



SUB-REGION SYNTHESIS SESSION

Sub-Region Southeast Asia Synthesis Session on Water Scarcity

Date/Time: Wednesday 22nd of May 2024, 14:50 -16:20 (UTC 8:00)

Location: BNDCC 1, MEZZANINE FLOOR, KINTAMANI 6

10TH WORLD WATER FORUM

Session Description:

In the Asia-Pacific, water resources form the basis of agricultural productivity and economic growth. However, the region is currently facing increasing water scarcity driven by population growth, rapid industrialization, urbanization, and climate change. From 1975 to 2010, the population living under high or severe water scarcity increased from 1.1 billion to over 2.6 billion, while those experiencing green-blue water scarcity—where there is insufficient water for both environmental and human needs—rose from 0.2 billion to nearly 1.5 billion.

Agriculture, which accounts for up to 95 percent of the region's freshwater usage, is crucial for Asia's food production but increasingly competes with other sectors for water. This competition is heightened by the region's rapid economic expansion, placing further strain on water systems. Water scarcity issues manifest through insufficient availability, over-utilization, variable supply, and poor water quality, posing significant risks to the region's development.

The FAO estimates a 50 percent increase in global food production is needed by 2050 to meet rising demand, which will intensify the competition for scarce water resources among urban, industrial, and environmental sectors. Agriculture, as the largest consumer of water, is a major driver of water scarcity and significantly impacts water quality.

To effectively address Southeast Asia's escalating water challenges, implementing robust water accounting and allocation systems is crucial. Enhanced water management tools can help quantify water use, identify inefficiencies, and optimize distribution among agricultural, industrial, and urban users. This strategic approach is essential for ensuring sustainable water use and supporting the region's agricultural needs amidst growing scarcity pressures.



This session highlights the need for coordinated actions to ensure water security and sustainability in Southeast Asia's agricultural sector, emphasizing the importance of innovative and scalable solutions.

Key messages:

1. The Asia-Pacific region is experiencing significant water scarcity due to factors like population growth, rapid industrialization, urbanization, and climate change, which is impacting its agricultural productivity and posing risks to economic growth and development.
2. Effective management and strategic allocation of water resources, including the implementation of robust water accounting systems, are crucial to addressing the challenges of water scarcity in Southeast Asia, especially to support agriculture and ensure sustainable water use amidst competing demands from various sectors.

Concrete outcomes:

1. Increase awareness and foster collaboration between diverse stakeholders regarding water scarcity in Southeast Asia.
2. Highlight national successes and challenges in managing water scarcity in Southeast Asia.
3. Foster south-south learning to promote best practices in water management across Southeast Asia, with an emphasis on adaptable strategies suitable for various local contexts.
4. Raise awareness of various national and regional initiatives to tackle water scarcity, emphasizing the value of shared experiences and regional technical cooperation.
5. Advocate for the broader use of water accounting and management tools to help stakeholders across Southeast Asia better understand and address competing water demands.



Detailed Session Plan: 90 minutes / 100-150 people

Timing	Item Description / Role	Speakers
2 mins	Introduction	<i>Master of Ceremony:</i> Mr. Fany Wedahuditama Regional Program Coordinator Global Water Partnership Southeast Asia
5 mins	Opening Remark	Mr. Tim Goodes Executive Director (Basin Plan) Murray Darling Basin Authority, Australia
7 mins	Setting the scene: Water scarcity in Southeast Asia	Ms. Caroline Turner Water Scarcity Programme Manager Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations
5 mins	Introduction to the High-Level Panel	<i>Moderator:</i> Mr. Thanapon Piman Senior Research Fellow Stockholm Environment Institute (SEI)
7 mins	Experience of Indonesia	Mr. Muhammad Irfan Saleh Director of Water Resources BAPPENAS, Indonesia
7 mins	Experience of Lao PDR	Ms. Sengphasouk Xayavong Deputy Director of the Policy Division, DWR DWR, MONRE, Lao PDR
7 mins	Experience of Thailand	Mr. Nitidate Makkate Civil Engineer, Senior Professional Level ONWR, Thailand
7 mins	Reflections on the Panel Discussion from Cambodia	Dr. An Pich Hatda Secretary of State MoWRaM, Cambodia
20 mins	Moderated Q&A	<i>Moderator:</i> Mr. Fany Wedahuditama Regional Program Coordinator Global Water Partnership Southeast Asia
5 mins	Summary & Closing	Lance Gore Principal Water Resources Specialist Agriculture, Food, Nature, and Rural Development Sector Office Asian Development Bank