

# Mekong River Commission

Meeting the Needs - Keeping the Balance



**Constitutive Meeting  
International Basin Organizations  
Thanon-Les-Bans  
25 – 26 Nov. 2002**



# Mekong River Co-operation - Spanning Almost Half a Century

- Studies by ECAFE and others => great potentials of then less known Mekong and calls for international cooperation.
- Mekong cooperation was formalized in 1957. It has gone through good time and turbulence of history/regional and world politics
- End of cold war area, countries in LMB decided to turn battlefield to market place.
- Laudable call for sustainable development.
- In 1995, a new, framework agreement was signed and MRC was established as the successor of the previous Mekong Committee.

Mekong Committee

Interim Mekong Committee

MRC

1957 1958 1959 1960 1961 1962 1963 1964 1965 1966 1967 1968 1969 1970 1971 1972 1973 1974 1975 1976 1977 1978 1979 1980 1981 1982 1983 1984 1985 1986 1987 1988 1989 1990 1991 1992 1993 1994 1995 1996 1997 1998 1999 2000 2001

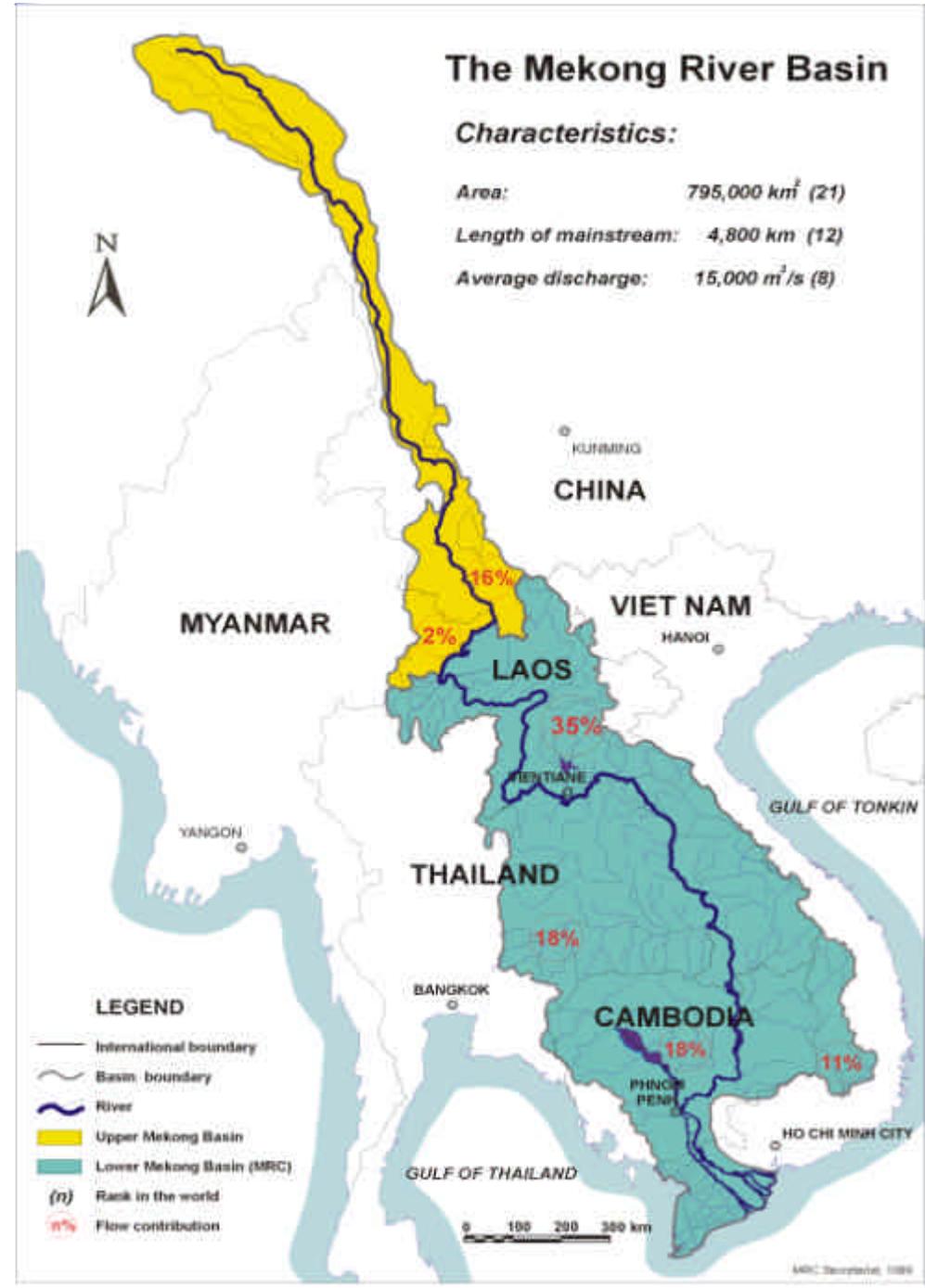


# SETTING of Mekong Basin

## The Mekong River Basin

### Characteristics:

- Area: 795,000 km<sup>2</sup> (21)
- Length of mainstream: 4,800 km (12)
- Average discharge: 15,000 m<sup>3</sup>/s (8)



## Contributors:

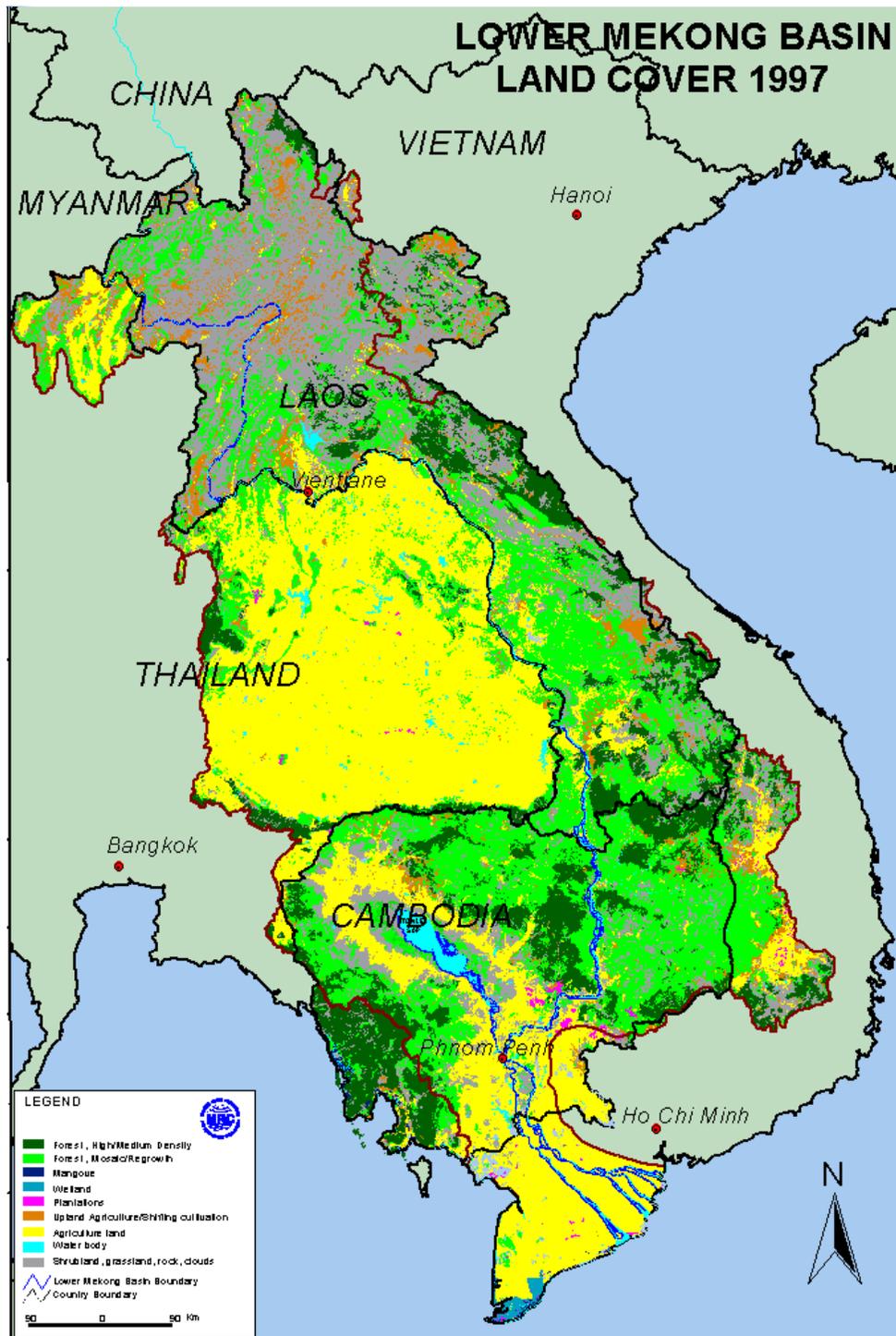
### Upper Mekong (18%)

- China – 16%
- Myanmar – 2%

### Lower Mekong (82%)

- Cambodia – 18%
- Lao – 35%
- Thailand – 18%
- Viet Nam – 11%

Throughout history, river has both divided people and brought them together.



## Potentials and Challenge

- With average flow of 15,000 m<sup>3</sup>/second; supporting one of most productive and diverse ecosystems in the world.
- Total population living in the Mekong Basin is at present 73 million people => young & fast growing.
- Least spoiled & least developed, potential for development is from utilized. However, considerable challenge lies ahead.

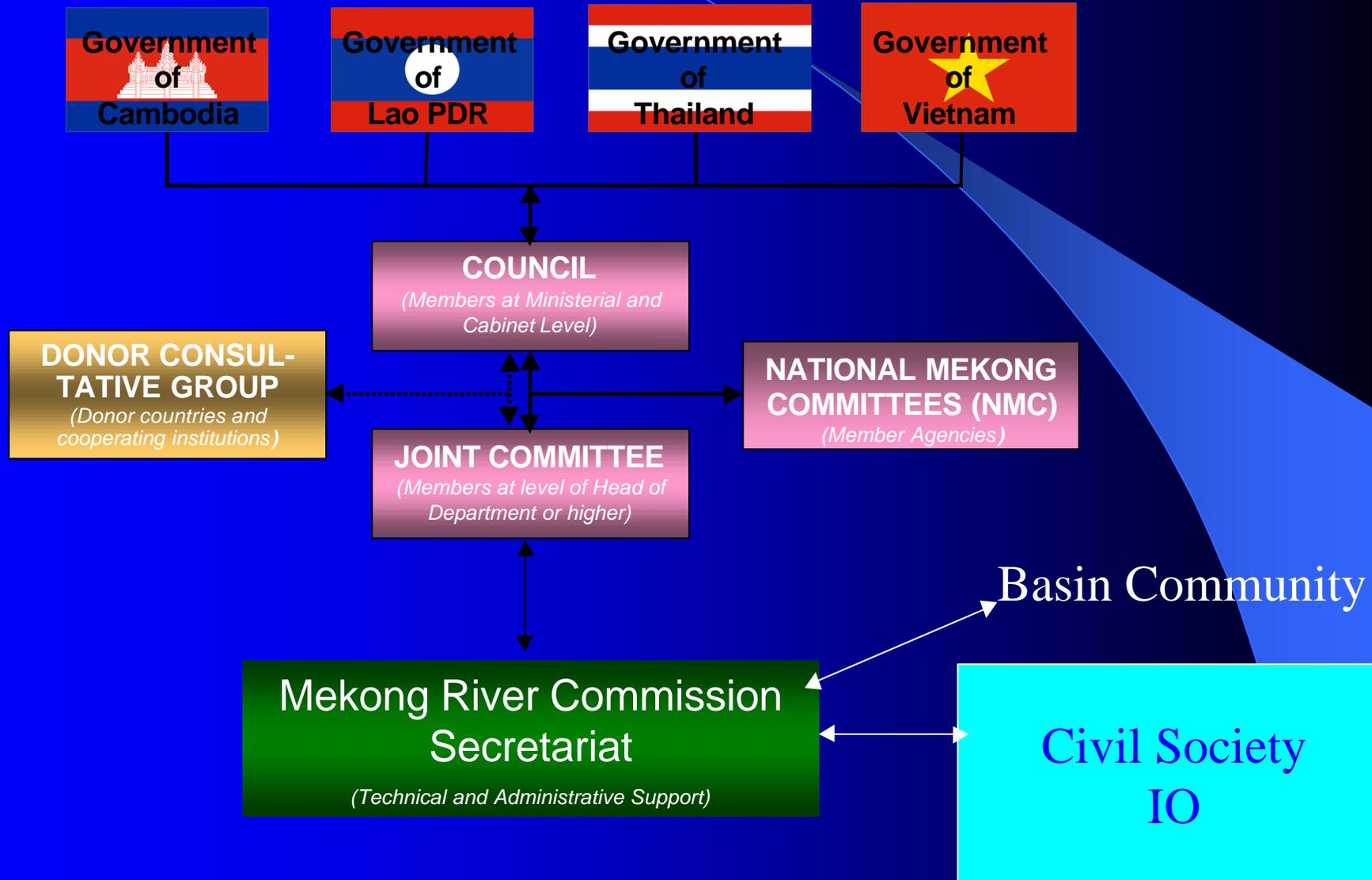
# Role of Mekong River Commission



- The 1995 Agreement states, MRC's role is to promote “**Cooperation in all fields of sustainable development, utilisation, management and conservation of the water and related resources of the Basin.**”
  - This should contribute to **sustainable and balanced development**, while preserving the **environmental integrity** of the Basin.
  - Through joint institution – MRC.



# MRC Organisational Structure



# 1995 Agreement

- Framework Agreement:
  - principles, objectives, institution, and dispute resolutions; and
  - Agreement to agree on other procedures, rules, guidelines, and standards.
- Framework vs. comprehensive agreements.

# ...And Three Key Elements in the MRC Approach:

## *Generating Knowledge:*

- Be the main knowledge-centre on water-related basin issues, understanding changing inter-dependencies.



## *Seeking mutual benefits & equity:*

- Identifying needs and policy issues, and enabling win-win solutions that help meet the needs of all.



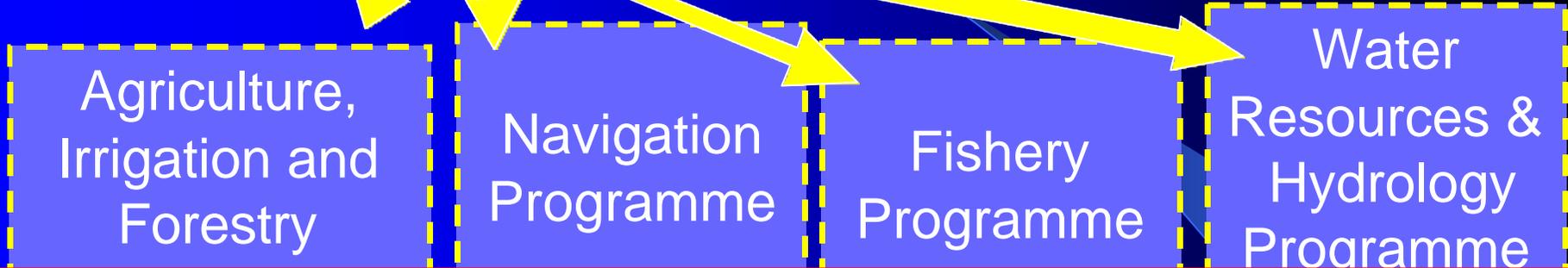
## *Ensuring sustainability*

- Ensuring long term benefit for both present + future generations.



# MRC's Strategic Structuring

## Sector Programmes



## Basin Development Plan/Processes



**3 Core Programmes**

**Support Programmes**



# MRC Sources of Funding

- MRC member-countries annual contribution to OEB;
  - MRC member-countries contribution in kind and cash to programmes;
  - Donor technical & financial assistance.
- => MRC decision to gradually increase national contribution.

# MRC's STRATEGY: The Catchment Management Approach



- Effective two-way communication with all key stakeholders
- Local communities '**the stakeholders**' are included in the management and protection of the ecosystems
- **natural boundaries** are identified and **managed holistically (sectors + cross cutting themes)**



# Participation & Accountability

- Member Countries (National Mekong Committees, Line Ministries);
- Basin Community (Civil Society, Mass Organizations), Donors,
- Dialogue Partners (China and Myanmar)
- MRC's observers (ESCAP, UNDP , ADB, IUCN, WWF, ASEAN)
- Regional and International Organizations/ Initiatives.

# Participation & Accountability



- **Signed partnership agreements:**
  - Murray Darling Basin Commission (1997);
  - Asian Institute of Technology (AIT, 2000),
  - ADB (2000),
  - World Meteorological Organization (WMO)
  - UNEP/International Environment Technology Center (2001), IUCN,
  - UNESCO-IHE Delft (2001)
  - WWF 2001
  - Asian disaster Preparedness Center (2002)
  - Other universities

# MRC's STRATEGY: Sustainable Basin Development



In line with the 1995 agreement, MRC strives to ensure that development priorities have an **holistic perspective**.

We do this through an integrated river basin management approach and through regional cooperation.



Overall, the MRC is guided by the objective of **sustainable, and environmentally sound development**.



**Thank You for  
You Kind  
Attention**



[www.mrcmekong.org](http://www.mrcmekong.org)