



Press Release

For more information, please contact:

Nitasha Nair on +94 76 332 6357 or n.nair@cgiar.org

Samurghi Ranasinghe on +94 76 901 5421 or s.ranasinghe@cgiar.org

For immediate release

Sri Lanka hosts meeting of minds on the Indus Basin

Experts identify key steps to strengthen knowledge on climate change and other water-related challenges

Colombo, Sri Lanka (July 6, 2017) – Sri Lanka has hosted a ground-breaking meeting to strengthen knowledge and support collective efforts on tackling climate change adaptation and other water-related challenges in the Indus Basin, home to more than 300 million people.

“Climate Change continues to have significant impact on our limited, shared water resources across the globe,” said the Honorable Minister of Foreign Affairs Ravi Karunanayake, Government of Sri Lanka. “The Indus Basin is one such key resource impacting on Afghanistan, China, India and Pakistan, and some 300 million people who live within the basin boundaries.”

Organized by the International Water Management Institute (IWMI) and International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD), and held on July 4-5, the Forum brought together over a hundred researchers, government experts and development practitioners from the four countries sharing the Indus basin, with international experts and partner representatives.

Highlighting Sri Lanka’s role as the Forum’s host, the Honorable Minister added, “We hope that Sri Lanka may also benefit and contribute to these important outputs and that the spirit of collective endeavor bridges not just communities of scientists but all other communities in the region sharing these challenges.”

Over two days, Forum participants examined the current knowledge landscape from each basin country’s perspective, and discussed current initiatives focusing on the basin. The Forum also stressed the importance of building stronger collaboration between those who generate scientific knowledge and those who need better knowledge and understanding to make more informed decisions.

“There has been over a decade of support from the World Bank for water cooperation dialogue in South Asia,” said Bill Young, Lead Water Resources Management Specialist from the World Bank. “Our support to Indus Basin dialogues has focused on building the knowledge foundation to help tackle the water management challenges, especially those associated with a changing climate. At the Indus Basin Knowledge Forum, the Bank is very pleased to see the cementing of collaborative partnerships with institutions in the region that are well placed to ensure longer term sustainability for this dialogue process.”

“The Indus is a high-priority basin for ICIMOD, as it ranks among the most important in the world in terms of human dependence on meltwater, directly or indirectly supporting populations numbering in the hundreds of millions,” said Arun Shrestha, ICIMOD’s Regional Programme Manager for River Basins and Senior Climate Change Specialist. “The Indus Basin Knowledge Forum has been an important milestone in assessing the nature of existing knowledge and development challenges in the basin. But more importantly, the Forum has generated some concrete actions to expand our knowledge and build greater coordination for work in the basin. For its work in the Indus Basin, ICIMOD is grateful for the support of the Government of Australia through the Sustainable Development Investment Portfolio.”

Experts identified key actions for strengthening the Indus Basin knowledge landscape, building on opportunities for knowledge sharing and co-development, while also making the knowledge already available more readily accessible. A few action points identified were to connect science with policy and practice, continue Indus Basin Knowledge Forum at both the national and regional level, and undertake collaborative research.

“IWMI is happy to lead the Informing Change in the Indus Basin [ICIB] program funded by DFID [Department for International Development, UK], which aims to improve the way knowledge is managed and shared in the basin, strengthening decision making and enhancing dialogue at different levels and through different channels in the basin,” said Alan Nicol, leader of IWMI’s Sustainable Growth strategic program. “We hope this meeting will lead to a set of practical actions on the ground, which genuinely deliver benefits to the Indus Basin development.”

Notes for editors:

Accompanying photos can be freely used but should be credited to IWMI.

For more information, see the conference web link - www.iwmi.org/IBKF

See recording of the Honorable Minister's speech at - <http://bit.ly/2uIJ8kZ>

The **International Water Management Institute (IWMI)** is a non-profit, scientific research organization focusing on the sustainable use of water and land resources in developing countries. Headquartered in Colombo, Sri Lanka, with offices across Asia and Africa, the Institute works with governments, civil society and the private sector to develop scalable agricultural water management solutions that have a real impact on poverty reduction, food security and ecosystem health. IWMI is a CGIAR center focused on research for development.

CGIAR is a global partnership that unites organizations engaged in research for a food-secure future. IWMI leads the **CGIAR Research Program on Water, Land and Ecosystems (WLE)**, which combines the resources of 11 CGIAR centers, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the RUAF Foundation, and numerous national, regional and international partners to provide an integrated approach to natural resource management research. WLE promotes a new approach to sustainable intensification in which a healthy functioning ecosystem is seen as a prerequisite to agricultural development, resilience of food systems and human well-being. www.iwmi.org

Informing Change in the Indus Basin is a DFID-funded program led by IWMI.

The **International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD)** is a regional knowledge development and learning centre serving the eight regional member countries of the Hindu Kush Himalayas (HKH) – Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, China, India, Myanmar, Nepal, and Pakistan – based in Kathmandu, Nepal. Globalization and climate change have an increasing influence on the stability of fragile mountain ecosystems and the livelihoods of mountain people. ICIMOD aims to assist mountain people to understand these changes, adapt to them, and make the most of new opportunities, while addressing upstream and downstream issues. ICIMOD supports regional transboundary programmes through partnerships with regional partner institutions, facilitates the exchange of experiences, and serves as a regional knowledge hub. We strengthen networking among regional and global centres of excellence. Overall, we are working to develop economically and environmentally-sound mountain ecosystems to improve the living standards of mountain populations and to sustain vital ecosystem services for the billions of people living downstream – now and in the future. www.icimod.org/