

CLOSING SPEECH

By

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*Excellency,
Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen*

On behalf of the Mekong River Commission I firstly have to apologise that Mr. CEO Dr. Cogels was unable to join us at the end of this forum. He is engaged in a scoping mission with the World Bank and while he was, fortunately, able to find the time to deliver the welcome speech; he had to return to Vientiane this morning.

However I am confident I speak for him when I say that we are all delighted that the 4th Annual Mekong Flood Forum has been such a success.

I would like to take the opportunity to once again thank our generous sponsor, the Royal Government of the Netherlands, for their support for this forum. I am sure they will agree it has been a very productive exercise.

I also thank all the delegates and presenters from our member countries of Cambodia, Lao PDR, Thailand and Vietnam and our dialogue partners, Myanmar and China and all those participants and delegates both the region and further afield who gave up their time to be with us for this forum.

During the two days of this forum we have had the chance to learn a great deal about Improving Flood Forecasting and Early Warning Systems for Flood Management and Mitigation in the Lower Mekong Basin and I am sure that we will all leave with many good ideas and practical solutions as to how we can continue to improve our work in this field.

Forums like this provide an excellent opportunity for people from many countries to share their experiences and it is from these discussions that we can continue to strengthen our regional cooperation and take on board concrete examples of best practices both in our region and those from the international arena.

Our member country delegates have given us a comprehensive picture of last year's flood and their experiences of national flood forecasting and warning and we have also heard about the implementation of real life regional projects.

From our international participants, we were fortunate to share knowledge gained from studies and applications of mathematic model in France, Denmark, The Netherlands, Japan and USA, while we listened with great interest to ideas on the potential for applications of advanced international technologies to improve the real-time and accuracy of flood forecasting in the Mekong River Basin.

From our friends and Dialogue Partners in China and Myanmar we gathered some valuable information on how those countries approach the needs of flood forecasting and warning.

Distinguished Delegates,

Ladies and Gentlemen

I understand our working group discussion come up with extremely useful recommendations and achieved some solid solutions to pragmatic working arrangements between the RFMMC and member country centres and communities at risk and feel these will stand us in good stead for our future working arrangements.

Finally this 4th Annual Mekong Flood Forum has provided the RFMMC with its first opportunity to bring everyone up to speed on how its programme work are progressing after one year of operation and what will happen in the coming year. I think we can feel assured that all is on target and that the programme will prove to be of immense assistance to those people of the basin who are living with floods and facing with serious damages.

I look forward to seeing all of you next year at the 5th Annual Mekong Flood Forum. I wish you all safe journeys home and for those who have a chance to stay a little longer I hope you can take the opportunity to visit some of the wonderful sites in Siem Reap.

Thank you for your attention.