



MEKONG RESOURCES FORUM III

Development Impacts and Resilience in Agriculture and Forestry in the Mekong Region

Hoa Binh, Vietnam. 15 - 16 June 2017

Overview

In the time of globalization, free trade, rising power of the private sector and much of uncertainty, nations in the Lower Mekong Region, therefore, have been influenced by changes from geopolitical competition, development trends, environmental degradation and the climate crisis. While the general social economic context is improving, there is the glooming picture of injustice, inequality and instability in terms of fair sharing of wealth and prosperity among different groups and communities among our society. On the other hand, there's hopeful movement on the ground where communities find their ways to resilience and adapt to changes, as well as steer the bottom-up development.

ASEAN is anticipated to be one of the most dynamic economic regions. In 2015, the establishment of the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) has marked a step of the state-led regionalization process to boost further connectivity and cooperation within the region with hope to create higher economic growth. With AEC, there expects to be an increasing trends of flows of capital and investment within the block. In the Lower Mekong, the intra-region trade and investment has increased in recent years between Myanmar, Thailand, Laos, Cambodia and Vietnam. Thailand and Vietnam, with more advanced economies, have become important investors in the region. For Vietnam's investment, agro-forestry is the second largest sector in overseas investment structure, and it ranks third in Laos' and Cambodia's foreign direct investment and domestic direct investment receipt during 2011-2015.

As part of the economic integration and regionalization, there are numerous government-led initiatives, bilateral and multi-lateral, among regional states for promoting economic development, trade and investment. These inter-governmental projects, however, often lack inclusive participation of their utmost constituents and still far from the "people-centered" approach, one that has been the motto of ASEAN. The space for meaningful engagement of civil society and local communities in these process is limited.

While governments aim high to change economic structure to more industries and services, agriculture and forestry still play crucial role in regional economies. In addition to their endurance to external challenges, especially during economic crisis, these sectors provide a safety net as they are sources of food security and livelihoods for the majority of population, including those most vulnerable in rural and poor communities.

Despite obstacles and social political challenges, there has been a growing efforts from the ground by communities and civil society groups working to compliment the development gaps and resilience to changes in these sectors. Some successful lessons have been scaled up to local and national policy levels.

This Mekong Resources Forum hopes to connect ideas and efforts of communities and non-state groups across the Lower Mekong region in promoting resilience in agriculture and forestry, as well as reducing negative impacts from development on our natural resources and ecosystems. In addition, we hope to continue the discussion on rethinking development that comes from bottom-up toward prosperity and peace, people-centered approach, equity, and non-destructive alternatives.

Program Objectives

- To share issues, concerns, lessons learned, good practices and perspectives in agriculture and forestry sectors in relation to resilience and adaptation to environmental changes at different levels.
- To discuss and promote better development alternatives and approaches in order to secure fair and equitable access to natural resources, improve livelihoods and quality of life and ensure sustainability of our living environment.

Participants

About 100 participants from community and non-state organizations in the Lower Mekong region, research and academic institutions, representatives from governmental agencies, media and other interested parties.

Organizers: PanNature, ADDA, the International Centre for Research in Agroforestry (ICRAF), and Vietnam-Lao-Cambodia Association for Economic Cooperation Development (VILACAED).

Time and Venue

- Time: 15 – 16 June 2017.
- Location: Trade Union Hotel, Kim Boi district, Hoa Binh province, Vietnam

Mekong Resources Forum is an initiative that aims to facilitate meaningful dialogues among regional organizations in the Lower Mekong Region. This non-state platform includes a wide variety of dialogues, exchanges, and cooperation activities built upon mutual interests and power of knowledge for bettering natural resource governance in the region. The first forum was organized in December 2011 in Hanoi. The second forum was organized in May 2013 in Tam Dao. For more information about previous forums, please see www.nature.org.vn/en/tag/mrf

The Mekong Resources Forum III is co-organized by PanNature, ADDA, ICRAF, and VILACAED. For more information about the co-organizers, please visit:

- PanNature: www.nature.org.vn
- ADDA: www.adda.vn
- ICRAF: <http://www.worldagroforestry.org/country/vietnam>
- VILACAED: www.vilacaed.org.vn

Forum Program

Time	Contents
June 14	
16:00 – 18:00	Travel from Hanoi to Hoa Binh
19:00 – 20:30	Reception Dinner
June 15 – Mekong Resources Forum	
7.30 – 8.00	Participant Registration
8.00 – 8.30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction to Workshop Program and Participants - <i>PanNature</i> • Welcome speech from Hoa Binh Provincial People’s Committee • Opening speech by the co-organizers: VILACAED, ADDA, and ICRAF
Context of Agriculture and Forestry in the Mekong: Views from the Ground	
8.30 – 10:00	Plenary Session: Chaired by co-organizers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agribusiness and investment flows in the Lower Mekong <i>Chrek Sophea, Focus on the Global South</i> • Climate-smart agriculture: Application and lessons learned <i>Marianne Norgaard Jensby, ADDA Denmark</i> • UN-REDD program’s approach to promote sub-regional collaboration to address transboundary displacement. <i>UN-REDD Program</i> • Water resources for development and multi-sectoral conflicts: A case-study of the Mekong Delta <i>Dr. Le Anh Tuan, Can Tho University</i> • Assessment of Fish Conservation Zones in Lao PDR. <i>Mr. Sinsamout Ounboundisane, FishBio (Lao PDR)</i> • Establishing resilient forests for hydrological services: Evidences from Vietnam <i>Dr. Pham Van Dien, Vietnam National University of Forestry</i>
10.00 – 10.15	Tea Break
Resilience and Adaptation: From the Bottom-up	

	<i>Parallel Session I: Connecting Resilient and Sustainable Agricultural Practices in Mekong Region</i> <i>Chaired by ICRAF and ADDA</i>	<i>Parallel Session II: Forests and Forestry – Maintaining Ecosystems and Sources of Livelihoods</i> <i>Chaired by PanNature and VILACAED</i>
10.15 – 12.00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Climate-smart agriculture and beyond. <i>Mr. Do Trong Hoan, ICRAF</i> • Connecting Resilient and Sustainable Agricultural Practices in Laos. <i>Ms. Hongnapha Phommabouth, Green Community Development Association</i> • CAD and Activities in Agriculture in Myanmar. <i>Ms. Helen Naw Naw Shio, Community Agency for Rural Development</i> • Facilitating climate change adaptation in agriculture in socio-economic planning at local levels in the Northwestern Mountains of Vietnam. <i>Mr. Nguyen Duc To Luu, PanNature</i> • Discussion: 30 mins <p><u>Objectives of this session:</u> To share good practices and lesson learned from the ground in each country, including but not limited to green agriculture, climate-smart agriculture, community-led initiatives, and local policy instruments. The keynote presentation will cover the session theme at broader aspects at regional level.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction to the session theme. <i>Mr. Nguyen Viet Dung, PanNature</i> • Lessons learned from sustainable forest plantation in Vietnam. <i>Dr. Tran Kim Hao, Institute of Rural and Community Development</i> • Forestry and livelihood development. <i>Mr. Tem Ven, Ponlok Khmer.</i> • FREDA and activities in forestry in Myanmar. <i>Ms. Tin Tin Ohn, FREDA</i> • Would health of forest ecosystems determine the sources of forest dependent community incomes? <i>Mr. Keo Tai, NTFP-EP Cambodia Program</i> • Discussion: 30 mins <p><u>Objectives of this session:</u> To share lessons learned and perspectives on different aspects of the session theme, such as forestry, agroforestry initiatives, community-managed protected areas, transboundary conservation of forests, timber production and trade.</p>
12:00 – 13.30	Lunch Break	
13.30 – 14.00	Plenary Report: Briefing of 02 Parallel Sessions.	
Impacts of Mega-scale Development and Mitigation: Regional Perspectives		

14.00 – 15:30	<p>Plenary Session: Chaired by co-organizers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mega-scale development: The case of sugar concession in Cambodia. <i>Eang Vuthy, Equitable Cambodia</i> • Impacts on natural resources and livelihoods of small holder farmers. <i>Mr. Sinthavong PHUANGCHAMPA, Global Association for People and the Environment (GAPE)</i> • Stepping out of the REDD+, FLEGT and PES: What's in it for local communities? <i>Dr. Pham Thu Thuy, CIFOR</i> • Responsible and accountable business sector: Voluntary guidelines, laws, and corporate engagement <i>Ms. Nguyen Hoang Phuong, PanNature</i> • Sustainable Poverty Reduction through Restructuring Land-use Patterns and Crops in Vietnam's Central Highlands. <i>Mr. Nguyen Van Minh, Institute for Sustainable Development Research in Vietnam and ASEAN</i> • Toward a Better Governance Mechanism of Land Contracting for Inclusive and Sustainable Development. <i>Ms. Ta Thu Trang, Institute of Policy and Strategy for Agriculture and Rural Development</i>
15.30 – 15.50	Tea Break
15.50 – 16.50	<p>Forum: Toward a more prosperous and peaceful, people-centered, fair and non-destructive development: Is it possible and how?</p> <p><i>Key Speakers: Representatives of non-state organizations from the region. Speakers will share their views and dialogue with forum participants on related issues around the main question.</i></p>
16.50 – 17.00	Summary and Close
18.30 – 20.00	Dinner at Trade Union Hotel
June 16	Field Visit to Agro-forestry Models
08:00 – 12:00	<p>Group visit to 02 models implemented by local communities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Treo village, Tu Son commune (Kim Boi district): Forestry plantation • Thanh Lap commune (Luong Son district): Vegetable production. Farmers – business sector cooperation.
12:00 – 13:30	Lunch (en route)
13:30 – 15:00	Travel back to Hanoi capital city