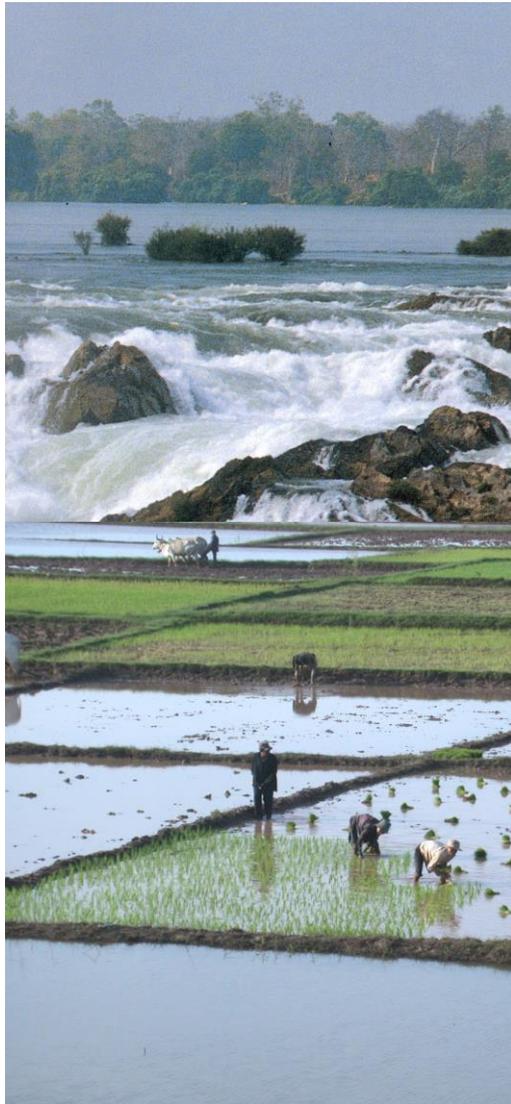


# Mekong River Cooperation

## Working *together*: global & local challenges

Enhancing Joint Efforts and  
Partnerships towards Achievement of  
the SDGs in the Mekong River Basin  
2-3 April 2018, Siem Reap, Cambodia



David Grey

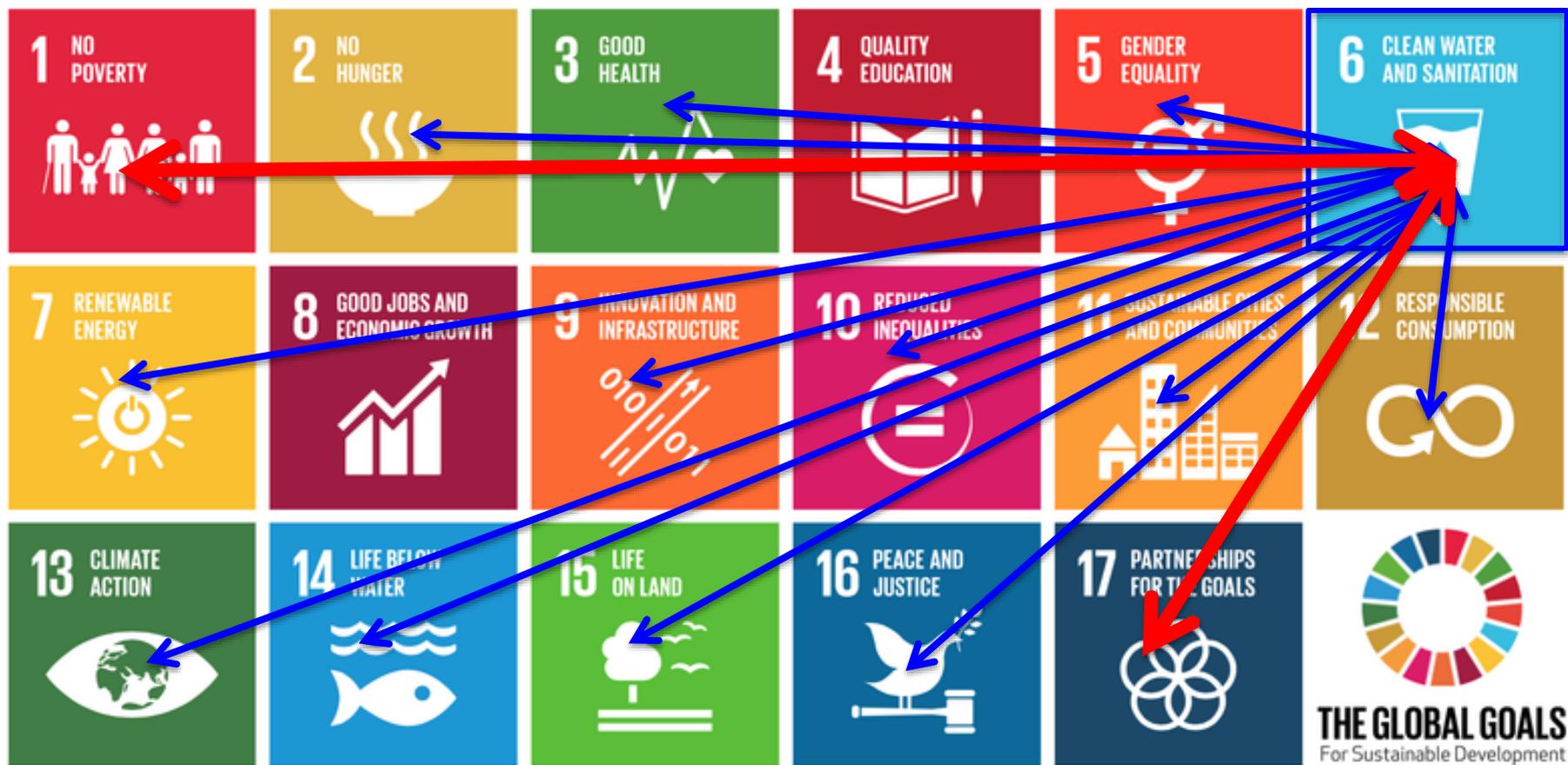
Visiting Professor: Oxford & Exeter Universities, UK; Tsinghua University, Beijing China.

# Global Development Challenge: a global response.

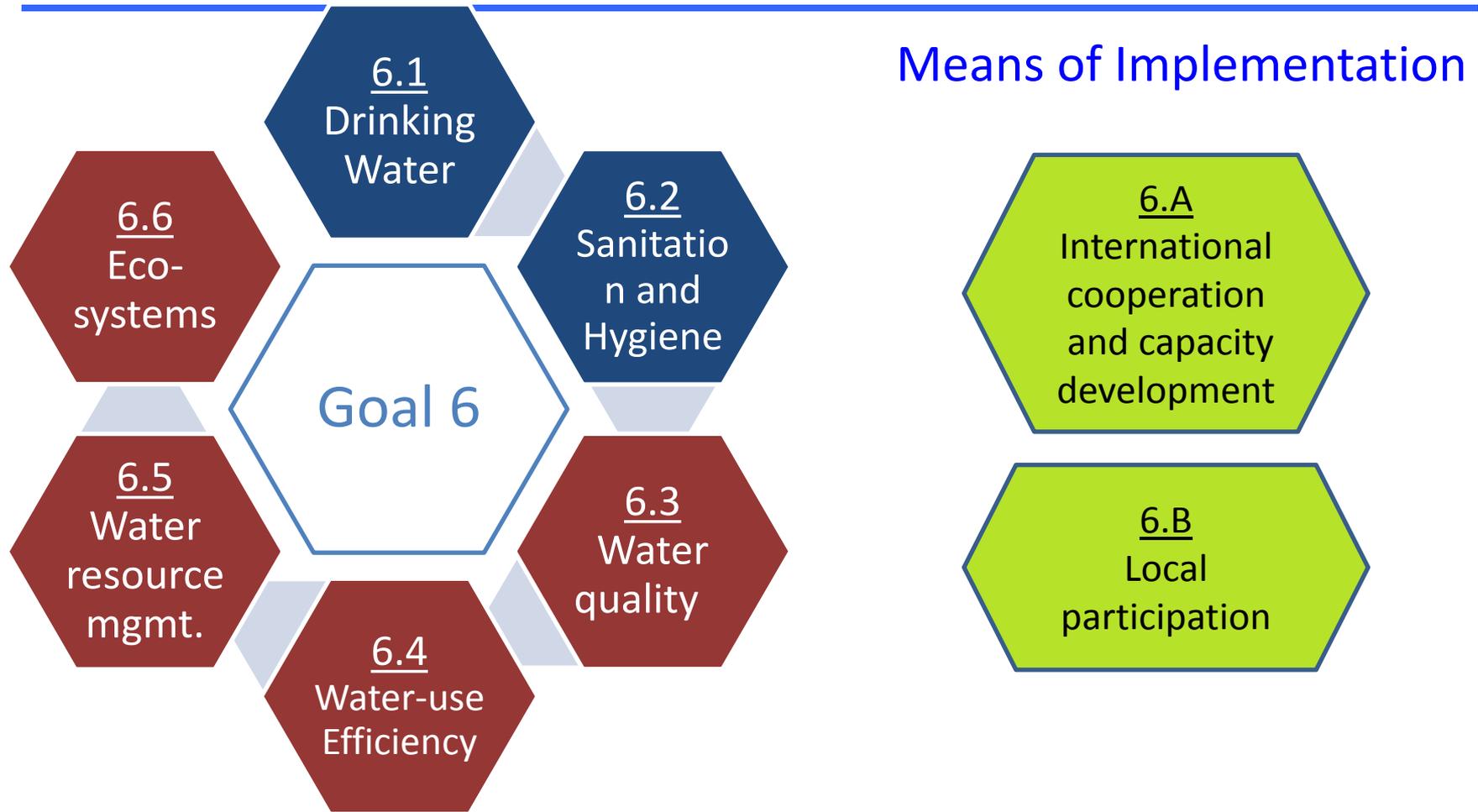
## Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

- ▶ 17 Goals for the world's future, to 2030, backed by 169 detailed Targets
- ▶ Negotiated at the UN, agreed by nearly all the world's nations, on 25 Sept 2015
- ▶ All Goals apply to *every* nation and *every* sector; cities, businesses, schools, organizations, *All* challenged to act: **UNIVERSALITY**
- ▶ *All* Goals are inter-connected in a system – we cannot aim to achieve just one Goal... we must achieve them *All*: **INTEGRATION**
- ▶ Achieving *All* Goals involves making very big, fundamental changes in how we live on Earth: **TRANSFORMATION**

# 17 Sustainable Development Goals

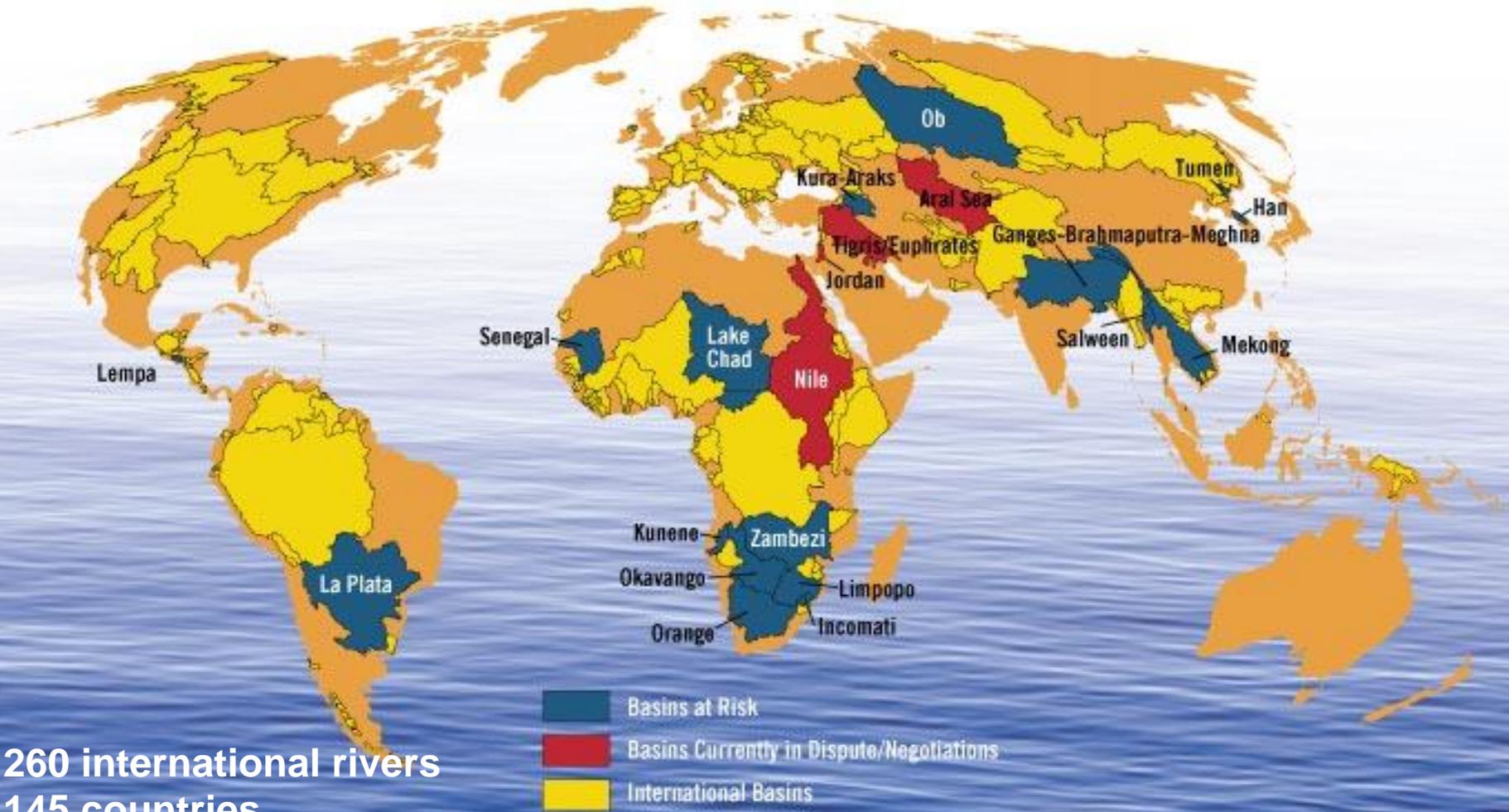


# Goal 6: Ensure availability & sustainable management of water & sanitation for all



# The global challenge of transboundary waters

“But the water problems of our world need not be only a cause of tension; they can also be a catalyst for cooperation. If we work together, a secure & sustainable water future can be ours.” Kofi Annan Feb 2002



c. 260 international rivers  
c. 145 countries  
c. 50% of global population

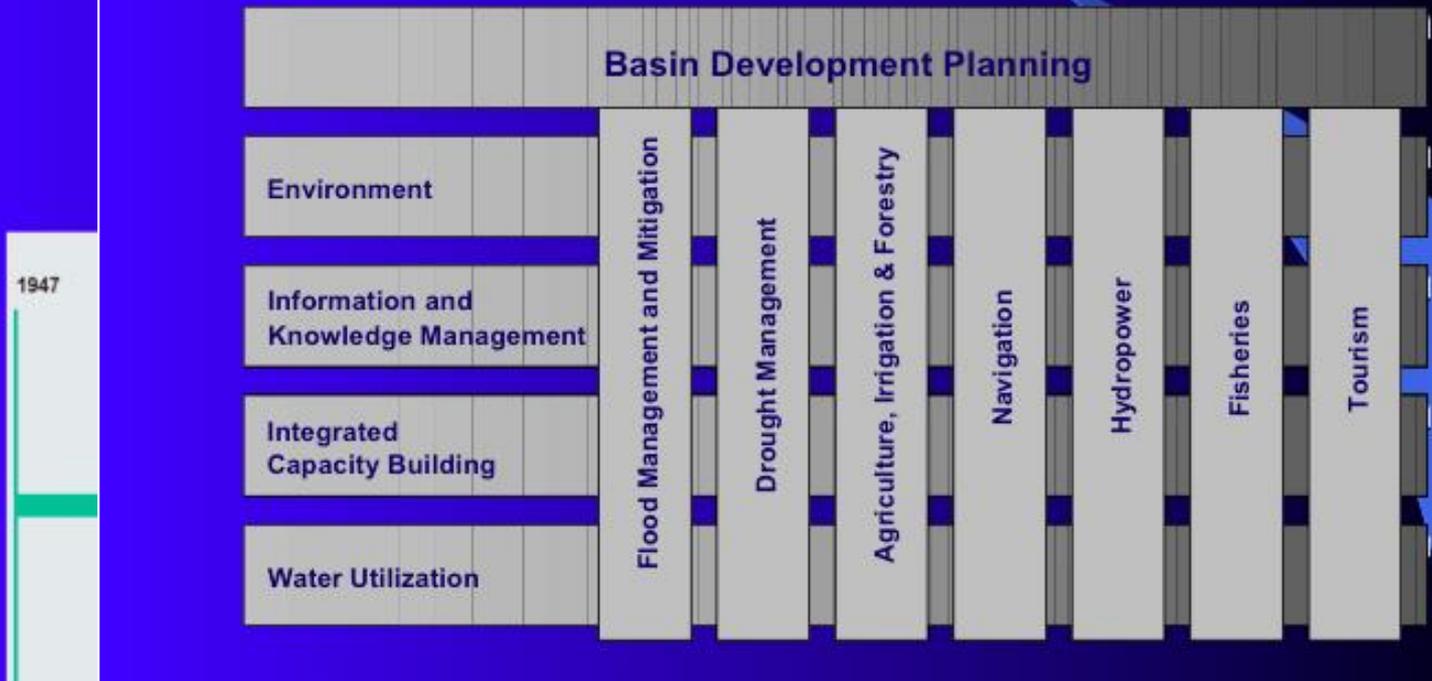
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# Integrated Program

1995 → ?



1947

United Nations General Assembly establishes the Economic Commission for Asia and the Far East (ECAFE)

ECAFE conceives a grand scheme for Mekong Development

ECAFE organises the first Mekong reconnaissance mission

Mekong Committee Founding Statute signed

Wheeler Report summarises status of knowledge on the LMB  
UNDP appoints C. Hart Schiff as first Executive agent of the Mekong Committee

Indicative Basin Plan published

Interim Mekong committee Statute signed by Lao PDR, Thailand and Viet Nam

Signing of the Agreement on the Cooperation for the Sustainable Development of the Mekong River Basin which created the MRC

Articles 5,6 &26 Procedures completed



# 'IPOE': Mekong River Commission → world class RBO

## 2010→2013 visits: key needs

- → **Riparian ownership & control**
  - serving Mekong states
  - riparian Chief Executive
  - riparian career staff, in-house academy
  - shared financing
  - from donor 'driven' to 'basket' funds
- **Basin 'planning' → 'development'**
  - 'cooperative regional assessment'
  - 'broker' deals & support negotiations
  - support local > regional benefit sharing
  - sustainable development 'help desk'
- **Change → 'development narrative'**
  - anti-development?
  - to supporter of good development
  - from 'parties in dispute' to 'partners'
- **'Apex indicators' for policy makers**
  - eg system 'health'; risk; cooperation
- **China: →dialogue, lock-in low-flows**

## 2018 progress

- **+ Riparian ownership & control**
  - serving Mekong states
  - riparian Chief Executive
  - ALL riparian career staff
  - 20%→100% 2030 financing of core
  - most donor support in 'basket' funds
- **+ Basin 'planning' to 'development'**
  - CS 'cooperative regional assessment'
  - facilitation ..5 joint projects
  - within 5 projects (more being done)
  - sustainable development 'help desk'
- **+Change to 'development narrative'**
  - employing PNPCA
  - facilitating good development...
  - good evidence of progressive shift....
- **+ 'Apex indicators' for policy makers**
  - new State of Basin report in progress
- **+China: dialogue, 2016 low-flows ...**

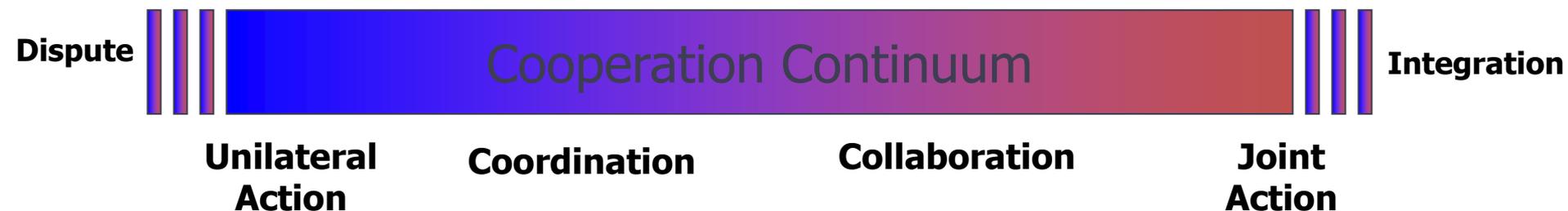
## Greater cooperation: why and how?

increase & share benefits....look for 4 types of benefits

<b>Type 1: Environmental</b> Increasing Benefits <i>To the river</i>	Improved ecosystem sustainability, conservation & water quality
<b>Type 2: Economic</b> Increasing Benefits <i>From the river</i>	Improved productivity – energy, food, WASH, flood & drought management
<b>Type 3: Political</b> Decreasing Costs <i>Because of the river</i>	Reduced risks; policy shift to cooperation & development
<b>Type 4: Indirect Economic</b> Increasing Benefits <i>Beyond the river</i>	Broader cooperation & integration

# What is cooperation?

- Cooperation is not “all or nothing”  
*more cooperation is not necessarily better*
- Different levels of cooperative effort  
different benefits, in different places, at different times
- “Right” level of effort depends on potential benefits  
driven by hydrology, economics, riparian relations
- .....and the costs of capturing those benefits
- A “continuum of cooperation”



# Cooperation Continuum: context specific

Indus  
treaty,  
commission

Mekong →  
-Lancang?  
info sharing,  
assessments,  
some collaboration

Rhine  
converging  
national  
agenda

Parana & Orange  
joint planning &  
investment

Senegal  
joint  
equity  
ownership

• **Adapt national plans to mitigate regional costs**

• **Joint institutions**

• **Communication & notification**

• **Adapt national plans to capture regional gains**

• **Joint project assessment & design**

• **Information sharing**

• **Identify, negotiate & implement national investments that capture cooperative gains**

• **Joint investment**

• **Regional assessments**

• **Joint ownership of assets**



Dispute

Integration

Cooperation Continuum

**Unilateral  
Action**

**Coordination**

**Collaboration**

**Joint  
Action**

# 'Game-Changer'?

*Manage rivers together... share costs & benefits...?*

- eg: build jointly-planned/-financed/-operated 'best-site' storage/hydropower: minimise impacts, maximise benefits?
- Is there the vision, courage & spirit?.. if not now, soon?

Parana River: Itaipu Binacional  
(Brazil-Paraguay) – on border



Orange River: Lesotho Highlands (Lesotho-  
South Africa) – within Lesotho

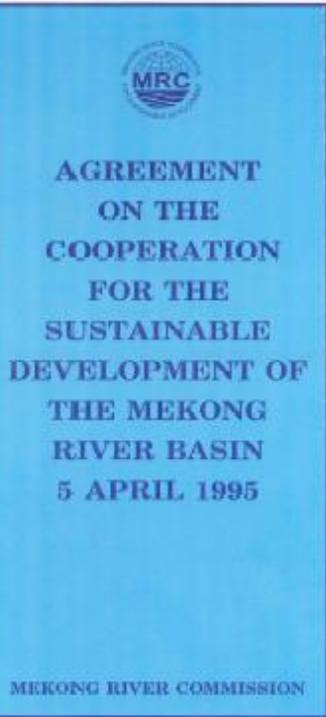


Senegal River: Manathali (Mali, Mauritania,  
Senegal, & now Guinea) – within Mali



# Is there a mandate – & interest – on the Mekong?

- *Definition of Terms: BDP*: general planning tool & process that JC would use as blueprint to identify, categorise & prioritise projects & programmes to seek assistance for & to implement plan at basin level
- *Article 1*: to cooperate in all fields of sustainable development, utilisation, management & conservation of water and related resources of Mekong..... to optimise multiple-use & mutual benefits of all riparians...
- *Article 2*: to promote, support, cooperate & coordinate in development of full potential of sustainable benefits to all riparian States....., with emphasis & preference on joint &/or basin-wide development through formulation of basin development plan, that would be used to identify, categorise & prioritise the projects & programmes to seek assistance for and to implement at basin level



clear mandate: *implement at basin level, cooperate, multiple use & mutual benefits, joint &/or basin-wide development*

# IPOE-facilitated Workshop

Vietnam, 28/03/14

- Country groups:
  - Interests
  - Risks & opportunities
- Inter-country groups:
  - 2040: the Mekong we want to avoid
  - 2040: the Mekong we want to see
  - 2018: some early joint opportunities ('deals'), moving towards the Mekong we want to see
  - 2016: the MRC we need: to promote the 'deals' & achieve the Mekong we want to see
- The 'Council Study' 2018 now provides evidence base

# Interests, risks, opportunities... possible areas

	2040 avoid	2040 see	2018 'early'	2016 needs
Social-economic-status				
Flooding				
Low flows				
Water quality				
Environment, biodiversity				
Reliable irrigated? food production & trade				
Fisheries & trade				
HEP peaking power & interconnection				
Navigation				
Recreation/tourism				
Other (cities?)?				

Repeat this regularly?

Mekong River Cooperation  
*working together,  
sharing benefits...*

