

Session 2
MRC

Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development, 19-21 May 2014, Pattaya, Thailand

Director Pich Dun, Mekong River Commission Secretariat

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen

The world came together in the Millennium Summit in 2000 committing to a global partnership to reduce extreme poverty through the achievement of the eight Millennium Development Goals, or MDGs. A truly admirable effort has been ensuring that great progress towards the goals have been achieved in the past decade and a half.

We are now at the end of the time set for the MDGs, and are preparing to take stock of the achievements made. At the same time we are preparing for the future and beyond the MDGs. The post-2015 development agenda needs to build on the achievements and address the weaknesses in the previous effort. One such weakness, identified by many, was the lack of concrete, measurable indicators for the environmental goal. This needs to be addressed in the Sustainable Development Goals.

In preparation of the Second MRC Summit, held in Ho Chi Minh City, Viet Nam, on the 5 April 2014, and international conference was convened by the Mekong River Commission under the theme of Cooperation for Water, Energy and Food Security in Transboundary Basins under Changing Climate. The two-day International Conference, held by the Mekong River Commission (MRC), focused on the areas of climate change adaptation, sustainable development and benefits of cooperation. Over 300 International water management experts from all over the world, representing 20 River basin organisations and over 10 international organisations met to share experiences and discuss the issues under the themes of the Conference.

The conclusion of the international conference were summarised in a series of recommendations, specifically addressing; Climate change adaptation in a transboundary context, Sustainable development, and the Benefits of cooperation. It is the second set of recommendations which I wish to bring to this meeting's attention. The conference recognised the importance of the nexus approach in addressing water, food and energy security, and went on to say, and I quote:

"While the nexus approach is important for the development of targets and goals in the post-2015 agenda, these targets are more likely to be reached through a dedicated goal on water. There is a risk that assuming that 'water is everywhere' leads to 'water being nowhere'. This goal must clearly reflect transboundary surface and groundwater challenges."

I take this opportunity to emphasise that a dedicated Sustainable Development Goal on water would, in the opinion of the expertise gathered at the International Conference, ensure that water is not assumed to be addressed whilst in fact being forgotten. From the perspective of an international river basin organisation such as the Mekong River Commission and the fact that we have over 250 transboundary river basins, inhabited by almost half of the world's population, makes it critical that a dedicated goal on water addressing transboundary water issues (surface and ground water) is elaborated to ensure that development and use of water is contributing to sustainable development.

We hope that participants of this meeting will also see the need for this and join the global effort in ensuring a dedicated Sustainable Development Goal for water.

The full summary of the conference is available on the MRC website, and I have also brought with me hard copies of the summary for those interested. I also invite you all to engage with MRC and other river basin organisations to discuss the importance of water and how the nexus of water, energy and food security can best be addressed locally, regionally and globally.

Thank you for your attention.