

## **MESSAGES OF THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE**

### **Addressing the challenges of sustainable food and energy production in trans-boundary basins:**

1. Hydropower and infrastructure brings new economic development opportunities. These infrastructure developments need to adequately address the social and ecosystems impacts that result from those investments, including those across administrative boundaries.
2. Food security will depend on a strong agricultural system and will demand a "blue-green water management revolution" – which will transform the productivity of rain-fed and irrigated agriculture. Water and food security is likely to be achieved "not only by investing more but also by investing better."
3. The emerging global experience in trans-boundary river management shows that shifting from a focus on competing national interests to one of maximising common benefits and sharing risks will enable genuine trans-boundary water security to be achieved and sustained.

### **Addressing approaches to adaptation to climate change in international river basins:**

1. More efficient agricultural water use will be an important part of climate change adaptation.
2. Extremes of drought and flood events are expected to become more frequent. To minimise the potential negative impacts of these events, it will be necessary to merge disaster risk management with climate change adaptation strategies.
3. Providing water security for the population of the basin is at the heart of adaptation to climate change. The effective implementation of integrated water resources management (IWRM), closely linked to land management, is the way to achieve these goals.
4. Climate change knows no boundaries and will impact the poor most directly. Adapting to climate change in the Mekong region will require cross-cutting approaches and agreed regional strategies.

### **Addressing private sector involvement infrastructure development in shared river basin:**

1. There is a need to adopt international best practice, such as the "Equator Principles", to ensure that investments in water infrastructure are financially, socially and environmentally sustainable.
2. The rules should be the same for any investment which has trans-boundary impacts, whether it is private or public sector. Countries cannot transfer their responsibility to the private sector; riparian member countries are responsible for impacts from infrastructure development.
3. Governments, international finance institutions and private sector banks will not be able to provide the full financing requirements to close the supply side gap. Innovative financing models, such as new bond markets are being explored. Demand side actions will also be required.

### **Addressing the challenges for trans-boundary river basin organisations in a changing world:**

1. Benefit sharing means "the process where riparians cooperate in optimising and equitably dividing goods, products and services connected directly or indirectly to the water course or arising from the use of its water."
2. Increasing involvement of civil society stakeholders in planning activities and decision making processes is increasingly recognised as an essential part of sustainable development, and additional emphasis is needed for this to be effective.
3. As good examples the Yangtze and Zambezi basins have developed mechanisms for synchronisation of dam operations and flood releases to optimise water use from existing and future systems. These experiences offer valuable lessons for the Mekong.
4. Collaboration involves technical and policy issues that address long-term, short-term and real-time planning and operations.

5. As an example from this region, the MRC's integrated water resources management based development strategy provides a framework for managing the "development space" in the basin. The "development space" is not just a volume of water that can be used, but a space for development and management of water and related resources, shaped by sustainable boundaries, e.g. acceptable trans-boundary impacts and basin-wide procedures.
6. River basin organisations need to find sustainable financing mechanisms to support the core functions for management of the basin.