

**Conference on Watershed Management for Controlling Municipal Wastewater
in Southeast Asia
Chair's Summary**

Backgrounds

This conference has been held on July 28th, 2016 in Nagoya, Japan inspired by the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of 'halving the proportion of untreated wastewater by 2030,' aiming to promote an improvement of institutions and infrastructures related to wastewater treatments in Asia. This conference has been held by the call of Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism (MLIT), and Ministry of Environment (MOE) in Japan. Participants included policymakers of ministries concerned with infrastructure improvement and water environment from five countries of Southeast Asia: Cambodia, Indonesia, Myanmar, Philippines and Vietnam, and MLIT, MOE, JICA and Shiga Prefecture in Japan. The conference has been chaired by Professor Hiroaki Morita at Nihon University.

1. It is necessary to promote wastewater treatments in all of the countries of Southeast Asia to achieve the SDGs. Each country faces severe water pollutions associated with urban population growth and rapid expansion of cities. Thus, they are in need of extensive wastewater control plans and substantive institutions corresponding with the urban expansion.
2. Because currently planning systems and the respective state of affairs differ among the countries, this conference has been held to promote a wastewater treatment planning in the whole of Asia by sharing information of advanced examples in the region as well as the situation and challenges in each country.

Opening of the conference

3. Welcome statements by Mr. Yasuhiro Morioka, Director-General of Sewerage and Wastewater Management Department. MLIT pointed out the similarity of water environmental problems Southeast Asian countries now/will face, which Japan had experienced and tackled in 1960-1970s. Therefore, while both Japanese policy and technology are effective solutions, it is necessary to consider corresponding measures based on regional characteristics in Southeast Asia and currently available technologies. Mr. Morioka stated that the conference would be a starting point for both Southeast Asian countries and Japan to learn from each other, and discuss a desirable future direction.

4. Greetings by Mr. Yasumasa Watanabe, Director of the Water Environment Division, Environmental Management Bureau, MOE introduced Water Environment Partnership in Asia (WEPA) at the beginning. Mr. Watanabe also emphasized the importance of the cross-sectorial cooperation between environmental sectors and infrastructural sectors highlighting the long-term and hand in hand cooperation and efforts made by the MOEJ and the MLIT to overcome Japan's environmental problems which occurred in the 1960s. He also wished for the success of the conference.

Opening session

5. In this session, MLIT in Japan explained the points of the conference and the necessity of watershed management. Also, MOE in Japan presented an overview of water environment managements in Asian countries.

Session 1: Overview of the Water Environment Standards and Effluent Standards and their Implementation

6. In this session, officials in charge of water environments in the participating countries presented overviews and explained the statuses of ambient water quality criteria and effluent standards in each country.
7. All of the five countries have established or are now preparing ambient water quality criteria and effluent standards. However, the levels of water quality monitoring and enforcement of regulations based on the effluent standards are different among the countries.
8. Most of the countries face problems related to overlapping responsibilities and regulations among relevant ministries and agencies
9. To conserve the water environment, proper understanding of the status of water quality as well as impacts of wastewater to the water environment is critical.
10. Due to different socio-economic and natural environmental conditions, each country also has its own issues and approaches to tackle the problems. However, it is essential for all the countries to implement wastewater management through cross-sectorial collaborations with the involvement of multi-stakeholders.

Session 2: Current Status of the Planning of Municipal Wastewater Treatment

Systems

11. In this session, officials in charge of infrastructure improvement in the participating countries presented overviews and explained the statuses of wastewater treatment plans in each country.
12. Many countries face challenges in introducing a wastewater treatment system, such as, low awareness of people about the water environment, low priority towards the issue from government and community, insufficient regulations and laws for enforcement, limited human resources and budgets for wastewater management, land limitations and finally a lack of affordable technology to construct wastewater treatment plants.
13. To overcome the challenges, it is necessary to raise awareness and build capacity in the multi-sectors and to engage stakeholders starting from the primary educational level.
14. Although all countries agreed on the importance of the concept of a river basin-wide planning, countries are in different stages, and a concept of river basin planning has not yet been introduced in most of them.
15. Some countries highlighted the challenges of formulating plans, including, a lack of procedures for the development of the schemes, insufficient national inventories or difficulty to renew inventories, coordination with development plans and execution of the plan itself (low budget, institutional capacity).

Session 3: Discussions for the development of municipal wastewater treatment in Southeast Asia

16. Based on Session 1 and 2, this session discussed measures to promote wastewater treatments and a desirable watershed management in Southeast Asia.
17. On discussion, topics were proposed by the Chair: i Common challenges and necessary measures, ii Collaborative actions to promote the measures in the countries.

i Common challenges and necessary measures

18. The participant countries shared the discussed points of session 1 and 2. Shared the view on the common challenges among participant countries and necessary measures.

ii Collaborative actions to promote the measures in the countries

19. Participants recognized the effectiveness of information-sharing by the attending countries as a first step to solve common challenges among them, and also acknowledged the necessity to hold the conference periodically in Japan in order to share lessons learnt from river-basin approach which Japan has been taking.
20. So far, no country has conducted basin-wide upper-level planning, thus the attending members pointed out the need to develop a model project for water-basin wide environmental monitoring in a particular basin in each country, and to share the outcomes among themselves.
21. In order to promote a basin-wide planning for wastewater treatment, the participants pointed out the necessity to start a discussion to formulate a common guideline in Southeast Asia in the future.