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รายงานการดำเนินการฉบับสมบูรณ์

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โครงการ

“การจัดประชุมสัมมนา International Seminar on Cultural Diversity of the
Mekong River: Sharing Experience from Japan and Mekong Countries”

สำนักงานกองทุนสนับสนุนการวิจัย

โดย

ศูนย์วิจัยสังคมอนุภูมิภาคุ่มน้ำโขง
คณะศิลปศาสตร์ มหาวิทยาลัยอุบลราชธานี

บทคัดย่อ

รายงานฉบับนี้ เป็นรายงานการดำเนินการโครงการ “การจัดประชุมสัมมนา International Seminar on Cultural Diversity of the Mekong River: Sharing Experience from Japan and Mekong Countries” จัดโดยศูนย์วิจัยสังคมอนุภูมิภาคลุ่มน้ำโขง คณะศิลปศาสตร์ มหาวิทยาลัยอุบลราชธานี ซึ่งจัดขึ้นเมื่อวันที่ 19-20 พฤศจิกายน 2553 โดยมีวัตถุประสงค์เพื่อสร้างการตระหนักถึงความสำคัญของวัฒนธรรมท้องถิ่นและความเป็นภูมิภาคแห่งลุ่มน้ำโขง ซึ่งในปัจจุบันกำลังเผชิญกับความท้าทายต่อการเปลี่ยนแปลงของโลก ซึ่งการสัมมนาในครั้งนี้จะเป็นความร่วมมือระหว่างนักวิชาการในภูมิภาคลุ่มน้ำโขงและญี่ปุ่น เพื่อแลกเปลี่ยนประสบการณ์การทำงานในด้านการพัฒนา การเปลี่ยนแปลงทางวัฒนธรรมและการปรับตัว ความหลากหลายและ การฟื้นฟูวิถีชีวิตของคนในท้องถิ่น เพื่อแสดงให้เห็นว่าความรู้ท้องถิ่นและองค์กรทางสังคมจะสามารถบูรณาการเข้าไปในปฏิบัติการพัฒนาในภูมิภาคได้อย่างไร และเพื่อสร้างจุดแข็งต่อการฟื้นฟูเอกลักษณ์ของภูมิภาค การประชุมดังกล่าวได้รับการตอบรับจากผู้เข้าร่วมประชุมเป็นอย่างดี ผลจากการประชุมไปสู่การแลกเปลี่ยนความรู้ และข้อคิดเห็นต่อประเด็นต่าง ๆ ที่เกี่ยวข้องกับลุ่มน้ำโขง รวมถึงการสร้างเครือข่ายระหว่างนักวิชาการ NGOs ทั้งในและนอกพื้นที่ รวมถึงในระดับนานาชาติและโดยเฉพาะความร่วมมือระหว่างประเทศญี่ปุ่นและลุ่มน้ำโขง

Abstract

This report is the overall report of the “International Seminar on Cultural Diversity of the Mekong River: Sharing Experience from Japan and Mekong Countries” held on November 19-20, 2009 organized by Mekong Sub-region Social Research Center [MSSRC], Faculty of Liberal Arts, Ubon Ratchathani University.

The objective of the seminar is to reemphasize and reevaluate the importance of locally cultural and social sensibilities in the Mekong region, as the pace of economic development quickens and the region’s incorporation into the global economy intensifies. This seminar thus aims to bring together assorted stakeholders – selected Japanese and Southeast Asian regional experts, NGOs, and local voices from the Mekong region – to discuss and share perspectives on development, cultural change and adaptation, diversity, and the resilience of local livelihoods. We aim to assert local culture and worldview into the discourse of Mekong development, to explore how local knowledge and social organization could be better integrated in regional development practices, and to reinvigorate efforts to revive Mekong regional identity.

The outcomes from the seminar bring to sharing knowledge and let us to thinking of important thing to living together in the Mekong region. Indeed, building networks of academics and activists at the local to global level especially with Japanese is also the important one.

สารบัญ

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Project Title: **International Seminar on “Cultural Diversity of the Mekong River: Sharing Experiences from Japan and the Mekong Countries”**

Type of event: Invited Seminar entitled ‘Talk Globally, Act Regionally’

Organizer: **Mekong Sub-region Social Research Center [MSSRC]
Ubon Ratchathani University**

Co-organizers:

- Mekong Program on Water, Environment and Resilience
- Mekong Regional Studies Institute, Ubon Ratchathani University
- Social Research Institute, Chulalongkorn University
- Japan Watch Project, Thammasat University
- International Fellowship Program of Thailand Alumni Network
- Faculty of Law, Ubon Ratchathani University

Supporters:

- Japan Foundation [JF]
- Mekong Program on Water, Environment and Resilience [M-POWER]
- Mekong Regional Studies Institute [MRSI]
- Thailand Research Fund [TRF]

Background:

The Mekong River serves as the life blood for over 60 million people, flowing through a region rich in ethnic and cultural diversity, ancient and modern civilizations, and supporting myriad livelihoods, trade routes, and biohabitats. Home to over seventy different ethnic groups, the river forms an intrinsic part of Southeast Asian society, the cultural and ecological heart of mainland Southeast Asia.

The Mekong river originates on the Tibetan plateau, its flow connecting China and Southeast Asia physically and historically. The downstream Mekong region comprises a common cultural area consisting of the modern-day nation-states of Thailand, Burma, Laos, Cambodia and Vietnam. Each span of the river basin supports a unique part of Mekong culture. The river sustains the livelihoods, norms, rituals, customs and communities central to the formation of the Mekong regionalism. The diversity of Mekong cultures is the most salient characteristic of the basin; highly diverse ethnic groups speaking languages from five different language families; monumental histories marking the waxing and waning of great civilizations and witnessing the transformations of a continent from kingdoms to modern nation-states. Cultural continuity across generations depends on the livelihoods sustained by the river’s resources: its fish, its water, its affordance as a means of transportation and trade. Despite its vast cultural diversity, there are also marked cultural commonalities: Buddhism in particular has been a unifying force and one undergirding the cultural integrity of the Mekong as a region, at least in the lowlands. Other forms of religious belief and rituals involving the river also serve to unite disparate highland and lowland cultures, creating a unity amidst the diversity of Mekong peoples.

The enormous cultural diversity of the region – including groups like the Hmong, Mien, Khmu, Tai-Lao, Cham, Khmer, Kinh, Jarai, Kuay, Stieng, Tampuan, just to name a few – and the vast disparities in livelihoods, economic development and access to social resources have, predictably, both caused and resulted in disputes over natural resources and rights to their use. Competition over the Mekong’s resources is increasingly fierce, with different cultures making different demands based on their particular socioeconomic practices

and societal needs. Ranging from the smallest of subsistence forest dwellers to massive multinational conglomerates and the competing needs of nation-states, the claims being made to riparian resources are vastly different in scale, style, and urgency.

Cultures living along the Mekong have all developed their own systems for understanding, managing, and valuing natural resources, systems which are, to varying degrees, interdependent. With recent dramatic expansions in population and with the relatively sudden reorganization of economics into an ever more global regimen, the resources of the river and the indigenous systems for maintaining them have come under incredible pressure and strain. Many livelihoods that have persisted for centuries are suddenly becoming unviable and eclipsed by alternate forms within a global capitalist system. The river and its resources are being redefined and expropriated by actors often from far afield, who just a few decades ago had little or no interest in the river and who appeared to Mekong people as remote and inconsequential. Now the river is being managed and developed by forces and people who may have no direct presence among those living along the river itself. Local control of resources has passed out of local hands, and this disenfranchisement and disempowerment has led to frustration, anger and discontent. Upstream and downstream relations, often taken for granted as remote and disconnected, now prove to be urgent matters which directly impact the very flow and viability of the river itself. Among the most critical such hotspots are the Tonle Sap biosphere in Cambodia, Sipandone wetlands in Laos, the Mekong Delta in lower Vietnam, and the Mun River watershed in northeastern Thailand. Each of these illustrate the importance and centrality of Mekong resources, especially the biodiversity of fisheries, upon which people have relied for millennia and the rapid and drastic way such resources can be endangered by global forces acting on very local contexts.

Understanding the factors influencing the changes in Mekong culture and people's adaptation to such changes can be fostered through open and frank dialogue. Only through such dialogue will Mekong societies, and broader Asian and Southeast Asian societies at large, be able to ensure peace and co-prosperity in the region. The use or exploitation of resources in any one area of the Mekong now becomes an issue among all cultures and ethnicities dependent on the river. Open-minded debate and a willingness to learn and understand each other is absolutely critical to the region's immediate future stability.

Current subregional cooperation in the Mekong region is predicated on policy coordination among states in a circumscribed space. The cooperation process between the Mekong countries is currently envisioned as broader intra-regional projects rather than as a form of integration within the area it delineates. Japan and Western countries have, as donors, encouraged the Lower Mekong countries to promote subregionalism. Prominent among these are the Swedish government, the Danish government, the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank; Japan, too, has been a key donor in the region and has emphasized alleviating poverty of the Mekong people by promoting infrastructure to facilitate trade in the region. Japan has a long history of economic support in the region, though initiatives that have brought tremendous growth. At this seminar, we propose to share the lessons of Japanese's experiences in promoting subregional growth, including the subregionalism perspectives, with relevant local and Southeast Asian stakeholders. This intention forms a central part of the proposed seminar.

The Mekong region's integration into global economics and politics prompts us to offer a conference motif: *Talk globally and act regionally*. The aim is to reconcile the different scales of development and resource management, between the global and the local, and to ensure that local voices and perceptions are not ignored or drowned out by dominant discourses of international development and nation-state politics. We aim to facilitate open dialogue targeting the impacts of regionalism and regionalization among Mekong cultures and societies. We want to integrate the voices of international and local expertise, and thereby

reconcile and empower both. Our seminar aims to stimulate the open sharing of different perspectives and learning in order to envision alternate forms of globalization which allow more space for local voices. We want to promote regionalization in Southeast Asia in a way that includes more than the voices of elite powerbrokers. Given Japan's leadership and innovation in many of these areas and Japanese commitment to the Mekong region, we aim in particular to foster connections between Japanese expertise and local expertise to realize these goals.

Underlying concepts and approach of the seminar, learning points and sharing perspectives

The objective of the seminar is to reemphasize and reevaluate the importance of local cultural and social sensibilities in the Mekong region, as the pace of economic development quickens and the region's incorporation into the global economy intensifies. Local worldviews have been increasingly marginalized in the face of dramatic socioeconomic upheaval, and this has led to social conflict, alienation, and dislocation.

This seminar thus aims to bring together assorted stakeholders – selected Japanese and Southeast Asian regional experts, NGOs, and local voices from the Mekong region – to discuss and share perspectives on development, cultural change and adaptation, diversity, and the resilience of local livelihoods. We aim to assert local culture and worldview into the discourse of Mekong development, to explore how local knowledge and social organization may be better integrated in regional development practices, and to reinvigorate efforts to revive Mekong regional identity.

Understanding sociocultural change and how people have adapted themselves to emerging conditions is an important area of research. But we submit that it is not only locals who need to adapt and change. Larger stakeholders, wielding large budgets, international support, and powerful discourses of development and economic prosperity must also adapt to local values ways of knowing. Debates on cultural diversity and its meaningful incorporation into development projects can lead to more fruitful economic outcomes and offers a better chance for lasting peace. Creating peace in society is a long term process which requires the engagement of all parties and every sector of society. It requires being flexible and open-minded, innovative and diplomatic. Our seminar proposes to foster peace and understanding by creating dialogue on the following:

- Understanding Mekong culture and its cultural diversity as based on Mekong resources.
- Understanding the dimensions of subregionalism and globalization, and how they impact Mekong resources and the maintenance of local livelihoods. This includes understanding how Mekong cultures have changed and transformed, and incorporates issues of international cross-border cooperation.
- Learning and sharing from countries and experts beyond the region, but who influence Southeast Asian regional economic growth, and understanding the root of conflicts to assist in both prevention and resolution.

To reach the goal of the seminar as laid out, the seminar will invite experts representing different scales of influence, from international, to regional, to local. Topics will be organized in a way to enhance the sharing of perspectives across different panel sessions and topics: globalization and the Mekong culture, enhancing the open dialogue for eliminating Mekong conflicts due to the use of the resource and understanding the differences between cultures that contribute to the Mekong society. *Talk globally, Act Regionally* as the underlying motif of the seminar will foster an open dialogue for learning and sharing perspectives. Panel sessions at the seminar will address the following topics:

- Globalization, subregionalism and urgent social issues related to the Mekong society and culture.
- The role of Japan in the Mekong region.
- Understanding Mekong ethnicity, race, gender, and cultural difference in the context of conflicts over the use of riparian water resources.
- Promoting local resilience in maintaining indigenous Mekong culture and customs
- Rethinking conflict prevention and conflict resolution across local and global scales in the Mekong region.
- Law and Regulation in the Mekong: Trade and River Management

Summary:

The seminar is intended to be the first of many steps in the effort to make local voices heard and to make local cultural relevant to development discourse. The seminar is being organized by the Mekong Subregion Social Research Center (MSSRC) at Ubon Ratchathani University, whose mission and research foci specifically address Mekong development and local culture issues. As organizers of the seminar, we believe Mekong cultural issues have been neglected in the last few decades, at the same as the region has been targeted for accelerated development. Just when local cultural adaptation should matter most, it has been almost entirely ignored. We believe that this seminar, drawing on and integrating Japanese and local Southeast Asian expertise, can serve as a valuable contribution for revitalizing local cultures and insisting they be made relevant, part and parcel of any development agenda.

We believe that our seminar, as proposed, would resonate strongly with the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs' Mekong-Japan Exchange Year 2009, that it is commensurate with the Ministry's goals, and that building networks and alliances among Japanese and Southeast Asian experts would prove enormously beneficial to the people of the Mekong, and to Asia as a whole.

Seminar snapshot:

- 1 ½ day seminar with 100 participants, to be held in Ubon Ratchathani Province, Thailand
- Format: invited seminar with panel sessions and exhibitions

Duration: Thursday 19 - Friday 20 November 2009 [1 ½ Day seminar]

Objective:

The objective of the seminar is to reemphasize and reevaluate the importance of local cultural and social sensibilities in the Mekong region, as the pace of economic development quickens and the region's incorporation into the global economy intensifies. Local worldviews have been increasingly marginalized in the face of dramatic socioeconomic upheaval, and this has led to social conflict, alienation, and dislocation.

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Focal Points:

The premises underlying the seminar include:

- That it is critical to understand Mekong cultures and their reliance on Mekong river resources.
- That it is important to reconcile and integrate the perspectives of localism, subregionalism, and globalization, and mitigate the impacts that regional development has on indigenous cultures and livelihoods.
- That learning and sharing among governors, funding supporters, scholars, experts and locals from the region and from supporting countries like Japan is a crucial way to ensure regional peace, economic prosperity, cultural dignity, and human rights in the Mekong region.

Main Participants: 100 participants: Japanese and Mekong Countries academics, government officials, NGOs, and representatives from Japan organizations.

Expected Outcomes:

Our key objective is to reassert the importance of Mekong culture into the discourses and debates surrounding development. We believe this seminar will contribute to that goal by fostering dialogue and professional relationships among interested experts and local stakeholders. This seminar will serve as the basis for durable future collaborations, research, and information exchange. The MSSRC, as organizers of the seminar, also intend to produce an edited volume (Proceedings) based on the panel presentations. We also expect substantial media coverage and publicity among interested organizations that will emphasize our focus on Mekong culture and our collaboration with the Japan foundation and our participation in the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs' Mekong-Japan Exchange Year 2009

Programme
International Seminar on Cultural Diversity of the Mekong River:
Sharing Experiences from Japan and the Mekong Countries

การสัมมนาทางวิชาการนานาชาติเรื่อง
“ความหลากหลายทางวัฒนธรรมในลุ่มน้ำโขง:
การแลกเปลี่ยนประสบการณ์จากญี่ปุ่นและประเทศในลุ่มน้ำโขง”
Thursday 19 - Friday 20 November 2009
Tubtim Room, Ubon International Hotel,
Ubon Ratchathani, Thailand

Thursday, 19 November 2009

Morning

08.00 - 08.30 Registration

08.30 – 08.40 **Conference Background**

Asst.Prof.Dr. Inthira Sahee Dean, Faculty of Liberal Arts, UBU

08.40 – 09.00 **Opening Address**

Prof. Dr. Prakob Virojanagud President, UBU

09.00 – 10.00 Keynote Speech

“Globalization, Subregionalism and the Mekong Social Issues”

Prof. Surichai Wan’geao Faculty of Political Science, Chulalongkorn University

And **Prof. Yuji Baba** Kyoto Bunkyo University

10.00 - 10.45

Session I: The Roles of Japan and ADB in the Mekong Region

Jean-Pierre Verbiest ADB Thailand Country Director

Assoc Prof. Dr. Siriporn Wajjwalku Director of National Policy and
Transnational Relations Division, TRF

10.45 – 11.00 Break

11.00 - 12.30

**Session II: Understanding Mekong Ethnicity, Gender and Difference, and Their Roles
in Conflicts over the Use of Riparian Resources**

Prof. Dr. Philip Hirsch Director, Australian Mekong Resource Centre

Khun Tee Chairman, Pa-O Youth Organization

Montree Chantawong Towards Ecological Recovery and Regional Alliance (TERRA)

Chair: **Assoc. Prof. Sommai Chinnak** Ubon Ratchathani University

12.30 – 13.30 Lunch

Afternoon

13.30 – 14.45

Session III: Promoting Resilience in Maintaining Mekong Culture and Customs

Assoc.Prof. Motoki Akitsu Kyoto University
Assoc.Prof. Lu Xing Yunnan University
Dr. Thanyatip Sripana Institute of Asian Studies
Chulalongkorn University

Chair: **Asst. Prof. Dr. Yaowalak Apichatvullop**

Director, Center for Research on Plurality in the Mekong (CERP), Khonkaen University

14.45 – 15.00 Break

15.00 – 16.30

Session IV: M-POWER Special Session: Mekong Water Governance

Assoc.Prof. Lu Xing Yunnan University
Kanokporn Deeburee M-POWER Fellow
Jakkrit Sangkamanee M-POWER Fellow

Ram Chandra Bastakoti M-POWER Coordinator
Prof. Phijaisakdi Horayangkura Faculty of Law Assumption University

Facilitator: **Asst. Prof. Dr. Kanokwan Manorom** Director, MSSRC

Friday 20 November 2009

9.00 – 12.00

The Future of the Mekong: Mutual understanding as a way towards conflict prevention and resolution focusing future roles of Japan

Katsumi Kakazu Director General, Japan Foundation
Pakawan Chufamanee Thailand Nation Mekong Committee
Mekong River Commission (MRC)
Asst. Prof. Dr. Kanokwan Manorom Director, MSSRC, Ubon Ratchathani University
Asst. Prof. Dr. Yaowalak Apichatvullop Director, CERP

Chair: **Asst. Prof. Dr. Peter Vail** National University of Singapore

12.00 – 12.30 Closing Remark

Katsumi Kakazu Executive Director,
The Japan Foundation, Southeast Asian Bureau
Director General, The Japan Foundation, Bangkok

Narrative Report

Background of the seminar

On 19-20 November 2009, Mekong Sub-region Social Research Center (MSSRC) of Faculty of Liberal Arts, Ubon Ratchathani University had organized an International Seminar on 'Cultural Diversity of the Mekong River: Sharing Experiences from Japan and the Mekong Countries'. This seminar was undertaken in collaboration with a number of institutions, including the Mekong Program on Water, Environment and Resilience, the Mekong Regional Studies Institute of Ubon Ratchathani University, Social Research Institute of Chulalongkorn University, Japan Watch Project of Thammasat University, International Fellowship Program of Thailand Alumni Network and Faculty of Law of Ubon Ratchathani University with supported by Thailand research Fund and Japan Foundation, with 150 participants including academics, government, local NGOs, international NGOs, students and villagers that came from Thailand, Japan, China, Australia, Singapore and Burma .

Our seminar aimed to reemphasize and reevaluate the importance of locally cultural and social sensibilities in the Mekong region We expected to bring together assorted stakeholders – selected Japanese and Southeast Asian regional experts, NGOs, and local voices from the Mekong region – to discuss and share perspectives on development, cultural change and adaptation, diversity, and the resilience of local livelihoods. We also hoped to assert local culture and worldview into the discourse of Mekong development, to explore how local knowledge and social organization could be better integrated in regional development practices, and to reinvigorate efforts to revive Mekong regional identity.

The seminar was divided into 6 themes including;

1. Globalization, Sub regionalism and the Mekong Social Issues
2. Session I: The Roles of Japan and ADB in the Mekong Region
3. Session II: Understanding Mekong Ethnicity, Gender and Difference, and Their Roles in Conflicts over the Use of Riparian Resources
4. Session III: Promoting Resilience in Maintaining Mekong Culture and Customs
5. Session IV: M-POWER Special Session; Mekong Water Governance
6. The Future of the Mekong: Mutual understanding as a way towards conflict prevention and resolution focusing future roles of Japan

Achieving objectives

According to our observation throughout the course of the seminar, we assessed that we quite achieved our objectives. Information, contents and critical critiques, questions and concerns pertaining to the current Mekong region and Mekong river basin situation were significantly raised in the seminar as we had ever expected. Detailed summarization of them are below.

On the theme, “Globalization, Sub regionalism and the Mekong Social Issues”, our keynote speaker, Prof. Surichi Wan’gao, a lecture at Chulalongorn University argued that there were crashes of values and egos of ‘globalization between two camps, those who supported and opposed globalization.. He furthered addressed importance of network in supporting each other to analyze impacts of global policies on local people and roles of academics and research in drafting development agenda and monitoring a powerful globalization in the Mekong region.

The presentation of Prof. Yuji Baba from Kyoto Bunkyo University on a “Thai Lue in the trans-national context” properly supported arguments of Prof. Surichai. His speech

highlighted ethnic peoples who had been marginalized and had become stateless people with a context of globalization.

On the session I: “The Roles of Japan and ADB (Asian Development Bank) in the Mekong Region”, Mr. Jean-Pierre Verbiest, an ADB Country director gave us critical roles of ADB in the GMS. Their roles in GMS’ development were mainly based on a concept of 3Cs – “Connectivity, Competitiveness, and Community”. According to his ADB’s standpoints, the 3 Cs had provided lots of economic and development opportunities to many people in many different ways. Associate Professor Dr. Siriporn Wajjwalku, director of National Policy and Transnational Relations Division of TRF, gave a similar view on the connectivity of people, goods and services around the Mekong region through many development efforts and based on regional integration ideology which was pushed heavily by big donors like Japan and ADB. She also was provocatively to show us how little Mekong people had known about these donors, especially Japan despite of the fact that Japan had played such a big role in the region many years. Very few knowledge about Japan had been documented by the Mekong people. Therefore, she ended up her lively presentation by motivating participants to further study and learn more about Japan.

On session II: “Understanding Mekong Ethnicity, Gender and Difference, and Their Roles in Conflicts over the Use of Riparian Resources”, Professor Dr. Phillip Hirsch Director of Australian Mekong Resource Center, critically analyzed relationships between differences and conflicts over the use of riparian resources in the Mekong River Basin. He noted that development had brought both potential conflicts and differences for both rich and poor people. He finally concluded that development must respect differences of people. Access to resource must be based on social justice, Potential conflict must be steadily reduced by respecting richness of cultural and natural diversities revolving around Mekong people and their environmental contexts. Mr. Montree Juntawong, the NGOs from TERRA reflected impacts of Mekong Power Grid on local scale, especially a case of Lao people by clearly saying that poor people would not get profits from this project. Mr. Khun Tee who is a chairman of Pa-O Youth Organization echoed voices of the Burmese people living along the Thai and Burmese border who had long been suffering from the military regime. He showed that these people had no opportunities to seek their secured life in accessing to resources as these resources were controlled by the regime.

On session III: “Promoting Resilience in Maintaining Mekong Culture and Customs”, Dr. Thanyatip Sripana a researcher at Asian Studies Institute of Chulalongkorn University, presented her research about the Vietnamese migrant workers living in Malaysia. She told a long story of their difficult lives and coping strategies to survive in new and different social and cultural spaces. Prof. Lu Xing, Director of GMS study center of Yunnan University, presented that an introduction of cash crops to ethnic communities in Sipsong Panna had brought a disintegration within ethnic groups. Some ethnic people had benefits of a project whilst other got very few. And Prof. Motoki Akisu from Kyoto University said that development activities had been involved by both local people and NGO network. He mainly discussed roles of NGOs in supporting local development using a case study of Nan Province of Thailand.

On session IV: “M-POWER Special Session; Mekong Water Governance, the research team of Mekong Program on Water, Environment and Resilience” presented background of what was MPOWER, who they were and how they worked, achieved and contributed to water governance in the Mekong river management. The two research fellows of MPOWER presented their research. Jakkrit Sangkamanee, a Phd. Candidate at Australian National University discussed a concept of hydro-ethnology and political economy of water

management using a case of a small scale irrigation project launched at community located along the Mekong river. He argued that water management in this village was mainly based on political motive. Villagers had exercised their power to negotiate and mobilize water resource with government overtime. For example, villagers wrote a proposal to the government to get a water project. Kanokporn Deepuree, a Phd. candidate at Research Center for Social Development of Chiang Mai University presented her research on roles of women in fishery management in Songkram river basin, Thailand. She argued that cultural dimension and local knowledge had played great roles in managing fishery resource. Prof. Dr. Pijaisak Horayankura a law professor at Assumption University, discussed international law and regulation must be considered to be a tool in managing Mekong mainstream.

On the second day of the seminar, we organized a session on “The Future of the Mekong: Mutual Understanding as a Way towards Conflict Prevention and Resolution”. We intended to focus on the future roles of Japan in the Mekong development. Mr. Katsumi Kakasu, a director of Japan Foundation was invited to give a speech on roles of Japan Foundation in a Mekong development. He presented important JF’s activities as a donor organization. Detailed programs supported were presented including education, cultural and academic exchanges. Following his speech, it was a discussion on roles of Mekong River Commission (MRC) presented by a representative from Thailand National Mekong Committee (TNMC), Mrs. Pakawan Chufamane. She described functions of MRC in the Mekong basin management based on triple bottom lines, “Environment, Social and Economy”. She insisted that MRC was still an intergovernment agency doing research and seeking knowledge to support decision making of the country’s members of MRC. Dr. Kanokwan Manorum, a director of MSSRC presented her research on Contract farming in Laos. She argued that contract farming was contested by two camps, Neo-liberalization and Neo-Marxism. Lao farmers joining contract had less power to negotiate with firms. Small farmers were integrated to regional food trade. How smallholders would get benefit from contract farming must be further studied. Lastly, Dr. Yaowalak Apichatvullop, a director of Center for Research on Plurality in the Mekong Region of Khon Kaen University, presented way forward to mutual understanding and working together among research institutes to understand a transition of Mekong region .

Conclusion

In conclusion, we have believed that this seminar is very fruitful for creating a mutual understanding among institutes about the Mekong region within a context of globalization. The seminar also emphasised that we were undergoing and encountering regional development challenged by free market economy. These challenges included high mobility of people and goods around the region, environmental depletion, cash crops squeezing out food crops, marginalization of people who could not adapt to modernization or access to benefits of market economy, , differentiation and potential conflicts among groups of people who had different access to resources and benefits of development projects. We also had seen a big push of donors like Japan and ADB in developing the Mekong region. Finally we had learnt that we must not only have a regional approach to understand integration of Mekong region but also find ways to cope with and respond to the Mekong challenges in these days and in the long run.

General Evaluation of the Project

The seminar was set for one and a half day composing of topics reflecting a core concept of our seminar, ‘talk globally, act regionally’. The topics ranged from local to global issues as seen from the seminar agenda. We conveyed the discussion through given speeches and thematic panels from many scholars working in the Mekong. To keep the seminar more attractive, we provided some exhibitions the Mekong photographs portraying lives and bloods of Mekong people depending on Mekong river basin. Hence, productive works of

International Fellowship Program of Thailand Alumni Network (IFP) and International Child Support (ICS) were displayed. .

We had evaluated our seminar by using the questionnaire. However, only a few participants returned an evaluation form back to us. Some of them emailed us later saying very positive about the seminar. Most of the suggestions made by them were on improving better facilities in the seminar room, like loud speaker and air conditioner.

On thematic sessions, some participants suggested us to focus more on particular issues and inclusion of voices of grassroots people. As we had local people including NGOs attending the seminar, we sought a support from IFP, one of the co-organizer, to translate from English to Thai for those who could not use English language.

Overall, we had found relatively successful in organizing this seminar as we had seen the seminar went interactively and constructively. Some participants brought up some critical questions about Mekong development such as what were the appropriate roles of donors to keep development sustainably and how institutes working in the Mekong region could be strengthened and networked through series of constructive dialogues, possible collaborations and so on. Participants were sparked and motivated by one of the speakers who was saying that we had known little about Japan's roles in the Mekong while Japan had already played such crucial roles in Mekong development long time ago. Therefore, this seminar paved a good channel for many people to understand Japan and to encourage people to find further ways to know more about Japan and its big and significant roles in the Mekong.

Hence, we had found that this seminar opened opportunities for people and institutes to know each others. For example, the seminar had provided space for both Japanese scholars, NGOs, regional scholars and local academics to further develop their possible network and collaboration. Scholars from Waseda University attending our seminar later on came to visit our center, MSSRC and other institute at Khon Kean University who had worked on the Mekong issues. They wanted to learn more about what these institutes had been doing about the Mekong.

Interm of no. of participants joining our seminar was more than we expected. Actually we planed to have 100 participants. In fact, about 150 people were joining our seminar. Although the Laotian, Vietnamese and Cambodian scholars could not join this event because of their internal constrains, we had some speakers presenting about some of their stories.

Number of participants joined the seminar were more than we expected. They were from many sectors including academics, government, local NGOs, international NGOs, students and villagers. This seminar opened opportunity for both the host, MSSRC's and other institutes to develop further collaboration Although the Vietnamese and Laotian speakers could not join us because of their time. We had people who studied about these two counties talked about these countries. It was very pity that we did not have our friends from Cambodian because of political reason. It was very good that we had also Japanese people working in the Northeast region of Thailand joined the seminar.

The discussion during the seminar was very fruitful especially on the second day. It showed that there was a strong debate about Mekong Development and the role of Japan in the region.

Some minor changes of the seminar's agenda were made. Only one session was dropped out which was "Law and the Mekong Management". As we firstly planed to have the Faculty of Law of Ubon Rathchathani University to co-host with us and run this session, but they decided to cancel their program later. Second, we had a cancellation from our Vietnamese scholar who was supposed to be one of the panelists. We then promptly replaced her by inviting the other scholar to give a presentation about Vietnamese people. Our Cambodian friend gave us very short notice about not coming to our seminar because of political reasons (it was just about a time that political dispute was hotly sparkling between the Thailand and Cambodia). We regretted not to have our Cambodian friends to share their knowledge with us.

Lesson for carrying out the project

We have learnt that partnerships in working together are very important. Therefore, we will continue to seek a cooperation with Japanese, other regional experts, institutes and NGOs to run useful, creative and fruitful activities to enhance our understanding about the Mekong and critically reflect challenges and ways to cope with them.

Pictures



Opening Address by Prof. Dr. Prakob Virojanagud, President, UBU



Keynote Speech "Globalization, Subregionalism and the Mekong Social Issues"
Prof. Surichai Wan'geao And Prof. Yuji Baba



Session I : The Roles of Japan and ADB in the Mekong Region
Jean-Pierre Verbiest , Thailand Country Director, ADB
Assoc Prof. Dr. Siriporn Wajjwalku Thammasat University/



Session II: Understanding Mekong Ethnicity, Gender and Difference, and Their Roles in Conflicts over the Use of Riparian Resources



Session III: Promoting Resilience in Maintaining Mekong Culture and Customs



Session IV: M-POWER Special Session: Mekong Water Governance



The Future of the Mekong: Mutual understanding as a way towards conflict prevention and resolution focusing future roles of Japan



Closing Remark by Mr. Katsumi Kakazu
Executive Director, The Japan Foundation, Southeast Asian Bureau
Director General, Japan Foundation, Bangkok



Exhibition



Participants & Discussion

International Seminar on Cultural Diversity of the Mekong River: Sharing Experiences from Japan and the Mekong Countries

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ภาคผนวก

Globalization, Subregionalism and Mekong Social Issues

Sharing experiences for what?

Surichai Wun'Gaeo

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Chulalongkorn University

Presidents, Asian Rural Sociology Association [ARSA]

Surichai Wun'gaeo, Ubon Ratchathani, 19 November 2009

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Key Points

- Logics of Globalization
- Possibilities for Redefinition from our Sharing of Experiences.
- Time for Perspectives Change

Surichai Wun'gaeo, Ubon Ratchathani, 19 November 2009

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Globalization

1. Economic Globalization

- *Market Logic : the prime movers: trade , investment , consumption
- *Information and Communication Technology (ICT)
- *Hegemony of neoliberalism: market fundamentalism

2. Deficits of Economic Globalization

- *Environmental and resources deficits
- *Governance and Democratic deficits
- *Human security deficits
- *Social deficits : inequality and injustices

3. Social Globalization [Secondary Logic]

- One-eyed Giant of **Economism**
- G8 → G 20
- ASEAN Charter
- Joint China –Japan–Korea: **East Asian Community**

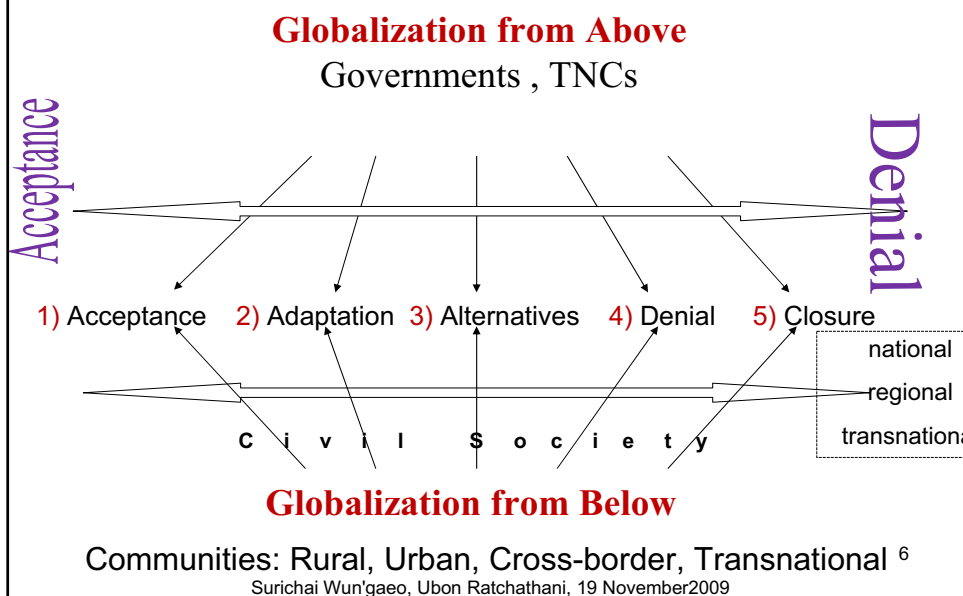
Development Experiences in an Era of Extremes:

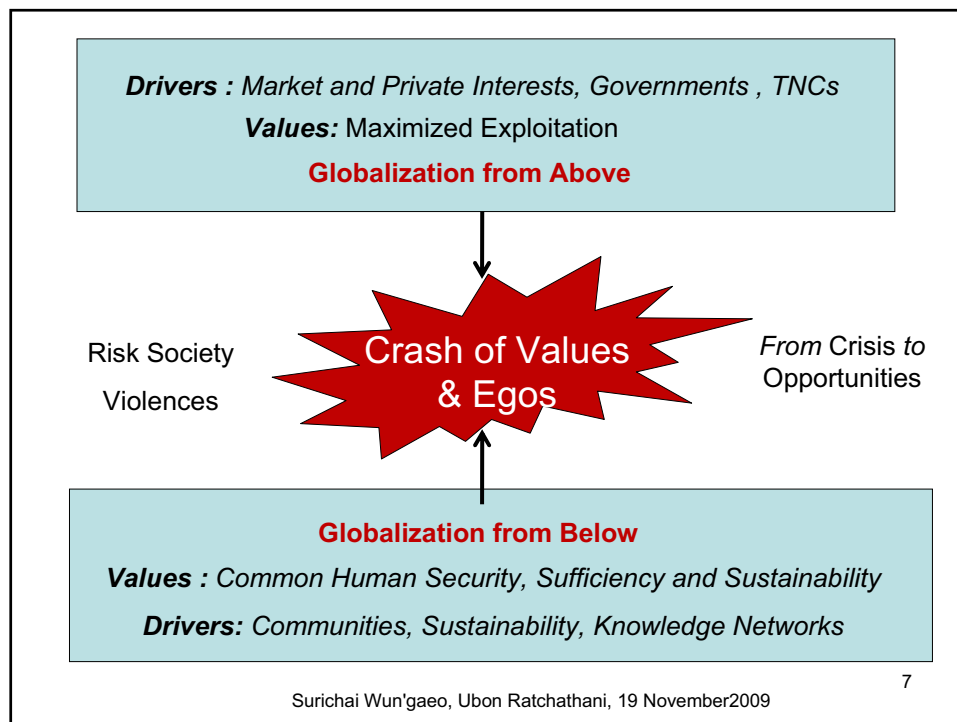
- Fast-track Globalization, Competitiveness and Human Insecurities, i.e. FTAs, EPAs
- World of Winners and Losers
- ◊ 80 % of the Region's GDP belongs to 1 upper classes of 15% people; remaining 20 % shared by lower classes of 85% people in developing countries
- Unregulated financial market and global CRISIS

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Globalization and Social Conflicts





Mekong Social Issues

a) East Asia and Mekong Region

- ◇ Greatest cultural, economic , ecological diversity
- ◇ Responses to Global and Planetary crisis

b) Human insecurities under Globalization:

- ◇ Community disintegrations and cultural fragmentations
- ◇ Explosive migration and human trafficking
- ◇ Financial instability, Volatility of capital flows
- ◇ Communicable diseases , pandemics
- ◇ Environmental disruptions and global warming
- ◇ Media and childhood insecurity
- ◇ Competitive and Antagonistic Nationalisms and

Cross-border citizen insecurities

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Context of Imbalances & New Politics of Empowerment

- Regionalization of development:
“national interests” vs. “transboundary interests”
- Stronger private economic actors & market forces
VS Weaker social actors/stakeholders
- Polarizing Discourses: Increasing distrusts and social alienation
- ASEAN, ADB, MRC for whom? Legitimacy crisis?
- What values for our common future?
Solidarity, Human Security and Social Justice

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Challenges for our Common Future

- Market-driven globalization: Governance beyond Governments
- New need for *multi-level, multi-layered governance*
- Necessity to have/create an atmosphere of partnerships (No country, No actors/stakeholders can do it alone)

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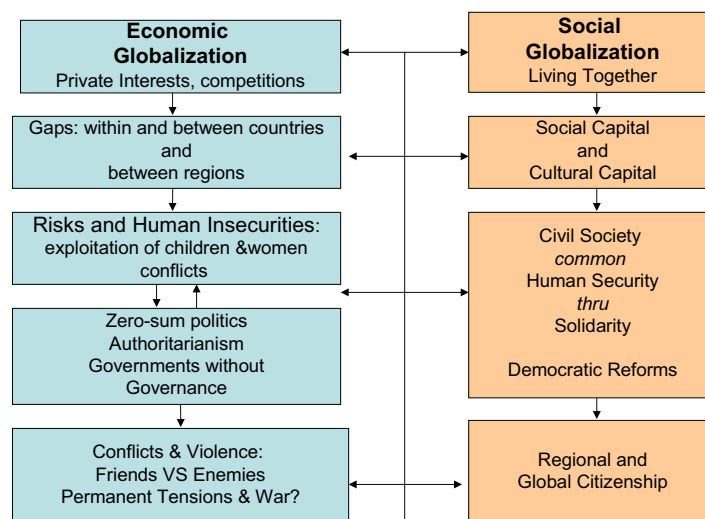
Challenges for our Common Future

- “Real-world” problems of development, e.g. trade-off between resources exploitation & conservation
- Perception gaps & unfavorable climate of opinions
- Complexity of actors/stakeholders & actions
- Institutionalizing Communities and CSO as legitimate stakeholders
- Universities and the research networks as transformative learners

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Globalization(s), Subregionalism and Human Security



Social Learning
Beyond National Models

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Conclusion

1. New Awareness
 - Globalization [s] and Risks
 - Politics of Identity and its Limits
2. New Realization of Perspective Change
 - Economic ≠ Social integration
 - Institutional lags
 - Hybrid Governance

Conclusion

3. Necessity of **Partnerships**
 - Mutual Learning in Multi-stakeholder context
4. Need for Creation of Enabling Environments,
and new Policy Platforms
5. New Knowledge and Research - Policy Platforms
 - Transformative Learning



International Seminar on "Cultural Diversity of the Mekong River : Sharing Experiences from Japan and Mekong Countries"



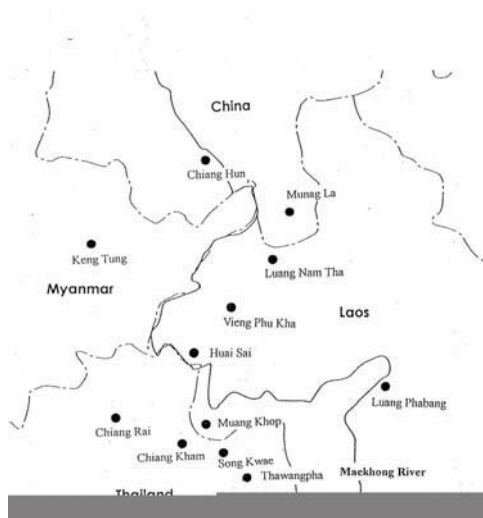
Yuji BABA

Kyoto Bunkyo University, Japan

19 – 20 November 2009
Ubon Ratchathani, Thailand



Tai Lue Migration from Muang La



Village in Muang La in Sipsong Panna



Chao Luang Muang La ritual in Thawanpha, Nan



Chao Luang Muang La ritual in Thawanpha, Nan



Ho in Phonsali, Northern Laos



Temple in Muang U, Phonsali, Northern Laos



U spirit ritual in Thawanpa, Nan : a part of Chao Luang Muang La ritual



Man Kho ritual in Thawanpa, Nan : a
part of Chao Luang Muang La ritual



Tai Lue in Chiang Kham,
Phayao in festival



Roles of Japan & ADB in Mekong Subregion

International Seminar on Cultural Diversity of the Mekong River:
Sharing Experiences from Japan and the Mekong Countries

Mr. Jean-Pierre Verbiest
Country Director
Asian Development Bank

Ubun Ratchathani
19-20 November 2009



ADB

The Greater Mekong Subregion (GMS)

Myanmar

Land area: 677 thou sq km

Population: 54.8 M

GDP per capita: US\$255 (2005)

Thailand

Land area: 513 thou sq km

Population: 65.8 M

GDP per capita: US\$3,133

The GMS in 2006

Land area: 2.6 M sq km

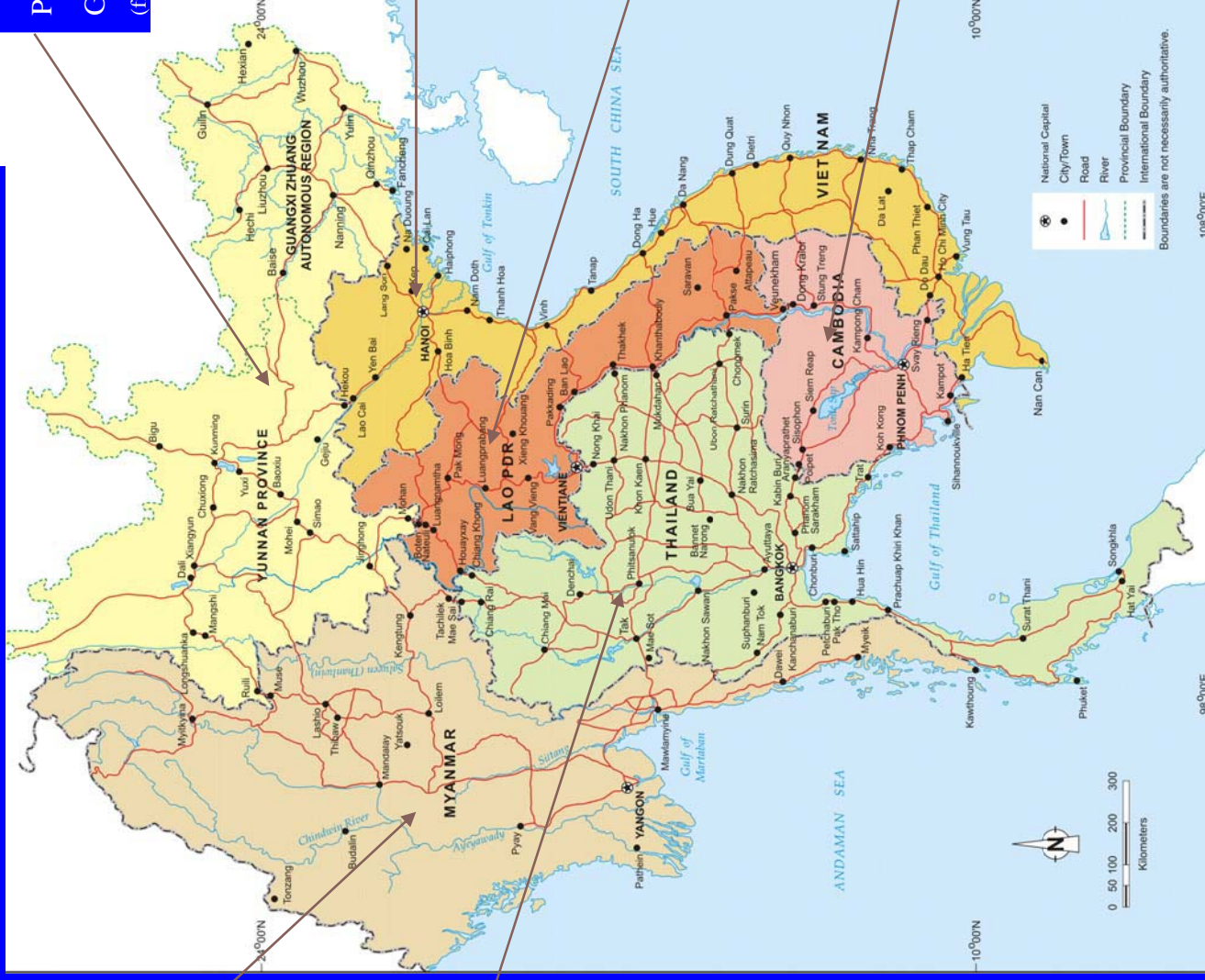
Population: 323 M

GDP per capita: US\$1,453*

* excludes Myanmar



1991/2009



People's Republic of China

Land area: 633 thou sq km

Population: 97.3 M

GDP per capita: US\$1,135

(figures for Yunnan and Guangxi only)

Viet Nam

Land area: 332 thou sq km

Population: 84.1 M

GDP per capita: US\$724

Lao PDR

Land area: 237 thou sq km

Population: 5.7 M

GDP per capita: US\$601

Cambodia

Land area: 181 thou sq km

Population: 14.1 M

GDP per capita: US\$510

Key Challenges in the GMS in the early 1990s

- ◆ Recent conflict
- ◆ Lack of access to markets and other economic opportunities, and social services
- ◆ High incidence of communicable diseases, illegal drug use, trafficking of women and children
- ◆ Degradation of the environment and unsustainable depletion of natural resources



Why regional cooperation in the GMS?

- ◆ Allows countries to take advantage of their complementarities and linkages
- ◆ Provides an important tool to address shared challenges
- ◆ Enables countries to support each other in pursuing their respective national development goals

Regional cooperation is the only answer to the development challenge of land-locked countries

The GMS Program

- ◆ Strategic priorities:
Connectivity, Competitiveness,
Community (3Cs)

- ◆ GMS sectors and themes

- Transport
- Telecommunications
- Energy
- Environment
- Tourism
- Human resource development
- Trade Facilitation
- Investment
- Agriculture



GMS Results

Connectivity:

Facilitating
subregional trade
and investment

2015

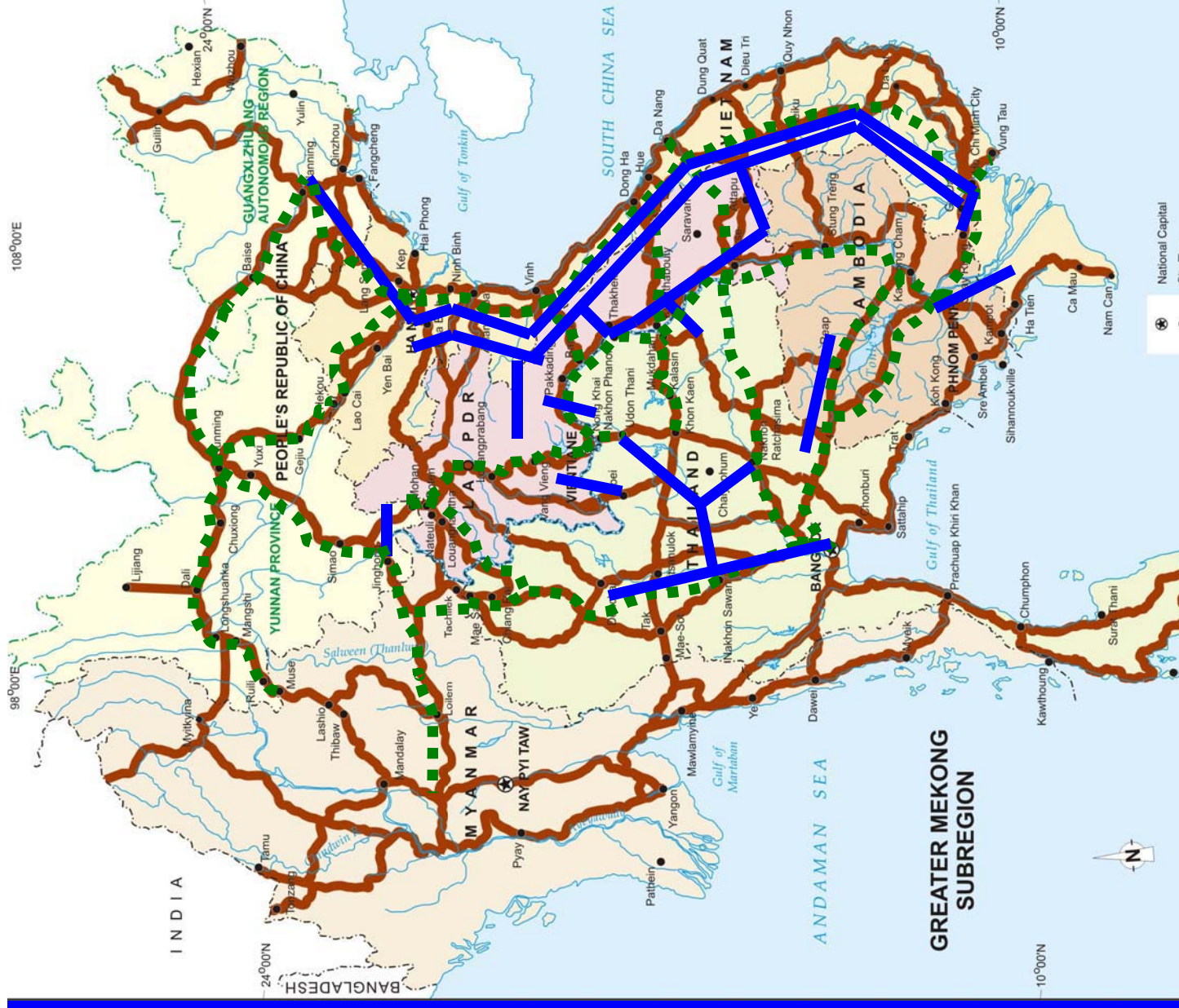
Roads

Telecommunications

Power Transmission
Line



1991/2009



GMS Results

- Competitiveness:* Simplifying processes for cross-border commerce and tourism
- ◆ Trade and transport facilitation
 - ◆ GMS Business Forum – encouraging private-public sector dialogue
 - ◆ Cooperation in agriculture
 - ◆ Managing the environment and shared natural resources

GMS Results

Community: Jointly addressing shared concerns

- ◆ Communicable disease control
- ◆ Promotion of safe migration
- ◆ Prevention of trafficking of women and children
- ◆ Promotion of the GMS as a single tourist destination
- ◆ Building capacity for development management

Macroeconomic and Poverty Indicators of GMS Countries

| | 1992 | 2006 |
|---|---------------------|----------------------|
| Total exports (US\$ million) | 36,343 ^a | 181,761 ^a |
| Tourist arrivals (thousands) | 10,005 (1995) | 22,378 |
| Foreign direct investment (US\$ million) | 2,144 | 6,969 |

^a Excludes the People's Republic of China (PRC)

| | Poverty Incidence (US\$1-a-Day) Headcount Ratio (in %) | |
|--------------------------------------|--|---------|
| | 1990 | 2003 |
| Cambodia | 46.0 | 33.8 |
| PRC: Yunnan/ Guangxi ^b | 23.8/7.8 | 7.9/3.4 |
| Lao PDR | 52.7 | 28.8 |
| Thailand | 10.1 | 0.7 |
| Viet Nam | 50.7 | 9.7 |

^b Based on national poverty line

