

WELCOME REMARKS

by
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Chair, Network of Asian River Basin Organizations (NARBO)

[Welcome]

Mahaweli Authority of Sri Lanka Director-General Ivan de Silva and Vice Chair of NARBO; Director Urooj Malik of the Asian Development Bank; Japan Water Agency Director Michio Ota and Vice-Secretary General of NARBO; Indonesia's BAPPENAS Director Donny Azdan; Executive Director Ramon Alikpala of the National Water Resources Board, Asst. General Manager Dolora Nepomuceno of the Laguna Lake Development Authority, friends, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good morning, and welcome to this important workshop on water rights.

I would like to congratulate the organizers of this workshop on behalf of NARBO: (i) the Asian Development Bank, (ii) the Japan Water Agency, (iii) the National Water Resources Board, and (iv) the Laguna Lake Development Authority. It is a great pleasure to be with you here at the headquarters of the Asian Development Bank.

[Message]

The global realities on water are grim. The Asia-Pacific region is not exempt from such stark realities. The same is true with my country Indonesia. The situation is compounded by (i) the lack of priority for water issues at the political level, (ii) the national and local governments' inability to manage pressures on water resources, (iii) the low investments in the water sector, and (iv) the fact that few water managers view water holistically. With pressures and competition for water escalating on an almost daily basis, we have no choice but to look to the management of our water resources.

Ladies and gentlemen, in Indonesia, we recently passed the new Water Resources Law of 2004, which we are confident will provide a better framework for integrated water resources management or IWRM. I know that in your own respective countries, you are also formulating and implementing strategies to improve IWRM.

The challenges to water have prompted NARBO to spearhead dialogue to address these issues through a series of workshops on water rights and water allocation. I am confident that the completed workshops have already contributed towards strengthening IWRM in river basins throughout Asia – which is the primary goal of NARBO.

Let me briefly share with you some information on the Network of Asian River Basin Organizations, which I understand most of you know already. NARBO was established in February 2004 in Indonesia with 43 initial member organizations. It aims to strengthen the capacity and effectiveness of RBOs in promoting IWRM and improving water governance, through training and exchange of information and experiences. Fortunately, there is already considerable IWRM experience in our region, and therefore much opportunity to share information, experience, and lessons learned. The variety of

experience available gives excellent opportunities for networking for NARBO. Information exchange and capacity building have been undertaken through websites, staff exchange, training, study visits, advice, and also through joint projects for advocacy, guidelines, sourcebooks, benchmarking, and even ISO certification, following the excellent example of the Perum Jasa Tirta basin organization for the Brantas river. Through its wide array of activities, NARBO contributes to a better future for water management in Asia by changing the way river basin managers work, plan, make decisions, and implement them.

[\[Closing\]](#)

Ladies and Gentlemen: We need to work together over the next days to look to the future and identify approaches to introduce or implement systems of water rights more effectively in our respective countries.

As Chair of NARBO, I will be pleased to be of assistance in this interesting and important endeavor; and to join hands with you in moving the agenda of water rights forward.

I thank all of you for sharing your time and resources despite your very busy schedules.

Thank you for your attention.