Regional Water Governance Strategy in Hindu Kush Himalaya Region

International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development

Kathmandu, Nepal
Himalayan glaciers are sources of freshwater reserves which provide headwaters for major river systems in Asia – a lifeline for almost half of humanity.

Ten River Basins
‘the Water Tower’ of Asia.
Sustaining 1.3 billion people in the River basins
Impacting on food and energy production of ~ 3b people

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River basins and their hydrological significance

Hydrological significance of glaciers and snow for rivers
- Very high significance
- High significance
- Moderate significance
- Low significance

About 54% of the catchment area lies in Tibet.
Himalayan glaciers are shrinking more rapidly than elsewhere.

Dyurgerov and Meier, 200
Climate Change Impacts on Water Resources

- As glaciers melt, *river runoff* will first increase and then decrease;
- Extreme events already on the rise;
- Likely shortage scenario for downstream agriculture and other users;
- Wellbeing of about half billion people in the HKH region including China will be affected.
Three Points for Regional Water Governance –

1. River basin approach

- Integrate IWRM with IRBM
- Promote co-operation between the physiographic regions through ecosystem management & market chains
- Enhance local socio-economic development and community participation in local decisions;
- Implement mechanisms for allocation of water rights within the river basins;
- Develop domestic capital markets and partnership with private sector for risk management
2. Promote Regional Economic Co-operation

- Co-operation in water should be part of the broader regional economic cooperation framework with focus on water;

- Enhance co-operation between upstream - downstream countries as producers and consumers of ecosystem services;
3. Use problems as opportunity

- Drivers like climate change and globalization have added new dimensions and opportunities for regional cooperation;
- Supply augmentation through water storage (both natural and human-made) should be part of IWRM/IRBM.
- Increase role of knowledge hubs in documenting and sharing good policies and practices.
Thank You!