



Mekong River Commission (MRC)

The MRC is an intergovernmental organisation established in 1995 to promote and co-ordinate sustainable management and development of water and related resources for its member countries' mutual benefit and the people's well-being by implementing strategic programmes and activities and providing scientific information and policy advice. The MRC member countries are Cambodia, Lao PDR, Thailand and Viet Nam. The MRC is promoting a programme of regional cooperation for sustainable water resources development at basin scale in areas of basin planning, water utilisation, environment, flood management and mitigation, fisheries, agriculture, irrigation and forestry, hydro-power, navigation and capacity building. (For more information, see the website www.mrcmekong.org).

Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ) GmbH

The Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ) GmbH is an international cooperation enterprise for sustainable development with worldwide operations. It provides viable, forward-looking solutions for political economic, ecological and social development in a globalised world. GTZ promotes complex reforms and change processes, often working under difficult conditions. Its corporate objective is to improve people's living conditions on a sustainable basis. (For more information, see the website: www.gtz.de).

Asian Disaster Preparedness Centre (ADPC)

ADPC is an independent, non-profit, inter-government foundation based in Thailand. Established in 1986, ADPC is the leading regional resource centre dedicated to creating safer communities and sustainable development through disaster reduction. ADPC's programs demonstrate a wide diversity in application, address all types of disasters, and cover all aspects of the disaster management spectrum from prevention and mitigation, through preparedness and response, to damage and needs assessment, rehabilitation and reconstruction. ADPC's programs are implemented by four teams: Disaster Management Systems (DMS), Urban Disaster Risk Management, Climate Risk Management and Public Health and Emergencies. (For more information, see the website: www.adpc.net).



Regional Workshop on Innovative Approaches to Flood Risk Reduction in the Mekong Basin

17-19 October 2007
Khon Kaen, Thailand



Flood Risk Reduction in the Mekong Basin

The annual Mekong floods are part of the lives of the communities living in the lower Mekong Basin Countries. Running 4,800 km from its headwaters on the Tibetan Plateau through Yunnan Province of China, Burma, Thailand, Lao PDR, Cambodia, and Vietnam, Mekong, the 10th longest river in the world, plays host to rich variety of fish and marine life to the inhabitants of its Delta. Additionally, the annual floods of Mekong carry nourished top soil from the upstream and deposit them in the downstream areas, creating rich fertile flood plains for the approximately 53 million people, populating the lower Mekong Basin countries namely Cambodia, Lao PDR, Thailand and Vietnam.

Conversely, the recurring annual floods of Mekong also cause devastating socio-economic and human losses. Recent extreme floods in the Mekong basin were observed in the year 2000, 2001 and 2002. 2000 floods in particular cost the lives of more than 800 people, many of them are children, mostly in Cambodia and Vietnam, and the agricultural production in the delta suffered a serious blow, and hundreds of kilometers of roads were damaged or washed away.

Fully recognizing the benefits of the annual floods, the importance of floodplains and the increasing demands of development they are facing, and at the same time taking into account the need for the disruptive nature of floods to be minimized to enable the river basin communities to achieve sustainable development, a range of innovative flood risk reduction and sustainable development programs are being implemented in the countries of the Mekong Basin.

The Flood Management and Mitigation Program (FMMP) of the Mekong River Commission's (MRC) applies the principles of integrated flood risk management to contribute to its objective "people's suffering and economic losses due to floods are prevented, minimized, or mitigated, while the environmental benefits of floods are preserved". The program started in September 2004 and its implementation will continue until 2011. The FMMP comprises of five components:

1. Establishment of a Regional Flood Management and Mitigation Center at Phnom Penh, Cambodia
2. Structural and Flood Proofing Measures
3. Mediation of Trans-boundary Flood Issues
4. Flood Emergency Management Strengthening
5. Land Management.

FMMP's Component 4 on "Flood Emergency Management Strengthening (FEMS)" has four projects (2 completed and two ongoing) implemented by the Asian Disaster Preparedness Center (ADPC), in partnership with Mekong River Commission (MRC). These FMMP Component 4 projects are funded through the "Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ) GmbH" and the European Commission Humanitarian Aid Department (ECHO). The objective of FEMS is to "ensure emergency management systems in the riparian countries are dealing more effectively with Mekong floods". Significant work has been done under the Component 4 of the FFMP in developing and implementing Flood Preparedness Program (FPP), strengthening capacities of national, provincial, district line agencies in integrating FPP priority actions into local development planning, raising public awareness on flood risk reduction, promoting regional knowledge sharing and enhancing trans-boundary emergency cooperation.

In the past decade remarkable initiatives on flood risk reduction have been carried out in the communities at risk by government agencies (e.g. NDMOs, hydromet services, ministry of natural resources, etc.) and other stakeholders, including UN agencies, international and local civil society organisations with the common objectives of enhancing local governments' and communities' capacities and resilience, improving preparedness and mitigating flood risks.

Flood risk reduction is becoming an integral part of the Mekong river basin management, and is contributing to wider goals of poverty reduction and sustainable development and through strategies to reduce vulnerabilities and enhance coping capacities.

The Workshop

The Regional Workshop on Innovative Approaches to Flood Risk Reduction in the Mekong Basin is being jointly organized by MRC and ADPC, as one of the key activities under Component 4 of the FMMP, with funding support for Die Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ) GmbH. The Workshop provides an opportunity for the disaster risk reduction practitioners in the Mekong countries and the wider region to share experiences and lessons learned, identify emerging trends, issues and strategies and develop partnerships to promote flood risk reduction. The Workshop will have participants from the national and local level planning and development agencies to enhance opportunities to integrate flood risk reduction approaches into the development process at different levels of the Mekong Basin countries.

The Workshop will contribute to enhance information exchange between the FMMP components and programs implemented by other stakeholders on flood risk reduction, thus promoting networking and building partnerships.

As a further contribution to knowledge sharing, the Workshop will launch the publication series "Safer Communities", a series of case studies that illustrate good practices of disaster preparedness and mitigation undertaken by the government and non-government agencies with the goal of reducing the vulnerabilities and risks on the communities living in areas prone to floods and other natural disasters. The first four case studies capture the experience of FEMS project in Cambodia and Vietnam while subsequent case studies would reflect work of other partners.

Workshop Themes

With the overall framework of "Innovative Approaches to Flood Risk Reduction in the Mekong Basin" The Workshop will focus on the following themes:

1. Development and implementation of Flood Preparedness Program at provincial, district and commune levels
2. Promoting community awareness and strengthening community resilience
3. Improving access to early warning
4. Implementing children and women focused programs for flood preparedness and risk reduction
5. Integration of flood risk reduction into national, sectoral and local development plans and programs
6. Capacity strengthening of disaster management authorities at national, provincial and district levels
7. Province-to-province trans-boundary cooperation in emergency management
8. Partnerships and networking for Flood Risk Reduction

Workshop Objectives

The Workshop intends to:

- Share local and regional knowledge, experiences and innovations in flood risk reduction approaches;
- Provide a platform to foster new regional partnerships as well as strengthen the existing ones to promote flood risk reduction in the region

Participants

Participants will be primarily from the National Mekong Committees (NMCs), the National Disaster Management Offices, the line agencies, planning agencies and official from Provincial and District Disaster Management Committees, Red Cross Societies, NGOs working in flood risk reduction and environmental degradation, universities and officials from UN Agencies, development Banks, donor agencies. Selected participants drawn from NMCs, line agencies, local authorities from the riparian countries will be funded by the project. A limited number of seats on a first-com-first served basis are available for other stakeholders.

Presentations

Presentations will be made primarily by the commune, district, provincial and national agencies, NMCs, ADPC and MRC project staff involved in the FMMP, particularly Component 4 as well as by government agencies, Red Cross, NGOs, UN Agencies working on the subject. Those interested in making presentation are requested to write to the organizer by 10 september 2007, with the intended title and a brief description of the subject to be covered. Opportunities are also available for poster presentations.

While presentation will primarily focus on the Mekong basin experience, a limited number of presentations on related experience from other basins and regions is encouraged.

Information

Venue and Duration

The Workshop will be held in Khon Kaen, Thailand from 17-19 October 2007. Venue of the Workshop will be announced separately.

Photo Exhibit

A photo exhibition will be held concurrent with the workshop. The photos should depict flood risk reduction works done by your organization or in your locality. You may bring promotional materials, posters, booklets, brochures and publication on the said subject for display. All delegates who wish to bring materials for the exhibit should advise the workshop organizer no later than 17 September 2007.

Language Requirement

As the Workshop will be conducted in English, it is essential that delegates are fully conversant in English.

For further inquiries on the Workshop, please visit: <http://www.adpc.net/regionalworkshop.asp> and contact: E-mail: regionalworkshop@gmail.com

For more information on FEMS please contact:

Mr. Thanongdeth Insisiengmay, ADPC Program Manager

MRC's Regional Flood Management and Mitigation Centre (RFMMC)
364 Monivong Blvd. Phnom Penh, Cambodia
Tel.: 855-23 726 622, Fax.: 855-23 726 633
E-mail: thanongdeth@adpc.net