

Peer Review Training on Benchmarking National Water Sector Apex Bodies

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Crowne Plaza Hotel, Manila Philippines**

Welcome Remarks

By:

**Wouter Lincklaen Arriens
Lead Water Resources Specialist, ADB**

On behalf of the Asian Development Bank, it is my honor and privilege to welcome you all to Manila and to this training program.

I am delighted to see our honored guests and participants from the national water sector apex bodies in Bangladesh, Malaysia, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Viet Nam and from Global Water Partnership for Southeast Asia and South Asia.

We miss the participation of other apex bodies from Nepal and Laos and our knowledge partners like IUCN, UN-ESCAP and IWMI who are unable to join us for various reasons.

This four-day training sets in motion the peer review process for benchmarking national water sector apex bodies that we have agreed during the first and second regional meeting in Hanoi and Bangkok in May 2004 and April 2005, respectively. In Hanoi, you requested ADB to assist you in developing a system of benchmarking your performance through a peer review modality. In Bangkok, you agreed to a set of performance indicators and arrangements for peer review that ADB helped develop.

In collaboration with Ateneo de Manila University which ADB has engaged to assist in the design and implementation of an independent certification program for peer reviewers, assessment tools were developed to kick-start the benchmarking exercise.

As you will know in the course of the training, the benchmarking process itself has already started several months back with the self-assessment of the Philippines' National Water Resources Board as one of the two pilot volunteer countries. The result is in that thick binder that you have been provided which shall serve as your manual for carrying out the peer review. So as you can see, this training requires substantial commitment from you who will in future undertake the same exercise for your organizations.

Being a pilot undertaking, we expected that some difficulties may be encountered and were indeed encountered but it is precisely this experience that will enrich the process. No doubt Dondi will regale you with his story and reflections about the experience of his organization in going through the exercise.

I wish you all a successful training program and more importantly a motivating benchmarking and peer review exercise.

Thank you and good day.