

UNESCO IHP-RSC, IDI, IFI special session:
Regional delivery of SDGs a focus on Hydroinformatics and Education for
Hydrohazards

11:00-12:30, 7 June 2016, ICWRRER 2016, Kyoto, Japan

Actions for strengthening regional water cooperation for a water secure region

On 7 June 2016, a UNESCO International Hydrological Programme Regional Steering Committee (IHP-RSC), International Drought Initiative (IDI), International Flood Initiative (IFI) special session took place at ICWRRER 2016 in Kyoto, Japan. The theme of the session was “Regional delivery of SDGs a focus on Hydroinformatics and Education for Hydrohazards” in Asia and the Pacific region and four distinguished panellist, Prof Guillermo III Tabios, current chairperson of IHP-RSC and from University of the Philippines, Prof Kenichiro Kobayashi from Kobe University and member of IHP-RSC, Prof Toshio Koike Director of International Centre for Hazard and Risk Management under the auspices of UNESCO (ICHARM) and Secretary of IFI and Prof Ali Chavoshian Director of Regional Centre for Urban Water Management Tehran under the auspices of UNESCO (RCUWM-Tehran) and Secretary of IDI. The session was co-chaired by Prof Shahbaz Khan (UNESCO, by SKYPE), Prof Tabios and Prof Tachikawa.

The objective of this session was to discuss and exchange views of the panellists on the following two questions:

- What are the main challenges for Asia and the Pacific region transformation to achieve water security and hydrohazards resilience?
- How IHP can play a role in delivering water related SDGs?

Both questions were answered focusing on the role of hydroinformatics and education for hydrohazards.



Figure 1 Mechanism for IHP-VIII, SDGs and Paris Agreement delivery for water secure Asia and the Pacific region.

The panellists presented different activities undertaken in the region for a water secure region:

- Presentation 1: “Current Institutional Arrangement of Water governance in the Philippines” (Prof Tabios, IHP-RSC-SEAP Chairperson, University of the Philippines): Prof Tabios advocated the need for a super water body to improve water governance in the Philippines for an efficient water management at the national level.
- Presentation 2: “Report of the proposal for making the Catalogues of Hydrologic Analysis as the successive series of the Catalogues of Rivers”. (Prof Kobayashi, Kobe University, Prof Chikamori, Okayama University, Prof Tachikawa, Kyoto University, Japan IHP and Secretary of IHP-RSC-SEAP): The Catalogues of Hydrologic Analysis was introduced as the successive series of the Catalogues of Rivers as a reference book for enhancing the understanding of hydrology and water resources in Asia and the Pacific region through various examples using the information included in the Catalogue of Rivers and a call for contribution was launched. Director

of RCUWM-Tehran and IDI Secretary advocated the willingness for West Asian countries to contribute actively to IHP-RSC activities as well as to become members of IHP-RSC and requested the possibility of IHP-RSC to open from South-East Asia and Pacific in order to include West Asia to be considered.

- Presentation 3: “IFI activities toward robustness for flood management in Asia and the Pacific region” (Prof Koike, ICHARM): The steps and activities for IFI new strategy and implementation plan (2016-2022) development were explained. IFI new strategy is to be launched at the next IHP-IGC in June 2016. The new implementation framework is articulated around five steps 1) Data & Statistics, 2) Risk Assessment, 3) Risk Change Identification, 4) Support in Sound Policy-making and 5) Support in Community of Practice. The new IFI strategy is expected to thrive a demand-drive network and related documentations of best practice in the regional process with the active contribution of IFI members and related networks.
- Presentation 4: “Innovation Approaches for Drought Risk Prediction and Monitoring in the Arid and Semi-arid Areas of the West Asia” (Prof Chavoshian, IDI): First of all, particular challenges in hydrological study in arid and semi-arid areas in West-Asia were reported: 1) many ungauged or poor data basis, 2) complicated hydrological system (recharge in groundwater and snowmelt contributions) especially in terms of modelling and 3) complexity of dryland soil surface processes. Then, the mandate of IDI was reported as to improve drought monitoring and prediction capabilities to reduce social vulnerability and to enhance local resilience to extreme events, introducing suitable hydrological models for application in arid and semi-arid ungauged or poorly gauged basins for more effective and accurate drought monitoring.

The panellists identified the following points as the next practical steps and direction for Asia and the Pacific region to be undertaken by UNESCO in order to help towards a water secure region and deliver Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, the SDGs and the Paris Agreement on Climate Change:

- The importance of water governance needs to be enforced in efficient disaster risk reduction measures
- The need for freely available statistical and hydrological analysis models or modules to build on the data collected such as in the Catalogue of Rivers in order to assess water-related disasters impacts in the region and the start of a new IHP-RSC project, the Catalogue of Hydrological Analysis and call for contributions from the region not limited to IHP-RSC members, UNESCO Category II centres and Water Chairs in the region.
- The need to strengthen hydrohazards management capacity at the national level for other champion projects like the JICA funded UNESCO project in Pakistan “Strategic Strengthening of Flood Warning and Management Capacity of Pakistan” which can be showcased
- The need for an online UNESCO catalogue of activities and trainings delivered in the region to strengthen hydrohazards management capacity at regional level
- The proposal by IDI to make IDI a multi-UN initiative like IFI by including WMO in the first step.
- It has been suggested that both IFI and IDI should work in close collaboration in order to improve hydrohazard management in Asia-Pacific.
- The need for a Drought Policy Report for the region under the leadership of UNESCO.