

**Letter of Intent for Collaboration**  
**On**  
**Network of Asian River Basin Organizations**  
**Between**  
**The Water Resources Development Public Corporation, Japan (WARDEC),**  
**The Asian Development Bank (ADB), and**  
**The Asian Development Bank Institute (ADBI)**

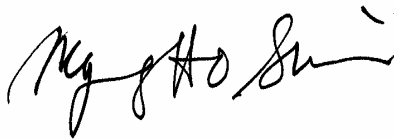
This letter expresses our intention to collaborate in establishing a Network of Asian River Basin Organizations (NARBO). The need for partnerships for action to achieve Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM) was recognized at the 3rd World Water Forum held in Kyoto, Osaka, and Shiga, in the Yodo River Basin, Japan, in March 2003. Several developed and developing countries in Asia have already established river basin organizations (RBOs) to implement IWRM. The 3rd World Water Forum highlighted the need to support these RBOs through knowledge sharing and capacity building, especially in developing countries.

Participation in NARBO will be focused on RBOs in developing countries in Asia. Regional centers of expertise for IWRM will be invited to join NARBO as knowledge partners. Collaboration will also be pursued with inter-regional knowledge centers. The organization, program of activities, and financing of NARBO will be determined in consultation with interested RBOs and partner organizations. Financial and other support for NARBO's activities is expected to be provided on a parallel basis from WARDEC, ADB, ADBI and other collaborating partners, with contributions from the RBOs joining as members. It is expected that support for some of NARBO activities in ADB's developing member countries may be drawn from the ADB's Cooperation Fund for the Water Sector, subject to ADB's regular approval procedures. Collaboration with ADBI is expected to be in the development of water

sector policy research, capacity building, training, networking, and dissemination.

It is expected that NARBO establishment will be accomplished in 2003 involving preparatory consultations and an initial regional workshop.

Signed at 3rd World Water Forum, Otsu, Japan, on 21st March 2003



**Myoung-Ho Shin**

Vice President of

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# NETWORK OF ASIAN RIVER BASIN ORGANIZATIONS

The goal of establishing a Network of Asian River Basin Organizations (NARBO) will be to help achieve Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM) in river basins throughout Asia, especially in developing countries.<sup>1</sup> NARBO's objective will be to promote the exchange of information and experience among river basin organizations (RBO) and their associated water sector agencies in Asia and to strengthen their capacity and effectiveness in promoting IWRM and improving water governance.

The need for partnerships for action to achieve IWRM was recognized at the 3rd World Water Forum held in Kyoto, Osaka, and Shiga, in the Yodo River Basin, Japan, in March 2003. Several developed and developing countries in Asia have already established RBOs to implement IWRM. The 3rd World Water Forum highlighted the need to support these RBOs through knowledge sharing and capacity building, especially in developing countries.

In Japan, measures to improve water resources management have been taken in each of the country's river basins in recent decades. WARDEC was established in accordance with the Water Resources Development Public Corporation Law, and oversees the development and management of water resources in seven major river basins in Japan under the direction of the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure and Transport in conjunction with the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry, and the Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare. WARDEC has built up valuable experience in IWRM, such as in organizing various financial resources, coordinating interested organizations, developing appropriate compensation systems, advancing construction and management skills, and building water resources management capacity. WARDEC has also sent staff to other Asian countries at the request of JICA to share technology and coordinate official IWRM development projects.

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<sup>1</sup> IWRM, as defined by the Global Water Partnership, is a process to improve the planning, conservation, development, and management of water, forest, land, and aquatic resources in a river basin context, to maximize economic benefits and social welfare in an equitable manner without compromising the sustainability of vital environmental systems.

ADB is a leading development institution in the Asia-Pacific region and is supporting water sector reforms and investments in its developing member countries. ADB's Water Policy 'Water for All' recognizes that water is a socially vital economic good that needs careful management to sustain equitable economic growth and reduce poverty. ADB promotes IWRM through river basin organizations, focusing on a participatory approach for water management, conservation, and protection, with water services to be provided by autonomous and accountable service providers. Supporting regional cooperation is a part of ADB's mandate.

The ADB Institute was established in December 1997 through the joint efforts of the ADB and the Government of Japan to provide intellectual leadership for development in the Asia-Pacific region. ADBI focuses on identifying development strategies that are suited to the particular social and economic circumstances of Asia's developing economies, and on improving the capacity for sound management of the agencies and organizations in ADB's developing member countries engaged in development works. ADBI's activities involve research, capacity building, training, networking, and dissemination.

Collaboration between WARDEC, ADB, and ADBI in establishing NARBO and promoting IWRM will create greater synergy and strengthen regional cooperation in the water sector among the developing countries and development partners in the region. In establishing NARBO, the focus of activities will be on (i) advocacy and raising awareness for IWRM in the region among water sector apex bodies, leading water sector agencies, and RBOs; (ii) sharing of information, good practices, and lessons learned among the participating organizations; (iii) supporting developing countries to improve water governance, including the enabling policy, institutional, and legal framework for IWRM; (iv) building capacity of RBOs in implementing IWRM; and (v) fostering regional cooperation for improved management of transboundary river basins in accordance with ADB's Water Policy.

Participation in NARBO will be focused on RBOs in developing countries in Asia, including Indonesia, Lao PDR, Nepal, People's Republic of China, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Viet Nam, and other countries. The collaboration of national water sector apex bodies and leading water sector agencies will also be sought as partners in promoting awareness and reforms for

water governance and IWRM.

Regional centers of expertise for IWRM will be invited to join NARBO as knowledge partners, including the International Water Management Institute in Sri Lanka, the Mekong River Basin Commission Secretariat in Cambodia, the Brantas River Basin Agency Jasa Tirta in Indonesia, the Asia-Pacific Association of Hydrology and Water Resources in Japan, Water CapNet in Malaysia, the Asian Institute of Technology in Thailand, the Secretariat of the Dialogue for Water, Food, and Environment in Sri Lanka, the Regional Technical Advisory Committees of the Global Water Partnership, the Inter-State Water Commission in central Asia, and the Murray-Darling Basin Commission in Australia.

Collaboration will also be pursued with inter-regional knowledge centers such as the Global Water Partnership in Sweden, the World Water Council and the International Network of Basin Organizations in France, IHE in the Netherlands, the Hydraulic Research Institute Wallingford in the UK, and the International Food Policy Research Institute in the US.

The organization, program of activities, and financing of NARBO will be determined in consultation with interested RBOs and partner organizations. WARDEC and ADBI are expected to host the NARBO Secretariat. Financial and other support for NARBO's activities is expected to be provided on a parallel basis from WARDEC, ADB, ADBI and other collaborating partners, with contributions from the RBOs joining as members. It is expected that support for some of NARBO activities in ADB's developing member countries may be drawn from the ADB's Cooperation Fund for the Water Sector, subject to ADB's regular approval procedures. Collaboration with ADBI is expected to be in the development of water sector policy research, capacity building, training, networking, and dissemination.

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