

Programme

26th February 2010

Morning: Welcome introduction and overview of meeting objectives

- 09:00-09:10 Brief introduction to the programme
09:10-09:20 Opening remarks
09:20-09:30 Brief review of achievements of the previous two workshops and future expectations
09:30-10:00 *Tea and coffee break*
10:00-12:00 Climate change observations: current and historical, lessons for smart adaptation
12:00-13:30 *Lunch*
Afternoon (1): Session II
13:30-15:00 Integrated flood management in a changing climate
15:00-15:30 *Tea and coffee break*
Afternoon (2): Session III
15:30-17:00 Climate change and river ecology
19:00-21:00 *Welcoming reception*

27th February 2010

Morning (1): Session IV

- 08:30-10:00 Water security: challenges and opportunities from climate change
10:00-10:30 *Tea and coffee break*
Morning (2): Session V
10:30-12:00 Regional adaptation to maximize benefits
12:00-13:30 *Lunch*
Afternoon: Field visit
19:00-21:00 *Dinner*

28th February 2010

Morning: Breakout group discussion, summarize state of the art knowledge and identify future research

- 08:30-09:00 Outline for breakout discussion
09:00-10:30 Discussion in 3 groups (flood, river ecology and water supply)
10:30-10:45 *Tea and coffee break*
10:45-11:45 Discussion in 3 groups (flood, river ecology and water supply)
11:45-12:15 Plenary - summary of discussions
12:15-13:30 *Lunch*
Afternoon: Discussion of future research collaboration under Mekong Basin Research Network
13:30-15:30 Discussion
15:30-16:00 Close of workshop
16:00-17:00 Take force meeting

Organizers

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CLIMATE CHANGE RESPONSES FOR ASIAN INTERNATIONAL RIVERS:

OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES



BEIJING
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The objective of **Mekong Basin Research Network (MBRN)** is to provide science based knowledge for cooperative/collaborative development and management of water resources in the Mekong River Basin through the creation of an international research network that provides knowledge and tools to assist policy making in the Mekong River Basin.



MBRN addresses the issues relevant to the Sustainable Water Resources Management of the basin, promoting basin-wide cooperation towards poverty alleviation ensuring environment security.

**MEKONG BASIN
RESEARCH NETWORK
MEKONGNET.ORG**

The goal of MBRN: to provide a forum where specialists, researchers, practitioners and the basin inhabitants can get together, discuss, debate, improve and agree on the state of water in the Mekong Basin and the best ways to use its resources optimally, preserving environment and protecting fragile ecologies.



MBRN is a forum for individuals although it is supported by a number of academic organizations, governments, regional and international organizations. It is a forum where everyone can interact without national, regional or any kind of organizational affiliations.

Participation

Your active participation, through suggestions and provision of knowledge, is crucial for the success of MBRN activities. UNU hosts a web site for active interaction on topics related to MBRN. Please join, and make your inputs, suggestions and insights at the project web site.

MekongNet.org for more details and registering

Introduction

Backed by observations and model studies, IPC assessment report in 2007 convincingly argued that climate change is indeed taking place, and that it is caused by anthropogenic activities. Two years later, the message delivered at the 15th Conference Of Parties (COP15) in Copenhagen is that the rate of climate change is faster than the initial predictions, the effects of already accumulated CO2 in atmosphere will persist for a long time and assessment of impacts and adapting to them is a priority for all regions.

Mekong Basin, extending from snow fed mountains in China to sprawling tropical delta in Southern Viet Nam, is composed of a diverse array of ecosystems and climates. Effects of climate change on basin wide environment and hydrologic regime and its impacts on fisheries, agriculture, hydropower generation and the social well-being of people living in the basin is a concern to all riparian countries as well as to the global community.

ISSUE

Recent developments in basin scale modeling has provided an improved understanding of basin wide water cycle and valuable information to decision makers on water management and disaster risk reduction. Now these methodologies need to be expanded not only to assess future scenarios under climate change, but also to develop appropriate adaptation strategies. Climate change adaptation is generally treated as local actions to be taken to mitigate adverse impacts on livelihoods and environment. However, climate change need not be limited to those negative impacts only. Change also provides opportunities for positive development. Feasible regional adaptation strategies need to be investigated that would maximize basin wide benefits while minimizing adverse impacts.

For example, while excessive temperature rise would decrease rice yield, simulation studies also show increasing rice production potential under warmer climate in some parts of the basin. How can these benefits be maximized? Historical evidence suggests that Mekong basin has flourished under a warming climate around the 8th century. How can these historical lessons be used today?

Clearly, the impacts of climate change on the complex ecology of the basin are diverse and interrelated, and require further investigation to elucidate them and determine the effects on the population, livelihoods and the economy of the region. By improving the knowledge on the potential impacts, it will be possible to increase the ability to not only improve capacity of people of the region to confront such impacts but also develop regional strategies with multilateral agreements by riparian countries to maximize potential benefits of the basin.

BACKGROUND

The riparian countries need to establish a range of actions to enable them to cope with these changes. Yet, many efforts in the downstream are disconnected from those in the upstream and vice versa. Further gaps exist in these efforts preventing information from flowing up to government decision makers, down to affected communities, and across national boundaries. In order to address these gaps, the United Nations University in Collaboration with Tsinghua University, Asian International Rivers Center of Yunan University and Asian Institute of Technology organized a series of discussion workshops which paved the way to two transboundary symposiums (The International Symposium on 'Role of water sciences in Transboundary River Basin Management', in Ubon Ratchathani, Thailand <http://www.mekongnet.org/Ubon#Preface> and the International Symposium on transboundary Water and Environment Security for Asian International Rivers in Yunan Dali city, China. <http://www.mekongnet.org/Dali#Background>) and the establishment of a Mekong Basin Research Network to discuss the water management issues by researchers and practitioners in all riparian countries to exchange information freely and learn from each other as an open forum. An executive committee of the network has identified 'Water Security', 'Flood Disaster Reduction' and 'River Ecology' as the three main areas that need to be focused in the coming years.

Under the umbrella of Mekong Basin Research Network, United Nations University, Tsinghua University and Yunan University organize this academic symposium and workshop to identify and update the base of existing knowledge, build on shared experiences, and produce concrete actions to improve regional cooperation in the Mekong Basin.

WORKSHOP STRUCTURE

The workshop is designed to achieve two outcomes. **The first is on identifying strategies for maximizing positive impacts while minimizing the negative impacts of climate change on different aspect of Mekong River.** Considering the uncertainty of future forecasts, the workshop will address impacts under general warming conditions. **Two main sessions** will be organized under this objective as:

1.Observation of the climate change impact on Mekong River Basin
2.Adaptation to climate change at regional scale
Research of Mekong River Basin at different geographic areas will be linked to form a regional strategy.

The second objective is to discuss the current status of the areas identified by Mekong Basin Research Network

1. Water Security
2. Flood Disaster Reduction
3. River Ecology

About 35 academics and practitioners will be invited for the discussions.

