

PRESS RELEASE

**The fourth Ocean Dialogue: “Combating Plastic Pollution in the South China Sea”
Ha Noi, 16 Jan 2019**

In the morning of 16 January 2019, the Diplomatic Academy of Vietnam (DAV), the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung (KAS) and the Australian Embassy in Vietnam co-hosted the fourth Ocean Dialogue entitled “**Combating Plastic Pollution in the South China Sea**”. Approximately 100 participants representing over 20 foreign missions in Hanoi, relevant Vietnamese ministries and government agencies, scholars, and media reporters attended the Dialogue.

Four policy analysts from Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines and Viet Nam joined in a panel discussion to exchange views on a wide range of issues related to plastic pollution in the South China Sea. The conference offered a unique opportunity for experts and participants to share in-depth analyses of the plastic pollution situation in the world’s oceans and particularly in the South China Sea, its negative impacts to regional development and security at various levels, countries’ maritime environment policies and the way the region should foster stronger cooperation to combat this trans-national issue of concern.

Speaking at the opening remark on behalf of organizers, Ms. Stacey Nation (Political Counsellor, Embassy of Australia in Viet Nam) said: “Combating plastic pollution in the world’s oceans is one of the greatest environmental challenges of our time. Inaction will have devastating consequences for marine wildlife, ecosystems and human health. The Australian Government is committed to assisting our partners to understand and address this threat which is why we are so pleased to be supporting and participating in today’s forum.”

Mr. Peter Girke, Resident Representative of KAS Vietnam, stressed the importance of reducing the use of plastics. “Single-use plastic items such as straws, plates, cutlery or cotton buds make up 70% of marine litter. A change in our every-day choices can reduce the demand for plastic tremendously.” He called on our governments to make concrete policies to protect our environment.

Commented on the issue prior to the Dialogue, Dr. Le Hai Binh, Vice President of the DAV pointed to the fact that the South China Sea is one of the seas with the highest levels of plastic pollution in the world. He mentioned the recent East Asia Summit Leaders’ Statement on Combatting Marine Plastic Debris in November 2018, calling for further regional cooperation and collaboration at all levels to reduce and eliminate marine plastic debris. “The Vietnamese government launched a campaign to combat plastic waste in 2018 and will continue to work towards this end in the coming years”, he added, referring to Official Letter number 5539 dated 10 October 2018 of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment.



Australian Embassy

Vietnam



This event is the fourth in the Ocean Dialogue series. The three previous dialogues were held in 2017 and 2018, respectively covering the topics of ocean governance, fishery cooperation and international law of the sea. All three events had special focus on the South China Sea.