

Message from the INWEPF to the 5th World Water Forum



Cooperative paddy systems in harmony with life and environment based on active involvement of all stakeholders are the most sustainable and equitable water management systems.

1. In recent years, it has been imperative to become aware of the tight water supply due to increased number of droughts and floods associated with climate change, population growth, and economic development. Last year's rapid rise in food prices is creating imbalances in the food supply around the world, resulting in unprecedented social unrest. One of the causes of this is droughts that have occurred throughout the world. The key to sustainable economic and social development lies in water issues and food security. Each country should strengthen agricultural production bases to make the optimum use of their natural resources such as land and water.
2. We, the International Network for Water and Ecosystem in Paddy Fields (INWEPF), assert that rice is the most important staple crop in the Asian monsoon region, where more than half of the world's population resides. The paddy systems are well-adapted to the regional climate. They have capacity to support large population. They can supply various benefits to sustain regional resources.

Moreover, "land and water" as a foundation of paddy systems are not only the image of nature, but they have been integrated with the infrastructures made by human beings, so that the cycle system can be enhanced and the blessings of nature can be received. The wisdom has been created and accumulated for long time in order to properly manage and operate the "land and water". This wisdom is the key to the sustainable water management to address and solve the problems in the global water issues.

3. We request all the delegates participating in the 5th World Water Forum to consider the following INWEPF statements and recommendations:
 - (1) Water can be used many times from upstream to downstream in its watershed through efficient paddy systems in spite of the fluctuation of water resource availability. Paddy systems serve as an artificial wetland which has good potential to preserve and maintain both human culture and natural ecosystems in a sustainable manner.
 - (2) The multiple values and services of paddy systems and the wisdom of "land and water" based on the principle of cycle should be recognized and highly evaluated, and they should be incorporated with goals, plans and strategies of water resources development and management.
 - (3) Participatory irrigation management system, which has been nursing with the wisdom of "land

and water”, should be introduced as one of sustainable water management systems. Pursuit of bottom-up discussions with all the relevant stakeholders is a significant factor for participatory irrigation management system. Participation of farmers is an indispensable part for participatory irrigation management system.

- (4) After ensuring the efficient and equitable water distribution in a sustainable manner, governments should provide necessary assistance (e.g. policy, legal, financial, and educational services and capacity building) including adequate investments in paddy systems and paddy system modernization and efficient management in order to achieve food security, to alleviate poverty, and to conserve ecosystems.
- (5) It is also necessary to anticipate the future climate change and to identify problems caused by climate change. Moreover, we should properly manage water and agricultural production facilities in order to address disasters due to climate change such as droughts and floods and so forth.