

Water Resources and Climate Change: The Pulse of the Mekong Region



The Mekong region is served by the Mekong River, the Chao Phraya, the Salween, the Ayeyarwady, and the Red River. These are the lifeblood of Cambodia, the People's Republic of China, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Thailand, and Vietnam—influencing the way of life of over 300 million people.

According to the Mekong River Commission (MRC), the ever-growing demand for food, water, energy, employment, and transport has seen the rise of the region's emissions and pollution. These, in turn, have affected the rivers' flow, water level, and sediment load, resulting to low harvest yields, disruptions in inland water transport, disturbances in power generation, and dwindling fishery resources across the six countries.

MRC, national agencies, and regional cooperation mechanisms such as the Mekong-Lancang Cooperation and Ayeyawady-Chao Phraya-Mekong Economic Cooperation Strategy are pooling regional climate adaption and disaster resilience efforts and resources to establish sound, responsive, and sustainable policies to decouple growth from environmental degradation and enhance communities' preparedness against climate change uncertainties.



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We believe that immediate access to accurate and coordinated information will result to stronger policies and more effective strategies to manage climate change impacts in the near and far future. This road may be paved with challenges but success is within reach when government officials, business owners, community leaders, and individuals remain committed in working together to protect the people and resources of the region. ■



Ms. Ratna Devi Nadarajan is MI's program specialist whose expertise include the management of sustainable safe food systems. Under MI's Agriculture Development and Commercialization Department, she assisted in the completion of the "Transboundary Cooperation Mechanism on Adaptation to Climate Change and Hydropower Development Projects," which was supported by the Lancang-Mekong Special Cooperation Fund.