin Nik Anis,  
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Mondaq  
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Arab Times  
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### Study: Airports still weak link in preventing illegal animal trafficking

Lewis King,  
Air Cargo World  
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### Spain's top anti-corruption prosecutor quits over Panama link

Sam Jones,  
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### Evidential issues in trafficking in persons cases: Case digest

United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime  
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### Vulnerability and exploitation along the Balkan route: Identifying victims of human trafficking in Serbia

Fafo Research Foundation  
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**ACAMS moneylaund-  
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al International AML &  
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9–11 April 2018  
Hollywood, USA

**20th International  
Conference on Ter-  
rorism and Transna-  
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21–22 May 2018  
Berlin, Germany

## HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE AND DISASTER RELIEF



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## SELECTED PUBLICATIONS

**Lives on hold: Making  
sure no child is left  
behind in Myanmar**

UNICEF  
2017

**The call to action on  
protection from gender-  
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emergencies**

Women's Refugee  
Commission  
2017

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**UN Women launches  
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*The New York Times*  
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**Indonesia, flood  
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AHA Centre  
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**Authorities and military  
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Sankalp Gurjar,  
*The Diplomat*  
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*Start Network*  
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**InterAction Forum 2017**

20–22 June 2017  
Washington D.C., USA

**AidEx Dhaka**

19–20 July 2017  
Radisson Blu,  
Bangladesh

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#### Water scarcity contributed to terrorism – NSA, DSS

*Eniola Akinkuotu and  
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#### Regional cooperation ‘key’ to Mekong projects

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#### Public sector to cut water and electricity usage by 2020

*Melissa Lin,  
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#### Hydropower dams, water diversion threaten Mekong Delta's water security

*Vietnam.net*  
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#### Water is ‘catalyst’ for cooperation, not conflict, UN chief tells Security Council

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*Claudia W. Sadoff, Edoardo Borgomeo, and Dominick de Waal,  
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#### Working with the market: Economic instruments to support investment in green stormwater infrastructure

*Seth Brown and Carrie San-neman,  
Storm and Stream Solutions, LLC (S3) and  
Willamette Partnership*  
2017

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**International WCRP/IOC Conference: Regional Sea Level Changes and Coastal Impacts**  
10–14 July 2017  
New York, USA

**Water Security and Climate Change Conference**  
18–21 September 2017  
Cologne, Germany

