



Asia-Europe Meeting

ASEM SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT DIALOGUE

8th ASEM Sustainable Development Dialogue

**Enhancing Water Partnership Towards Sustainable
Development and Inclusive Growth**

Closing Session Wrap Up

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Have we achieved our objectives?

- Overall ASEM SDD objective: to share experience and practices (e.g. Danube, Mekong etc.)

NO	8 th SDD Objectives	Yes/No
1	Exchange knowledge, experiences and best practices on key policy areas such as <u>population dynamics, water, food, energy security and climate change....</u>	
2	Enhance engagement in transforming transboundary water challenge into opportunities for inclusive growth and sustainable development (IG&SD); and	
3	Strengthen opportunities for PPP, North-South and South-South Partnership for IG&SD and achieving related SDGs.	

Key Messages from the Opening

- Water is most valuable, but increasingly scarce.
- Cross-sectoral in nature → essential key to SDGs.
- Risks, water crisis and conflict impacting on broader cooperation and benefits.
- No quick fix but a real and high political commitment, good governance, knowledge and human resources can bring us there.
 - Partnership and multilateralism.
 - Sustainable and inclusive development is not a bottleneck, but a key for development, peace and prosperity.
 - Data and knowledge for informed and inclusive decision-making; Integrated (basin, water and landscape) approach, water, food, energy nexus and climate change risk mitigation and adaptation.

Session 1: Key drivers and stresses

- Demands from relevant sectors and ecosystem growing rapidly. Climate change adding more complexity and uncertainty.
- Modelling, scenario assessment and monitoring →
A deeper understanding of how social and ecological system co-evolved through time
- Important for understanding and anticipating current and future conditions – potential benefits and risks/impacts.

Session 1: Key drivers and stresses (2)

- Relevant technology and platforms
 - E.g. Space derived data and GIS for natural resources and disaster risk management, esp. drought.
 - UN ASEAN partnership - ready for dry years in Mekong countries.
 - Regional discussions and capacity building for SDGs.
- Alternative solutions:
 - Global Map of free flowing rivers – only 37% still so (Nature, May 2019).
 - More hydropower projects are planned.
 - Need more cost competitive and sustainable solutions.
 - New and promising renewable energy (solar and wind).
 - Deltas are sinking and shrinking ++ high water demands, urban, sea water rises and over drafting of groundwater.
- Landscape change and several types of disasters.

Session 2: Transboundary River Basin Management

- Population dynamics, economic centers, CC in Asia.
- 279 transboundary rivers/lakes (68 in Europe, 64 in Africa, 60 in Asia - but we have much fewer transboundary river basin organizations and treaties.
- Hindu-Kush Himalaya – Third Pole’s Ice cap is melting at an alarming rate.
- Several players (state, state owned.. And non state) but coordination was still suboptimal or absent.
- Australian transboundary water reform process and 11 key components (water cap, environmental flow and water trade, information, compliance...)

Session 2: Transboundary River Basin Management

- Hungary and Danube, and Russia-Finland from two wars → best cooperation outcome. Why:
 - Cooperation requires good legal and policy framework/ foundation – general and water specific agreements, basin specific agreements
 - Relevant governance architectures – e.g. Danube Conventions → Global Convention, EU water framework directive → legally binding and compliance.
 - Good quality communication, outreach and awareness – esp. young people....
 - Compensation mechanism (Finland and Russia)
 - Technical information sharing and Joint Commission & WGs.
 - Private sector engagement
- Long term & step by steps - Trust and confidence are critical - resilience and continuity.

Session 3: Public and Private Partnership, Partnership

- Multi-faceted cooperation for SDGs – CSDGs
- Good benchmarks and tools for monitoring against relevant indicators and targets....
- North-South – TA, investment, PPP; and South-South – learning and sharing experiences.
- Impact from trade war and reduction of aid and soft loan.
- Environmental deterioration is alarming – Requires sustainable and inclusive investment in sustainability and green growth, valuing ecosystem services → to meet CSDGs and CC obligations etc..

Session 3: Public and Private Partnership, Partnership 2

- Partnership
 - China-EU Water Platform, R&D, Innovation, ASEMWater – R&D, policy dialogue/exchange - establishing ASEM Network for Science, Technology ...
 - Governance - Environment Protection Law and Zero Tolerance Enforcement in China since 2015
- Active China-EU partnership: How can we join or become more pro-active???
- Danube River Commission (navigation) vs. ICPDR.
 - Long evolution from post WWII
 - Within EU/EC policy framework and its transport network
 - River Information Services, proper resourcing and policy programs....
- Need to learn more from Europe on governance and coordination among its key architectures

Session 3: Public and Private Partnership, Partnership 3

- India's water crisis: Gender lenses
 - Water scarcity and poor sanitation impact women and children the most.
 - Groundwater extraction is extremely high.
 - Mass migration and school drop-out (girls).
- Response: creating mega-ministry, PPP, rain-water, waste water management, partnership...

Session 4: Science and Technology

- Hungary – good practices for flood and drought
 - Drought and water scarcity monitoring system
 - Detection, evaluation (water balancing, extreme period, wetness → info – HDI map/graph) intervention, and R&D
 - Flood management
 - structural measures → new strategy focusing on adaptation after 2000 (hard and soft - flood mapping (risks incl financial) – management strategy & local plans - periodically updated.
 - Riverbed/floodplain mgmt. plans; zoning and prioritizing for flood protection decision.
- Sub-basin 3Ss
 - VN-Cambodia – downstream countries
 - Relying on flow from other countries
 - Fluctuation in time and space
 - Political commitment to IWRM in Cambodian Water Law since 2007 -- DSS and KB for translating it into desired outcomes.
 - IWRM project – institution ---hydromet, Modelling, knowledge → planning and allocation, forecasting and operation.

Session 4: Science and Technology (2)

- Cambodia's technical capacity is rather limited for absorbing technology transfer and sustaining it.
- MRC, WB, Laos, Cambodia and Vietnam.....
- Reflections and confessions of honorary Mekong citizen:
 - Role of human resources, esp. civil services = backbone of good governance (science and policy interface).
 - Research cooperation and partnership → policy actions
 - Role of and care for young/emerging water professionals

Session 4: Science and Technology (3)

- Know our key Stakeholders: various
 - Translating science and technology into simple language (aspiration) → better outcomes.
 - Key elements: technology production, DSS, and organization and human powers...
 - Multi-disciplinary and multi-stakeholder ..
 - Managing human behaviours...

- Extremely vital that we prevent today's water crisis before it becomes tomorrow's catastrophe.
- Investment for peace and sustainability.
- Cooperation and partnership for sustainable and inclusive development and common prosperity are the Future we want !!!



THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR YOUR ATTENTION!

