

# LEADERSHIP IN PREPARING RIVER BASINS FOR FUTURE



**1st NARBO IWRM Executive Retreat  
on Leadership in River Basins**  
20-22 June 2011; Malang, Indonesia

# Water Executives from across Asia Discuss Leadership in the Regions River Basins

## Leadership for IWRM – Unprecedented Challenges

### How do they do it?

Leadership for integrated water resources management (IWRM) in Asia's river basins poses unprecedented challenges. How are IWRM executives maximizing their leadership in preparing river basins for the future? How do they enable win-win solutions among basin stakeholders to advance the IWRM process in the basin "up the spiral"? How do they keep political commitment to support sustained change over time? How do they expand their autonomy to take action rapidly and effectively? How do they address the water-food-energy nexus in the basin? How do they inspire staff, partners and stakeholders for a bigger vision, higher performance as change agents, smarter knowledge management, and a paperless office?

Acknowledging the complexity confronting the management of Asia's river basins, Mr. Keizrul Bin Abdullah, Chairperson of the Network of River Basin Organizations (NARBO), observed in his opening remarks at the 1st NARBO IWRM Executive Retreat that the challenges to leadership for IWRM in Asia's river basins that compels executives from different levels of governance to guide investments across a range of organizations as well as across engineering, economic, social, and environmental disciplines, stretching the boundaries of their leadership roles.

### The Retreat

Designed to discuss leadership in river basins, the retreat, held in Malang Indonesia on 20-22 June 2011, convened a small group of Asia's foremost river basin executives who have demonstrated good practice in their management positions within RBOs, ministries, and water councils and shown exemplary leadership for IWRM in river basins. Joining in the retreat with NARBO's management team, the



H.E. Mr. Djoko Kirmanto  
Minister of Public Works  
Indonesia

*“Indonesia may share its experience in dealing with the two-types of river basin organization. We are embarking on a process to move the public type of river basin organizations into quasi-corporate river basin organization. If in the future, the financial aspect of the quasi-corporate river basin improves, they will be transformed into corporate-type of river basin organizations.”*

# Leadership across/within Organizations and Personal Leadership

executives shared their experiences presenting case studies of river basin leadership models, and discussed keys for success in three focused areas: leadership across organizations in the basin, leadership within organizations, and personal leadership.

## What happened?

The retreat was hosted by Jasa Tirta 1 Public Corporation (PJT1) and CRBOM. PJT1 is Indonesia's ISO-certified corporate RBO for the Brantas and Solo river basins and considered as an exemplary RBO in the region implementing the IWRM process. Taking on an increasing leadership role also on the Asian regional scene, the Ministry of Public Works formed the CRBOM in 2009, which serves as a regional water knowledge hub under the Asia-Pacific Water Forum.

Over the two days, the 32 participants, stemming from Government agencies, RBOs, alongside other IWRM executives, special guests, moderators, resource persons and organizers, made short presentations about the leadership challenges and achievements in their specific river basins.

## Need for Documentation

Back at the retreat, in frank, open, and sometimes candid testimonies, the leaders exchanged views and experiences, on inter-agency relations, corporate culture, collaboration with civil society, the role of the academic community, media relations, and response to calamities. Overall, the participants agreed on the importance of good leadership and the value of dialogue and networking as caretakers of Asia's river basins, emphasizing NARBO's contributions particularly as an IWRM advocate, a contents provider, and a quality monitor.

## Moderators



**Mr. Keizrul Bin Abdullah**  
Chairperson, NARBO



**Mr. Ravi Narayanan**  
Vice-Chair, APWF Governing Council



**Ms. Marisha Wojciechowska-Shibuya**  
Senior International Water Editor  
at MaximsNewsNetwork



**Mr. Slamet Budi Prayitno**  
Former Basin Council Chairman,  
Solo River Basin



**Mr. Xiaoliu Yang**  
Professor, Peking University



**Mr. Wouter Lincklaen Arriens**  
Vice-Secretary General, NARBO and  
Lead Water Resources Specialist, ADB

# Corporate Culture, Collaboration with Civil Society and others

Participants also noted a general need for better documentation of experiences of basin-level IWRM in Asia, including on good leadership practices and models. Continued support from NARBO was encouraged, both at the regional level and via (existing and new) national NARBO chapters.

# Leadership Case Studies: Learning from Experience

“Leadership across organizations is how we can ensure a close relationship for understanding the needs of water users.”



**Mr. Yasuro Nakajo**  
Executive Vice President  
Japan Water Agency

## **A RBO changing focus on O&M**

For the last fifty years, the Japan Water Agency (JWA) has focused on the construction of facilities, but we are changing the focus to operation and maintenance. Right now, our major concern is how we can effectively manage and operate those existing facilities. Let me give you case examples: in the Chikugo river basin; the Kizu river basin; and at the Great East Japan Earthquake and Tsunami (GEJET) in 2011.

In Chikugo, rainfall now is more fluctuated. We have to secure the water resources for irrigation in June. What we are doing is just gathering concerned people to a meeting and involving them in the discussion. We provide necessary information and share what measures we should take. In Kizu, the head of the site office managed three dams 'over the manuals' to avoid inundation in the downstream city, where we couldn't avoid it by operating dams as shown in the manuals. The GEJET cut inside dykes and broke the pipe, and water was pumped out. When the earthquake occurred 2:46pm on 11th March 2011, we opened the meeting just four minutes after the earthquake. We received a report that it will take one month to recover because facilities should be fixed at the factory. I and President Aoyama were so surprised. "How can we ask people to wait one month for water?" We ordered to have it done within seven days and they did it.

I like to suggest several points. Leadership is how we can keep close relationship for understanding the needs of water users. Leadership within JWA is how we can enhance staff capability. The agency tends to consider following orders or mandates given by ministries or the local government, but we changed our ideas. We should persuade supervising ministries or local governments so that we can do something on our own initiative. I'm sure that the staffs have definitely changed their ways of thinking.

“They write on paper of their goals, which are specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and time framed goals, and put the paper behind their chairs. The goals must not be more than three. If they want to achieve something, they have to say the date to achieve that. You have to believe, and it happens.”

#### **Leadership in IWRM in Karnataka**

In India, IWRM has been discussed and debated for quite long years. It's not a new concept to us. But, to be very frank with you, very little has been done on the ground. It is dangerous in piloting new initiatives to put anything and call it IWRM without changing its content. Therefore, with ADB's suggestions, we are trying to reform our approaches on water resources management. We also declared this decade as decade of irrigation to really put in IWRM and river basin plans. We are in the process of establishing the advanced Centre for IWRM which will really work as knowledge center. We don't have local expertise that we put on the ground. For political leadership, we have a good Chief Minister who has made budget announcement to adopt IWRM principles. For administrative leadership, we have Chief Secretary who integrate with other departments, and we have steering committee under him to solve critical issues.

#### **Leadership with Coaching Principles**

Internal leadership criteria we follow is “coaching culture”. As one of certified coaches in India, we follow coaching principles within the organization.



#### **Mr. Dharanipragada Satyamurty**

Principal Secretary to Government, Water Resources Department, Karnataka, India

We have been involved in setting process on a weekly basis. We basically work as a role of attraction. We want to pull the things rather than pushing the things. We also work from inside to outside. Majority of my staff are allowed to meditate every day. They are silent at least fifteen minutes.

To make our staff manifest, each of us keeps 'goal sheet' in our office. They write their goals on paper, which are specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time framed goals, and put the paper behind their chairs. The goals must not be more than three. If they want to achieve something, they have to say the date to achieve that. You have to believe, and it happens.

“We provided taskforces in different disciplines, and also in different status so that they could overcome difficulties to make a draft of regulations.

In 2005, we got regulations done.”



**Mr. Mochammad  
Amron**

Director General of Water Resources, Ministry of Public Works, Indonesia, and NARBO Senior Adviser

#### **Government Policy Reform**

Indonesia’s water resources policy development changes have four steps: old order, new order, reform process, and reform era. For leadership challenges, as policy reformation process, we initiated the Water Sector Adjustment Program. We set up a taskforce at that time to provide policy formulation, water resources regulations, river basin management information, water quality management information, and irrigation management. Water quality was worse at that time. Irrigation management is also important. Taskforce members actually comprised government agencies from central and provincial, private – corporations, and non-government organizations. We provided taskforces in different disciplines, and also in different status so that they could overcome difficulties to make a draft of regulations, etc. In 2005, we got regulations done.

What we understand is that our shareholders’ and stakeholders’ priorities and where our team fits in the overall scheme of things; we will develop influence as we strategically contribute resources to achieve the most important organization targets; and choose our leadership efforts wisely.

“We have to have collaboration , coordination, conflict resolution, negotiation and communication skills. ”

#### **Leadership in IWRM in the Citarum on Government Side**

There are two RBO in the basin: one is PJT2 and another is BBWS which is on the government side. The basin is very important as it supplies water for 80% of Jakarta. The Citarum is famous and notorious. In 2008, it was selected as one of the worst rivers in Indonesia at an internet news site.

In order to solve the problem, we used a strategic framework. We have done a so-called project approach but we changed to the program approach. We have key areas: institutional and planning for IWRM, water resources development and management, water sharing, environmental protection, and disaster management. Our dream is that the Citarum provides opportunity for everyone to be involved, contribute and make positives changes together for a better Citarum. It is like an orchestra with a conductor to synchronize players and produce harmony.

There are two roles for the head of the RBO: as a leader

## Mr. Mudjadi

Director of Directorate of Planning and Programming, Ministry of Public Works, and previously head of Balai Besar Wilayah Sungai (BBWS) Citarum, Indonesia



### Leadership in the Citarum as a Corporate RBO

PJT2 is now a corporate RBO; before, it was a project office under the government. Most of our staff think in their minds that they can do the same way of business as they did in the government office. However, they have to re-think this as PJT2 is now corporation. How to change their mind-set? To retain the staff, we need to increase their ownership and their solidity. I told them that they have to change their mind as they have good salary as a staff of 'corporation', and that they have to do their job best and give us good results.

The second thing I told to my staff is that we have to manage the dam in a good way. But, it doesn't mean the dam only. We need to take a comprehensive and multi-disciplinary approach. We have to conserve the upstream area because many depend on it. We also have to manage the hydropower generator. At the same time, downstream of the Jatiluhur dam, we have an irrigation area.

and a project manager. It requires two ways of thinking. We have to have collaboration, coordination, conflict resolution, negotiation, and communication skills. Leader should create ownership of the strategic plan. We have to change from budget-driven to outcome-driven organization. Every project should be clear on what the outcomes are.

**“To retain the staff, we need to increase their ownership and their solidity.**

**We need to take comprehensive and multi-disciplinary approach. ”**

We have to take care of them. We have to think about that water is needed for drinking water for Jakarta.

It takes time to be equipped with required leadership skills. At first we have to make sure dam safety and to bring water for irrigation area and to Jakarta technically. Then, we have to raise our communication skills.



## Mr. Eddy Adyawardman Djajadiredja

President Director, Perum  
Jasa Tirta 2 Public  
Corporation, Indonesia

“The best way to bring about changes is to involve stakeholders so that people can improve their economical and social conditions. ”



**Mr. M. Monowar Hossain**

Executive Director, Institute of Water Modelling, Bangladesh

**Leadership in the Haor River Basin from Academe viewpoints**

The Haor river basin is a typical area in Bangladesh. For 6 months, it is under the water, and for 6 months, water level falls. It has the highest rainfall area in the world. River bank breach is very usual in the basin. We conducted a study to the river basin and suggested the government to establish an RBO to develop that area. The best way to bring about changes in the basin is to involve stakeholders so that people can improve their economical and social conditions, and at the same time quality of river system. There are different levels of governmental organization in the basin. Through discussion with different organization in the basin, I found that coordination with them is a strong tool to bring about changes. Leadership across organizations in this basin is very important and crucial.

“CCPE is a government-operated NGO. We have to have impacts on people side as well as government side. ”

**Government-Operated NGO – Leadership in the Ping River Basin**

The Coordinating Committee for the Protection of the Ping River Basin and the Environment (CCPE) is a people organization. We have started this when we had serious problems in water pollution in 1998. As a university teacher, I thought that we had to do something and rolled up people. It is a bottom-up approach. CCPE is an NGO but it's different. It is a government-operated NGO (GO NGO). We are doing as operational and advocacy as well. Our leadership case study as a senior RBO staff is awareness raising, to help people develop knowledge, cooperation and networking. We have to have impacts on the people side as well as on the government side. We have staff from local government, municipality and community. We educated all the sectors with soft and hard engineering.



**Mr. Wasan Jompakdee**

Chairman, the Coordinating Committee for the Protection of the Ping River Basin and the Environment, and Chiang Mai University, Thailand



“We always looked at urban water supply people as a rival. But when we were sitting down and looking at respective problems, then we began to understand more what problems we face.”

### **NGO as Catalyst in IWRM Process in Malaysia**

We started with building stakeholder participation through setting up Malaysia Water Partnership. We had to bring in people from all the sectors and different categories. For formulation, we decided that it should be a government department which is moving towards IWRM. Secondly, we created a conducive situation through awareness building. Each of us is better at understand problems of the other sides. I'm from the irrigation side. We always looked at urban water supply people as a rival. But when we were sitting down and looking at respective problems, then we began to understand more what problems we face. We identified key personnel in central agencies: the treasury, the prime minister's office; and the economic evaluation, and financing. Then, we identified real decision makers.



**Mr. Keizrul Bin Abdullah**  
Chairperson, NARBO

### **Mr. Ivan de Silva**

Secretary, Ministry of Irrigation & Water Management, Sri Lanka and Vice-Chairperson, NARBO



### **Mahaweli Water to North of Sri Lanka**

My case study is an initiative taken to promote water to the north side of Sri Lanka from the Mahaweli area. There was a serious war in Sri Lanka last 20-30 years. After the war, the main concern was the possibility to transfer water to the northern part. I was in a position to make a decision for water allocation in a fair and reasonable manner. The government designed it in 1980's, but it decided to develop water intensively for irrigation and hydropower in the basin. We had to justify the real necessity for diverting water to the north. River basin concept worked effectively and I appointed managers for basins respectively. We came to find out a win-win situation in designing some factors. I went to the areas concerned frequently and explained the plan and its flexibility. I believe that it is part of leadership – if you want to meet people, you should not wait until they come to you.

“I believe that it is part of leadership – if you want to meet people, you should not wait until they come to you.”

“If you like to bring your organization to better position, you should try to have new challenges. I always give my staff new challenges. It requires changes of mind set, and I have to change myself.”



**Mr. Tjoek Walujo Subijanto**

President Director, Jasa Tirta 1 Public Corporation, Indonesia and Vice-Chairperson, NARBO

**Leadership in two RBOs in Brantas River Basin**

Tjoek Walujo Subijanto shared his experience and views, “If you like to bring your organization to a better position, you should try to have new challenges. I always give my staff new challenges. It requires changes of mind set, and I have to change myself.”

Eko Subekti emphasized importance of communication with stakeholders, including member of the basin water council. Major tasks for the councils are to streamline the sector’s interests and to monitor RBO’s program. We need to keep them informed of our activities and convince them to evaluate our work and coordinate with stakeholders.

Syamsul Bachri mentioned that the important things for leadership within corporate RBOs are quantity (number of staff) and quality (expertise, skills, commitment, and appropriate character). Expertise and skills can be nurtured through training, education, and knowledge sharing. For others, director’s positive attitude, discipline and hard work are the keys. It creates trust among staff and solutions.

Subijanto echoed that leadership roles for corporate RBOs should create conducive working conditions. Corporate RBOs should (i) have clear and documented policies; (ii) establish an ‘open



**Mr. Eko Subekti**

Head of Balai Besar Wilayah Sungai (BBWS) Brantas, Indonesia

management’ to allow staff at any level to share their views and ideas; (iii) maintain a code of conduct as a ‘rule of the game’ in staff’s performance of tasks and responsibilities; (iv) maintain an effective and dynamic working team; and (v) develop appropriate incentives towards innovation.



**Mr. Syamsul Bachri**

Director of Human Resources and General Affair, Jasa Tirta 1 Public Corporation, Indonesia

# Where do we go from here? How do we take this forward?

## How can NARBO support a water leaders program for IWRM in the region?

Ravi Narayanan summarized the discussion that NARBO, building on past reputation, performance, and track record so far, can act in three different ways at the regional level: (i) to advocate using IWRM principles for the river basin management; (ii) possibly developing content, wherever necessary; and (iii) possible roles as a quality monitor. All these, of course, depend on as part of cooperation given date. These roles can be exercised or taken forward through three more ways: (a) production and dissemination of written materials, course content and etc.; (b) exposure visits that can be bi-lateral or regional, etc.; (c) particularly for the high level, an opportunity for the policy discussion and debates, what is the higher leadership quality, is or among others, which can be done either regionally or sub-regionally. He also raised some questions: Should the audience be management and representative of RBOs or should we expand to whole process to local political leaders, civil society organizations, and media who are actually not implementing but affecting outcomes? What can we do to be gender-balanced?

## How can the leadership be applied to programs and projects?

Wouter Lincklaern Arriens, Vice-Secretary

“Strong commitment by leaders is the key to get IWRM into practice.”



Mr. Apichart Anukularmphai  
NARBO Senior Adviser

General, NARBO and Lead Water Resources Specialist, ADB, wrapped up the discussion that we have been looking at projects which start with nothing nor with visions, and implementing projects is nowadays not only construction. It goes all the way to the results. For leaders and also for young staff, they have to understand what farmers and water utilities think, not just from behind their desks. And the way to do that is to go there, and to spend some time there, not just drive there and drive back on a same day. Leadership has different dimensions in the areas of how to do the delivery of project better, organization, system involved, performance and results. Project gives us a chance or arena to demonstrate, build, and nurture leadership.

“Leadership is not about an individual, it is about making everybody else a leader. Leadership attributes called upon in managing Asia’s complex and dense river systems, revolve around: anticipation (vision and planning), orientation, reconciliation (internal and external), and reaction (to new needs and opportunities).”



Mr. Ravi Narayanan  
Vice Chair, Governing Council, Asia-Pacific Water Forum



# Network of Asian River Basin Organizations

NARBO's mission is to strengthen the capacity and effectiveness of river basin organizations (RBOs) in promoting IWRM and improving water governance, through training and exchange of information and experiences among RBOs and their associated water sector agencies and knowledge partner organizations. Japan Water Agency (JWA), Asian Development Bank (ADB), Asian Development Bank Institute (ADBI) and Centre for River Basin Organizations and Management (CRBOM) jointly serve as NARBO secretariat.

<http://www.narbo.jp>

## Chairperson



Mr. Keizrul Bin Abdullah,  
Malaysia

## Vice-Chairpersons



Mr. Ivan De Silva,  
Sri Lanka



Ms. Dolora Nepomuceno,  
Philippines



Mr. Tjoek Walujo Subijanto,  
Indonesia

## Senior Advisors



Mr. Basuki Hadimoeljono,  
Indonesia



Mr. Mochammad Amron,  
Indonesia



Mr. Apichart Anukularmphai,  
Thailand

**For Further Information** please contact to: for membership - JWA's Mr. Tadashige Kawasaki at [narbo@water.jp](mailto:narbo@water.jp) or [Tadashige\\_Kawasaki@water.go.jp](mailto:Tadashige_Kawasaki@water.go.jp); for capacity development - ADBI's Mr. Tomotaka Higuchi at [thiguchi@adbi.org](mailto:thiguchi@adbi.org); for investments with roadmaps and basin program - ADB's Mr. Dennis Von Custodio at [dvcustodio.consultant@adb.org](mailto:dvcustodio.consultant@adb.org); for knowledge networking - CRBOM's Mr. Isnugroho at [bageurisnu@gmail.com](mailto:bageurisnu@gmail.com) or Mr. Fahmi Hidayat at [hidayat.f@gmail.com](mailto:hidayat.f@gmail.com).