

**Speech by Dr Armand Evers
First Secretary Integrated Water Resources Management
Royal Netherlands Embassy, Hanoi, Vietnam**

Your Excellency, Dr. Sin Niny, Vice Chairman of the Cambodian National Mekong Committee (CNMC).

Dr. Cogels, CEO Mekong River Commission Secretariat

*Representatives of the National Mekong Committees,
Ladies and Gentlemen,*

I'm happy to see so many people from the MRC member countries, from Asia, Japan, Myanmar, China, and from Europe and the US, and it seems an interesting group to discuss the topics of this flood forum.

For most of you I'm a newcomer in this Regional Mekong environment, although I have been working before in Vietnam within the context of the SESAN-3 and Yali dam.

Since March of this year I have been taken up my assignment as First Secretary Water Management at the Royal Netherlands Embassy in Hanoi.

My predecessor and former colleague in this post has finalised his assignment with the Netherlands Government last year to enter into a function of MRCS, in particularly as CTA for the Flood Management and Mitigation Programme. Thus the RNE and MRCS have created solid conditions for close cooperation and mutual understanding. Therefore I also invite the other funding donors of FMMP to share information, to coordinate all FMMP activities and to work closely together to secure effective and efficient implementation of FMMP.

RNE is interested in the overall development of the FMMP and the present flood forum may provide an insight in the overall process. I may remind you that the reason for investing in the Flood Management and Mitigation programme is the impact to be achieved particularly in the field of poverty alleviation, as a contribution to the UN Millennium Development Goals. At the end of the day flood management is not a stand-alone exercise. I appreciate the short film that will be presented on the MDG's in the Asian Pacific Region during one of the coffee breaks today.

I'm happy to participate in this Fourth Annual Flood Forum, which I consider my introduction to the cooperation with the Mekong River Commission and FMMP in particular. RNE is also keen to be involved in the continued discussion on the viability and sustainability of MRC in cooperation with member countries, donors and other stakeholders.

Back to the business of this Flood Forum. The flood centre is operational during the flood season and during that period staff will be occupied to some extent with operational tasks, but I'm interested in the year round work plan, particularly while a major part of the development activities will have to be scheduled outside of the flood season.

I understand that a "state of the art" flood centre will need time to be developed and that the FMMP team will have to work hard during many years to develop and justify such a status.

During a development process periodical reviews may help and guide the implementation process. I am considering to organise an operational/financial review by the end of 2007, more or less halfway the implementation period. A second appropriate review may be carried out in 2009, before the RFMMC is converted into an independent permanent flood centre.

Annex 2

I appreciate to learn that the construction of the Regional Flood Centre has been initiated. Thinking about the progress made by the FMMP, it may be a proper moment to review the internal lay-out and operational use of the building. Adjustments can be proposed now, so no money will be wasted by adjusting the lay-out to the operational needs in a later stage. FMMP should in my view look into that matter and report on it in the next bi-annual progress report.

I wish you all an effective and useful workshop.