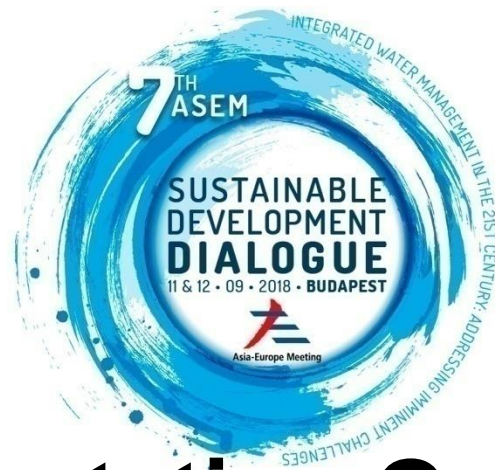


PROMOTING A FAIR BALANCE ON MEKONG'S SHARED WATER



**Te Navuth (Mr.)
Secretary General,
Cambodia National Mekong Committee**

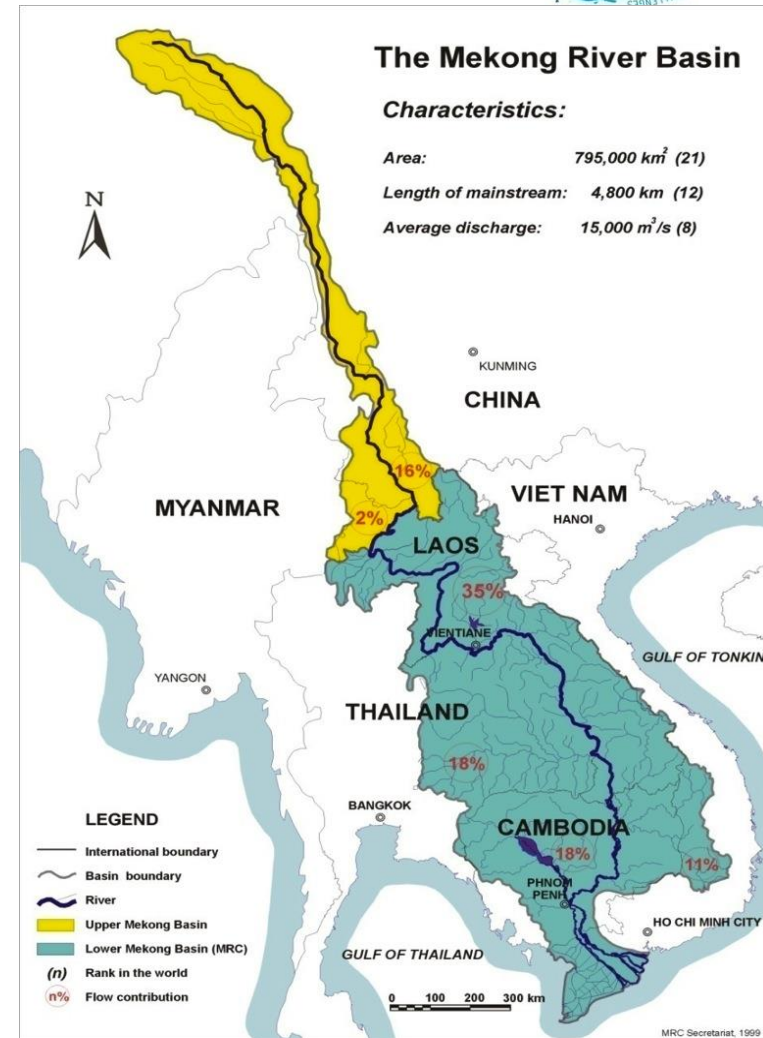


Presentation Outlines

1. Mekong River Basin
2. The 1995 Mekong Agreement
3. Basin Development Opportunities and Challenges
4. MRC Water Utilisation Procedures
5. Basin Development Strategy
6. High Level Political Commitment

1. Mekong River Basin

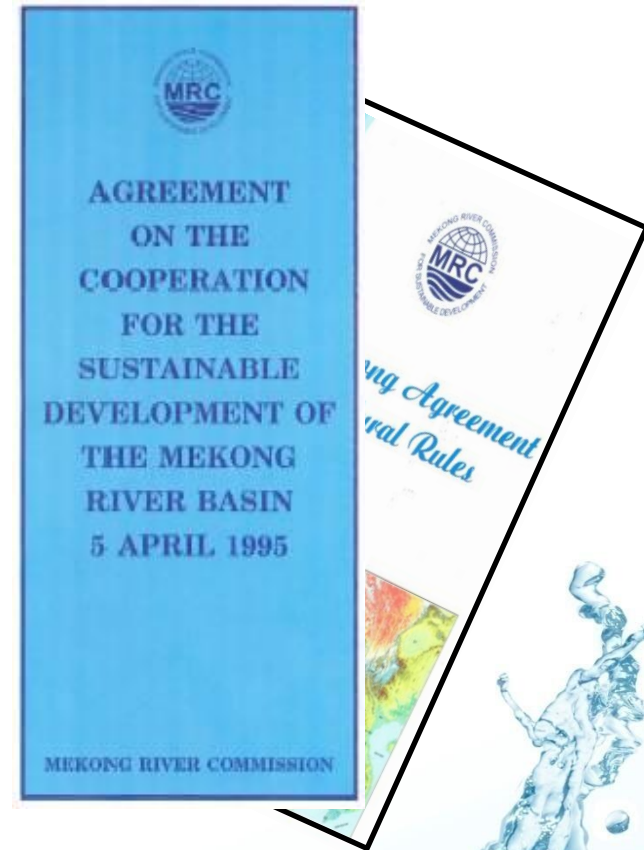
- The largest river in Southeast Asia. It flows through China, Myanmar, Laos, Thailand, Cambodia and Vietnam to the South China Sea.
- Its abundant natural resources support nearly 70 million people living in the basin. Basin population will increase to 100 million by 2040.





2. The 1995 Mekong Agreement (MA)

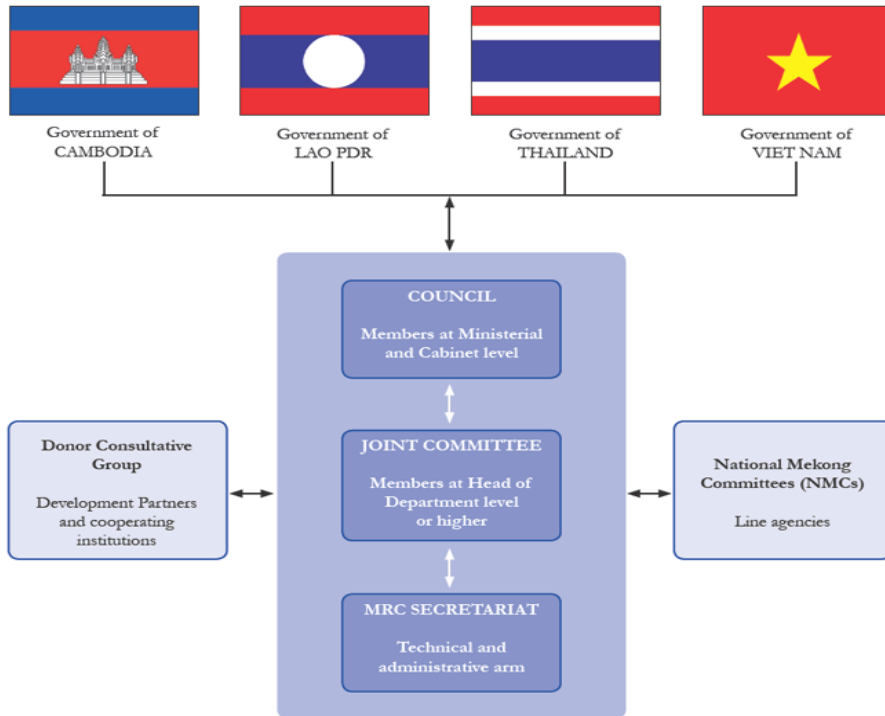
- 1995 MA established to assist Mekong River Commission Member Countries: Cambodia, Laos, Thailand and Vietnam to jointly manage shared water resources in a sustainable and cooperative approach.
- It has clear mandate for basin-wide planning, cooperation, mutual benefits, joint development, etc.
- It enables and requires MRC to adopt and refine Framework Procedures to carry out its work in close cooperation and coordination and has uniquely contributed to the sound and cooperative management of Mekong River Basin.



Mekong River Commission (MRC)



ORGANISATION OF THE MEKONG RIVER COMMISSION



Our Dialogue Partners



China



Republic of the Union of Myanmar

- An *inter-governmental organisation* established by 1995 Mekong Agreement
- For *sustainable development and management* of MRB through dialogue and cooperation
- A *platform for water diplomacy* to support water negotiations among member countries
- Using *scientific knowledge and technical* expertise on water resource management

3. Basin Development Opportunities and Challenges (1)



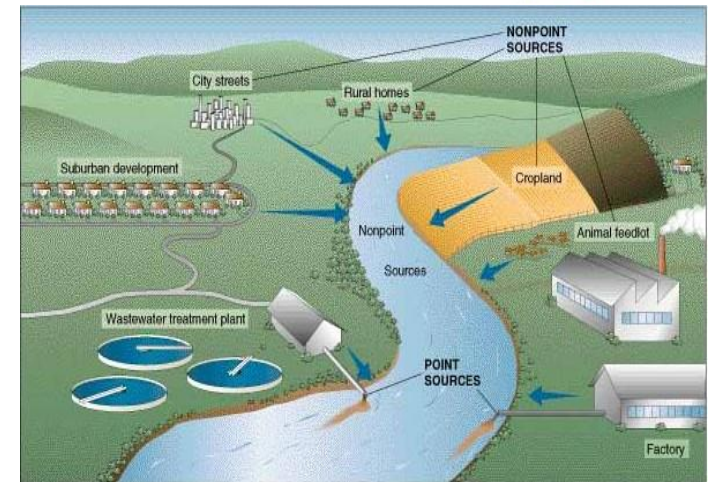
- The Basin offers development opportunities and cooperation for mainstream and tributary water resources (hydropower) development, fisheries, navigation, flood and drought management, tourism and environment including ecosystem management.
- Significant challenges such as rapid economic and population growth, increased demand for water, food and energy, urbanization, industrialization, the loss of environmental assets, wetlands and natural fisheries, deforestation, floods and droughts and risks to biodiversity and people's livelihoods and assets.



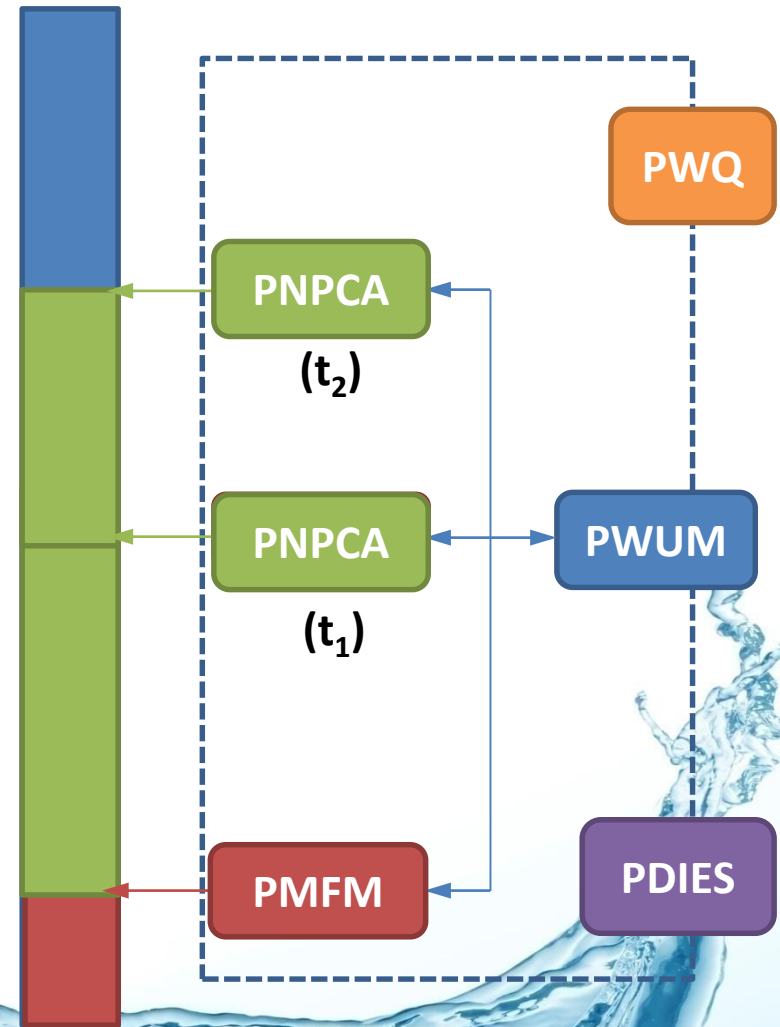
Basin Development Opportunities and Challenges (2)



- The increasing development in the mainstream and tributaries highlight the increasing need for the sustainability and coordinated operational management of tributary and mainstream water resources and hydropower development projects.



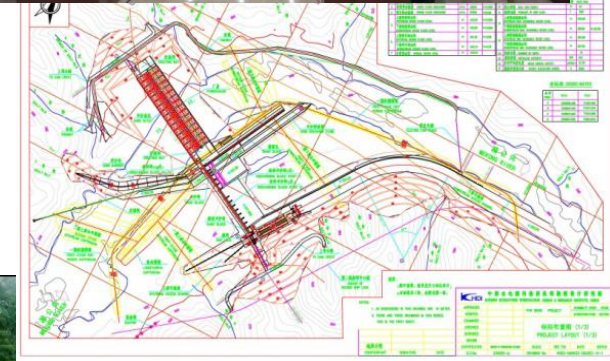
4. MRC Water Utilisation Procedures



Implementation of MRC Procedures



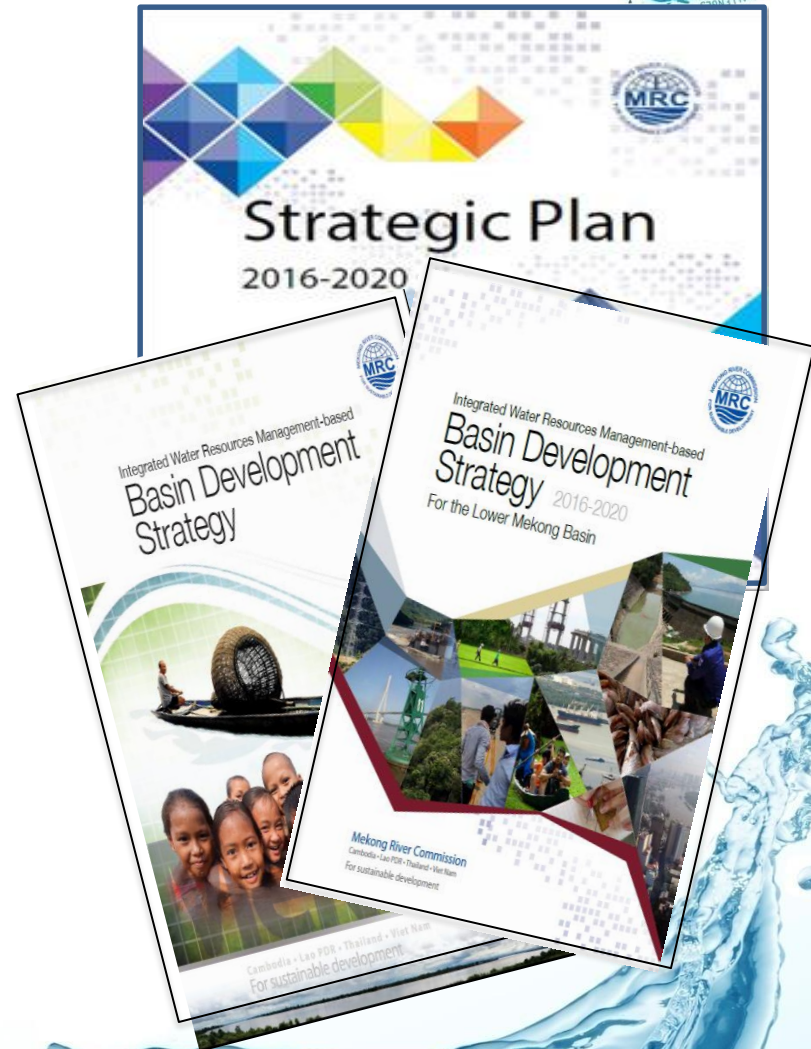
- Lesson learned from the application of the Prior Consultation processes for three proposed mainstream hydropower projects are vital for the management of the MRB, and the agreed Joint Committee's Statement on the Pak Beng hydropower project has shown strong commitment of the member countries.
- MRC is finalising TbEIA and Joint Environmental Monitoring activity for mainstream dams and the updating of the Preliminary Design Guidance for Mainstream Dams and the updating of the Sustainable Hydropower Development Strategy.



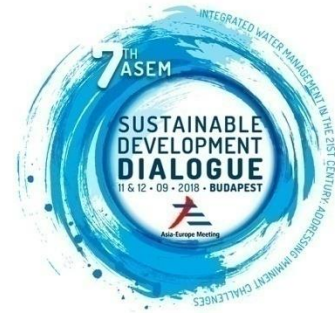


5. Basin Development Strategy

- IWRM-based Basin Development Strategy (BDS) has been developed and updated for every 5 years.
- BDS is a basin-wide strategy and applies to MRC and all relevant actors in Mekong Basin.
- MRC implements BDS through **Strategic Plan** and **National Indicative Plans**.



Medium to long term Strategic Priorities for Basin Development (1)



MRC has two fundamental roles mandated by 1995 Mekong Agreement:

To promote: optimal and sustainable development of the Mekong water and related resources.

To coordinate: the management of the river.

Strategic Priorities for Development : address issues related to promotion.

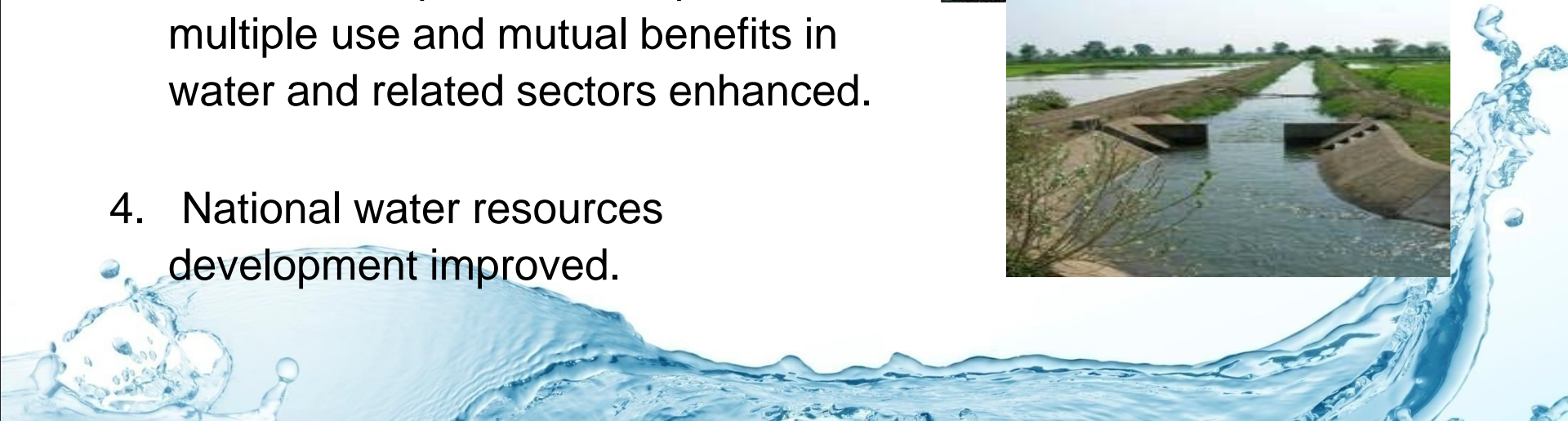
Strategic Priorities for Management: address issues related to coordination.



Strategic Priorities for Basin Development (2)



1. Regional joint cooperation and interdependent development increased.
2. Essential knowledge to address development uncertainty and minimise risks acquired.
3. Basin-wide optimal development for multiple use and mutual benefits in water and related sectors enhanced.
4. National water resources development improved.



Strategic Priorities for Basin Management (3)



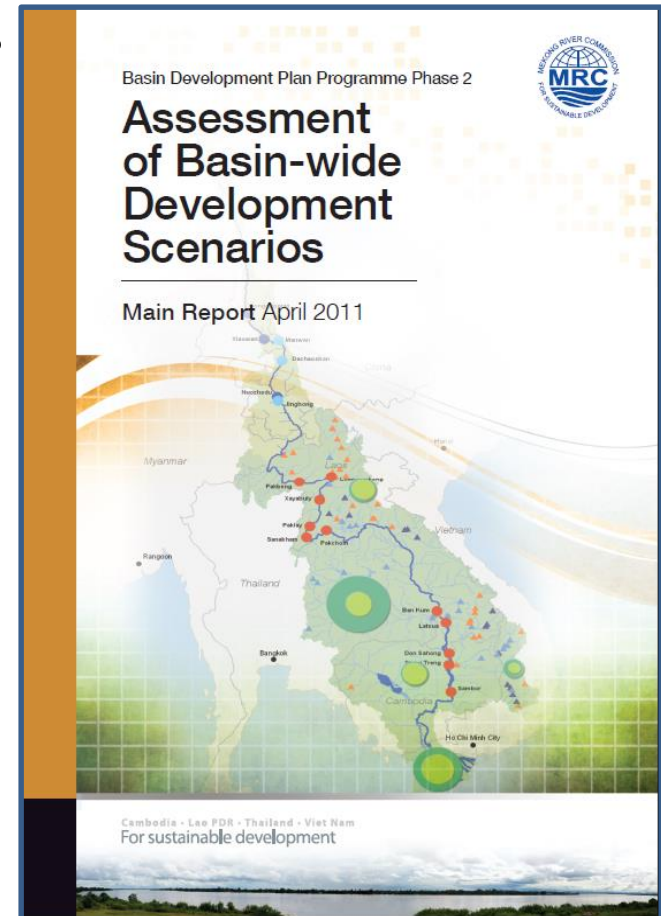
1. Basin management procedures and processes strengthened.
2. Protection and management of mutually agreed environmental assets strengthened.
3. Information management, communications and impact monitoring tools maintained and enhanced.



Key trade-offs to be considered (1)



- Basin-wide development scenarios to identify long term changes and rising social demands and to show where development and management opportunities of Mekong Basin.
- Scenarios will bring with both ‘synergies’ and ‘trade-offs. Anticipated key trade-offs:
 - Balancing economic benefits with social and environmental protection.
 - Balancing mainstream and tributary hydropower development.
 - Balancing the increase of reservoir and natural storage.





Key trade-offs to be considered (2)

- MRC's Study on Sustainable Management and Development of the Mekong River, there are particular trade-offs with other sectors across economic, environmental and social spheres.
- Development (hydropower) could significant impact on in fish yields, soil fertility and farm productivity throughout the lower Mekong countries. Particularly the Cambodia's floodplains and the Tonle Sap system may become most vulnerable.
- Based on the identified long term water related development and management needs, and trade-offs, the following challenges and risks are identified:
 - Harmonization of regional and national planning
 - Joint development and benefit sharing
 - Uncertainties associated with climate change and the impacts arising from outside the water sector
 - Implement basin-wide cooperation mechanisms

6. High Level Political Commitment (1)

In April 2018, the Heads of Government of Cambodia, Laos, Thailand and Viet Nam met in the 3rd MRC Summit in Siem Reap, Cambodia:

- Vital importance of sustainable development and management of water and related resources of the MRB, and reaffirming the highest political commitment to the more effective implementation of the Agreement on Cooperation for the Sustainable Development.
- Climate change, natural disasters, over-population, unsustainable industrialisation, intensive agriculture, irrigation, hydropower, and other development activities in the basin all constitute major challenges to MRB;





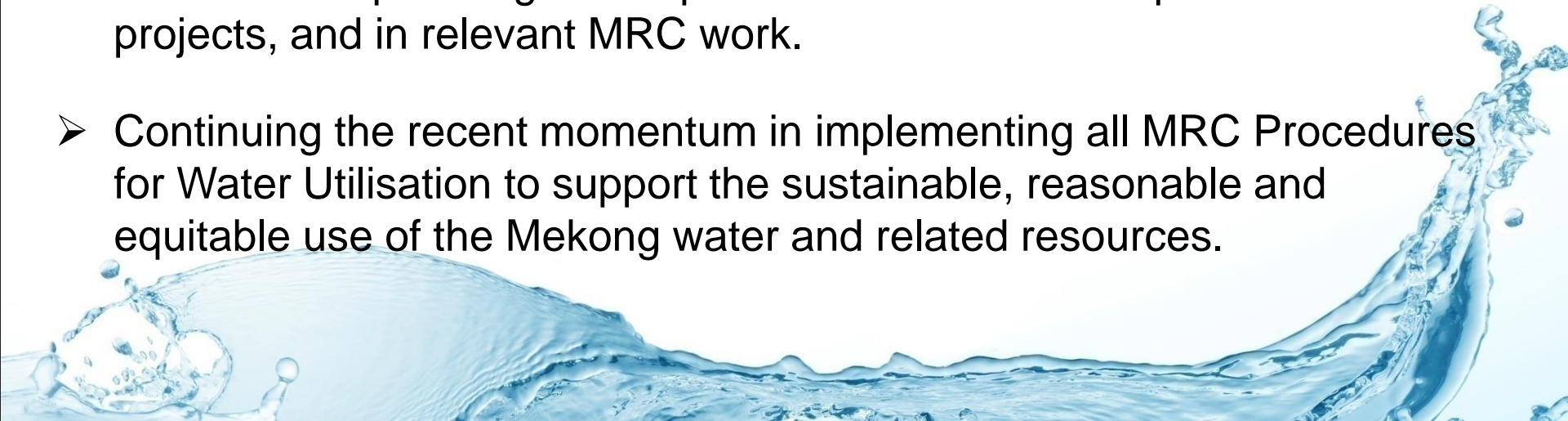
High Level Political Commitment (2)

- MRC's importance as a primary regional cooperation framework and its unique role as regional knowledge hub in enhancing the implementation of a set of Basin-wide strategies, procedures, guidelines, and data and information that fosters peaceful and mutually beneficial cooperation towards the optimal and sustainable development of MRB;
- MRB development has been essential for economic growth of riparian countries, it has also yielded adverse environmental and socio-economic impacts including transboundary impacts that need to be jointly addressed;
- The importance of enhanced joint efforts and partnerships to address Mekong challenges and opportunities to contribute to achieving the relevant SDGs committed by the MRC Member Countries, especially Goal 6 - "Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all."



Priority Areas for Action (1)

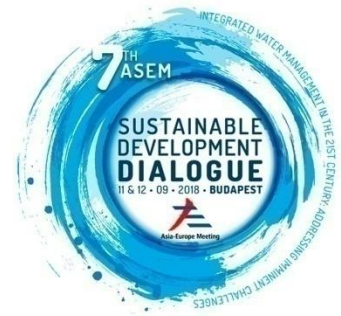
- Optimising the development opportunities and addressing challenges through a basin-wide, integrated and inclusive multi-disciplinary process, notably the implementation of the BDS within the broader context of regional integration, cooperation and socio-economic development.
- Considering the key findings from the Council Study, including at both policy and technical levels in order to capture development opportunities and address trade-offs, benefit sharing, risks as a reference for planning and implementation of national plans and projects, and in relevant MRC work.
- Continuing the recent momentum in implementing all MRC Procedures for Water Utilisation to support the sustainable, reasonable and equitable use of the Mekong water and related resources.





Priority Areas for Action (2)

- Strengthening the MRC basin-wide monitoring networks and forecasting systems for floods and droughts, and the data and information management systems underpinning them.
- Implementing the MRC Basin Development Strategy, Strategic Plan and the National Indicative Plans with greater efforts focusing on joint projects. Further effort on the implementation of the Decentralization Roadmap including the strengthening of decentralised monitoring activities with secured budget.
- Identifying and implementing opportunities for further cooperation with Dialogue Partners, Development Partners, and other partners. Concrete cooperation should be further pursued with ASEAN, Mekong-Lancang Cooperation, and Greater Mekong Sub-region towards a shared future. Regular engagement with relevant stakeholders in the work of the MRC should be continued.



Thank You!

