



18th Meeting of the Regional Consultative Committee
of Asian Disaster Preparedness Center (ADPC)



THAILAND
2025

18th Meeting of the Regional Consultative Committee (RCC)

Venue:

**Jubilee Ballroom on the 11th Floor
The Berkeley Hotel, Pratunam
Bangkok, Thailand
23-24 January 2025**

UpFront Session 1: Advancing Regional Cooperation and Inclusive Water Governance to build Climate Resilience

24 January, 2025; 11:00 – 12:00

1. Preamble

Asian Disaster Preparedness Center (ADPC) is implementing a regional program called Transboundary Rivers of South Asia Phase 2 (TROSAs 2), aiming to improve cooperation in governing shared water resources, strengthening resilience to climate change of riparian communities in the transboundary Ganges- Brahmaputra-Meghna (GBM) River Basins in India, Nepal, and Bangladesh. ADPC implements the TROSAs 2 outcomes with Oxfam as the lead partner. TROSAs 2 is funded by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA). The project's expected outcomes are to:

- Strengthen the leadership of civil society, especially women, and youth to influence the government and private sector on water governance across and between the transboundary GBM River Basins.
- Strengthen cooperation, collaboration, and accountability across and between the transboundary GBM River Basins.

The Ganges-Brahmaputra-Meghna Basin is a birthplace of flourishing cultures and livelihoods with a total area of 1.7 million square kms. The basin is distributed across Nepal, India, Bangladesh, China and Bhutan and finally joins the Bay of Bengal. Apart from being the third largest freshwater outlet to the world's oceans, the basin supports more than 800 million people. In South Asia, the Ganges River is located in India, Nepal and Bangladesh, the Brahmaputra River is located in India, Bangladesh and Bhutan, and the Meghna River Basin is located in India and Bangladesh. Many societies, cultures and economies depend on the basin for various needs, but the ecosystem services provided by the basin are also exposed to severe risks.

According to the World Bank Bangladesh Development Series, the GBM Basin will undergo a projected temperature rise of 1-3°C and receive 20 percent more monsoon rainfall by 2050. Intensification of climate events, degradation of ecosystems, unregulated infrastructure development and unplanned land use practices have caused



increasing stress on water resources and limited accessibility for the communities. The increasing climate risk also leads to issues of gender disparity and social inequalities, in addition to water accessibility challenges. Climate change poses a threat by causing crop damage, loss of life and property and increase of climate related disasters. Communities of the basin feel vulnerable due to climate risks and rapidly changing socio-economic scenarios.

According to the World Bank, by 2030, South Asia's water demand will double due to unsustainable usage, impacting lives and livelihoods. About 20 percent of the population in the GBM Basin lacks access to safe drinking water. Additionally, the Water Development Report 2016 highlights that globally 78% of the jobs are water dependent and increasing stress on water resources can lead to direct impacts on the water dependent sectors. At the face of changing climatic and socio-economic conditions the demand of water also increases for industries and communities. Multilateral cooperation and good governance for upstream and downstream linkages of the countries of the basin will improve water accessibility and build resilience to climate change of riparian communities. The GBM Basin has social, biophysical, cultural, economic and institutional interdependence which sustains agriculture, economic activities and societal functions of the basin. Multidimensional and inclusive governance and cooperation by the basin countries will ensure equal accessibility of resources.

The Need for Regional Cooperation

Climate change impacts the South Asia region and increases the burden of already vulnerable societies. There is a dire need for regional cooperation to help societies dependent on shared water resources to adapt and build climate resilience. The bilateral transboundary knowledge exchange. Bilateral knowledge exchange and agreements are influenced by ongoing conflicts, power dynamics and severe climate-related disasters resulting in limited initiatives for data and knowledge sharing. Based on this, there is a need for consistent knowledge exchange to oversee the entire region's water management. Meeting such needs is essential to not only accelerate climate actions but also to address local-level challenges. In the GBM region, disparities in equitable water management become further complex with the intersection of gender, social class, geographical location, and remoteness of these communities. However, international frameworks and commitments, such as the Dublin Principles (1992) and the SDGs (2015), emphasize the inclusion of gender and youth in water governance. Despite the systemic barriers - restrictive gender norms, limited access to resources, and a lack of participation platforms where they can influence policies (Meinzen-Dick et al., 2022; Geza et al., 2021) - there is a growing sense of hope and the willingness among women, and young professionals to engage in environmental conservation and sustainable development (Hickman et al., 2021).

Climate finance investments are also needed to back policy actions to address local-level disparities and to ensure water security and availability. The increase in adaptation finance will also enable communities who are interdependent to deal with increasing impacts of climate change. Improved delivery of climate finance will also promote bottom-up participatory planning and improve cooperation and knowledge exchange between the communities of shared water resources.

2. Objectives

- 2.1 Highlight the shared water governance challenges and identify priorities to strengthen resilience in the riparian communities in the Ganges-Brahmaputra-Meghna River Basins across India, Bangladesh, and Nepal and bring in best practices from other river basins like the Mekong River Commission.
- 2.2 Discuss ways to enhance inclusivity across transboundary basins to promote bottom-up participatory planning to ensure that voices of communities are heard.
- 2.3 Establish the way forward to enhance and promote dialogue to build resilience through knowledge exchange and facilitate cooperation among river basins.

3. Key Outcome

- 3.1 Facilitate discussion to promote cooperation and knowledge exchange between the GBM River Basin countries in South Asia.
- 3.2 Facilitate discussions to influence policies in the sphere of water governance by bridging the intergenerational gap in dialogues by enhancing voices of young women and youth leaders
- 3.3 Promote knowledge exchange among stakeholders to highlight shared challenges and best practices.

4. Participants

The key participants of the regional-level workshop are from government departments, primarily involved in disaster risk management and climate resilience efforts, and from the UN agencies working closely on these issues. Additionally, we will also have audiences from national and international civil society organizations working in climate adaptation, gender equality, human rights, and governance issues.

Session Plan

11:00- 11:03	<p>Welcome and Introduction (3 mins) ADPC Moderator</p>
11:03 – 11:43	<p style="text-align: center;">Harnessing Policies and Regional Collaboration for Inclusive Water Governance</p> <p>Theme: Regional Collaboration for Inclusive Water Governance Question: <i>How can we promote collaboration for knowledge sharing on water governance and building climate resilience across and between the Ganges- Brahmaputra and Meghna River Basin countries?</i> Speaker: Chair: Dr. Veena Vidyadharan (10 mins) Feminist Lead Oxfam Asia</p> <p>Theme: Climatic and Water Governance Challenges Question: <i>What are the climatic risks and water governance challenges that the riverine regions of Bangladesh face?</i> Speaker: Ms. Nayeem Rubaiyet (10 mins) Counsellor (Political) Embassy of Bangladesh, Bangkok</p> <p>Theme: Climatic and Water Governance Challenges Question: <i>What are the climatic risks and water governance challenges that the riverine regions of India face?</i> Speaker: Mr. Vishwa Ranjan Sinha (10 mins) Senior Project Officer, IUCN</p> <p>Theme: Climatic and Water Governance Challenges Question: <i>What are the climatic risks and water governance challenges that the riverine regions of Nepal face?</i> Speaker: Mr. Sunil Acharya (10 mins) (Online) Regional Policy and campaign Coordinator, Nepal</p>
11:43 – 11:55	<p style="text-align: center;">Harnessing Policies and Regional Collaboration for Efficient Climate Finance Delivery</p> <p>Theme: Driving Transboundary Cooperation Across Borders Through Climate Finance Question: <i>Can local-level climate finance accelerate climate action for communities, and will it provide greater benefits to riverine communities?</i></p>

	<p>Speaker: Chair: Dr. Veena Vidyadharan (3 mins) Feminist Lead Oxfam Asia</p> <p>Theme: Driving Transboundary Cooperation Across Borders Through Climate Finance Question: <i>What climate finance solutions can empower local communities across Bangladesh's river basins?</i></p> <p>Speaker: Ms. Ms. Nayeem Rubaiyet (3 mins) Counsellor (Political) Embassy of Bangladesh, Bangkok</p> <p>Theme: Driving Transboundary Cooperation Across Borders Through Climate Finance Question: <i>What are the climate finance needs that can support local communities across river basins in India?</i></p> <p>Speaker: Mr. Vishwa Ranjan Sinha (3 mins) Senior Project Officer, IUCN</p> <p>Theme: Climatic and Water Governance Challenges Question: <i>What are the climate finance needs that can support local communities across river basins in Nepal?</i></p> <p>Speaker: Mr. Sunil Acharya (10 mins) (online) Regional Policy and campaign Coordinator, Nepal</p>
11:55 – 12:00	<p>Q&A Closing (5 mins) ADPC Moderator</p>