

MESSAGE FROM THE FORMER CHAIRPERSON



LOOKING BACK NARBO ACTIVITIES 2004 – 2008 THE SIGNIFICANCE AND FUTURE EXPECTATIONS

It is my great pleasure to contribute this article to the NARBO Annual Report 2008 as requested by NARBO Secretariat to take a look back on the past five years since NARBO was officially established in 2004. By taking a look back, it is expected that we will be able to observe the significance of NARBO activities which have been implemented by all constituents of NARBO including the Secretariat and the members.

Firstly, let's refer to the history of NARBO establishment to remind us about the background of NARBO establishment. The need for partnerships for action to achieve IWRM was recognized at the Third World Water Forum held in Japan, in March 2003, where it was noted that several developed and developing countries in Asia have already established RBOs to implement IWRM. The Forum highlighted the need to support these RBOs through knowledge sharing and capacity building, especially in developing countries. Recognizing the need for networking and capacity building in the implementation of IWRM, the Water Resources Development Public Corporation (WARDEC) of Japan (later on reconstituted as the Japan Water Agency), the Asian Development Bank (ADB), and the Asian Development Bank Institute (ADBI) decided at the Forum to collaborate in launching NARBO, and a letter of intent was signed at the Forum on 21 March 2003. Then the First General Meeting of NARBO was held in Batu, Indonesia in February 2004.

Before we observe the significance of NARBO activities, let's first evaluate the success of NARBO in term of membership. The membership of NARBO has increased significantly from 43 members from 13 countries just after the 1st General Meeting in 2004, become 69 members from 16 countries as of June 2009. The increase of NARBO members is one of the indications that existence of NARBO is considered very important by many organizations related to IWRM and





river basin organization, not only in Asian region, but also other regions in the world. I think that one of their considerations to join NARBO is to have benefits from this network by sharing information good practices and lessons learned on IWRM among the members.

In term of NARBO activities, during the last five years, NARBO has implemented many activities based on NARBO Action Plans which formulated and agreed by all members during NARBO General Meetings. The scope of activities consist of 1) advocacy, raising awareness, sharing information, good practices and lessons learned on IWRM through the NARBO web site, publications, case studies, electronic newsletter, guidelines and sourcebooks, and media relations; 2) capacity building of RBOs in implementing IWRM and improving water governance through training courses, workshops, performance benchmarking activities, advisory visits, scholarship programs, RBO exchange visits, staff exchange programs, and twinning programs; 3) technical advice on planning, conservation, development, and the proper and efficient operation and maintenance of water resources facilities; and 4) fostering regional cooperation for improved management of water resources in transboundary river basins.

Advocacy, raising awareness, sharing information, good practices and lessons learned on IWRM through the website and electronic newsletter have been done very actively by NARBO Secretariat and members. Related to activities on thematic workshop, NARBO has implemented workshop on various topics on practical water resources management such as water-related disaster and its management in Asian Countries, water allocation and water right, and sustainable management for water resources infrastructures. By implementing these thematic workshops, NARBO members who participate in the workshops, could learn from each other on the topics for capacity building in implementing IWRM and water governance. For the others who didn't participate in the workshop also could learn the topics by assessing the materials from NARBO database.

Related to capacity building of RBOs in implementing IWRM and improving water governance through training courses, NARBO has successfully carried out five training programs in Thailand, Sri Lanka, Korea and Viet Nam. After conducting the 5th IWRM Training, I do believe that NARBO has improved the quality and credibility of its annual program on IWRM to the level of a prestigious regional flagship program. The training program has used a participatory,





trans-disciplinary approach to develop the capacity of participants in understanding and implementing IWRM in their respective river basins. The training that includes pre-training, in-training and post-training activities, have been based on adult learning principles, centered to the needs of the participants.

Related to NARBO performance benchmarking, this activity is considered very important as systematic exercise that ensures an organization's development. This activity is very useful for the RBO members to improve their performance in basin management. In Indonesia, this activity has inspired Directorate General of Water Resources, Ministry of Public Works to conduct performance benchmarking to all RBOs in Indonesia gradually in order to improve river basin management in Indonesia.

From the above evaluation, it could be concluded that NARBO activities in 2004-2008 have reflected its significance to the intention of NARBO establishment. I believe that after implementation of NARBO activities in 2004-2008, NARBO is on the right track to realize the goal of NARBO to help achieve IWRM in river basins throughout Asia and the objective of NARBO to strengthen the capacity and effectiveness of River Basin Organizations (RBOs) in promoting IWRM and improving water governance. Therefore, in the future, it is expected that NARBO will continue the implementation of its activities based on Action Plan agreed by all members. However, NARBO should improve continuously the quality and credibility of each activity.

What are the expectations in the future? It is understood that climate variability results in significant impacts on water availability and safety. Every year, millions people are affected by droughts and floods in our region. In the future, climate change is likely to increase both the number and magnitude of hydrological extremes. It is hoped that NARBO could participate in many initiatives on climate change adaptation and mitigation. By taking into account this issue to NARBO activities, NARBO can assist its members to prepare climate change projections and to assess the impacts of global climate change and land use change on water balance and water quality in the basin level and to develop appropriate policies for the management of the water resources of the region in basin level in mitigating potential impacts of climate changes.

During 2004-2008, NARBO has participated in many activities in the





world for its promotion. I do believe that by participating in International water related events such as World Water Forums, Asia Pacific Water Summits, World Water Week, etc; and participating in specific program such as preparation of IWRM Guidelines at River Basin Level in cooperation with UNESCO, NARBO will strengthen its existence because of increased recognition to the roles of NARBO. I hope that in the future, NARBO will participate more actively in water related events at international and regional levels as many as possible.

Finally, I would like to express my sincere thanks to all NARBO Secretariat Members for their dedication to support NARBO and to all NARBO Members for their active participation in this network. It is hoped that NARBO always has strong support from the Secretariat Member from Japan Water Agency (JWA) and Asian Development Bank, as well as the increased active participation from all NARBO members. With the support from all constituents of NARBO, I will be able to achieve the goal of NARBO to help achieve IWRM in river basins throughout Asia and the objective of NARBO to strengthen the capacity and effectiveness of river basin organizations (RBOs) in promoting IWRM and improving water governance.

Jakarta, July 2009

DR. M. Basuki Hadimuljono

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "M. Basuki Hadimuljono".

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(Former Chairperson of NARBO)

