



Tokyo Declaration

The Tokyo Ministerial Declaration of the Delta Coalition

30th October, 2019

We, Ministers and High Representatives responsible for water affairs, environment and sustainable development from Argentina, Bangladesh, Colombia, Egypt, Indonesia, Japan, Mozambique, Myanmar, Philippines and The Netherlands out of thirteen Member States of the Delta Coalition have gathered in Tokyo, Japan on 30th October, 2019, to address specific challenges that deltaic countries face.

1. Recalling the outcomes of:

(1) The first Ministerial Declaration of the Delta Coalition in Rotterdam, The Netherlands in 2016, the second Ministerial Declaration of the Delta Coalition in Dhaka, Bangladesh in 2017, and the third Ministerial Declaration of the Delta Coalition in Cairo, Egypt in 2018.

2. Affirming that:

(1) The Delta Coalition is the world's first international coalition of governments that have formed a partnership to deal with inclusive and sustainable development in deltas.

(2) Delta countries aim to join forces to stimulate sharing best practices and innovation on strengthening resilience of their deltas.

(3) The implementation of projects that will reduce vulnerability to climate change requires a substantial mobilization of public and private finance.

3. Confirming:

(1) The importance to be fully aligned with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda on financing for development, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the Paris

Agreement on climate change, and the New Urban Agenda.

- (2) The necessity for upstream-downstream cooperation and coordination in all aspects especially with regards to infrastructure development in accordance with international water law principles, as applicable, as well as the national regulations and circumstances, in order to prevent causing significant harm.

4. Expressing:

- (1) Deep concern at the findings of the IPCC 5th Assessment report and IPCC Special Report on the Ocean and Cryosphere in a Changing Climate that the increase of sea level, alongside ocean warming and acidification are projected to exacerbate risks for human communities in deltas.

5. Acknowledging that:

- (1) We thank the government of Bangladesh for the development of the proposal to establish a permanent secretariat in Dhaka.
- (2) Deltas are critically important landscapes that are home to hundreds of millions of people, rapidly expanding mega-cities, some of the world's most productive agricultural land, thriving business hubs that are central to national, regional and global economies.
- (3) Deltas are dynamic ecosystems that are among the most vulnerable in the world to climate change due to human and natural changes throughout entire river basins from source to sea.
- (4) Appropriate sediment delivery by rivers is fundamental to the stability and resilience of deltas.
- (5) Urbanization and densification of urban and rural land have resulted in the disappearance of natural land-water transition zones, which are important as buffers in times of high water levels and droughts.
- (6) The natural resilience capacity of deltas is reduced by sea level rise and other impacts of climate change, such as increased flood risk, storm surge, drought, and water quality problems.
- (7) Land subsidence caused by intense drainage, groundwater extraction, etc. often results in levels below mean sea level. This further increases the vulnerability of urbanized deltas to climate change impacts and flood risk, with increasing numbers of victims as a result, and subsequent economic and ecological losses.
- (8) Natural causes as well as unplanned, uncoordinated and disproportionate human development activities, critical infrastructure on water bodies,

demographic change, common and differentiated impacts of climate change, rapid and unplanned urbanization are seriously affecting riverine, marine and coastal ecosystems, biodiversity and ecosystem goods, and disrupting lives and livelihood activities of the peoples of the deltas.

- (9) Efficient and good functioning water management, and water governance systems in Deltas become more and more important now both upstream and downstream. Climate change demands a forward looking, sustainable and adaptive way of organizing solutions for too little, too much, and too dirty water.
- (10) Climate change and sea level rise requires mitigation and adaptation measures on the immediate and longer term to stop the ongoing propensity of displacement of the coastal people.

6. *Stressing:*

- (1) The exigency of closer cooperation among the deltaic countries irrespective of socio-politico-economic setting and dynamics at sub-regional, regional and international levels to address the issues of trans-boundary Rivers, the specific and common obstacles as well as diverse geopolitical realities and challenges that are inherent to the deltaic countries can be addressed if delta countries work together with strong political resolve and commitment at sub-regional, regional and international levels.
- (2) The need to exchange best practices, for example the resolution 120 of the prime minister of Vietnam on adaptive policies in the Mekong Delta, the Bangladesh delta plan, the Japanese work on DRR and cross collaboration between meteorology and hydrology, the Dutch infrastructural planning and management system, etc.
- (3) Capacity building and innovative methodologies and technologies need to be further developed – both for national and local governments as well as for the private sector – to optimize delta management and ensure sustainable development.
- (4) The need to consider Nature Based Solutions (NBS) and sustainable infrastructure to mitigate and adapt more cost effectively and sustainably in deltas.

7. *Aware that:*

- (1) The UN/WB High Level Panel on Water agreed that the Delta Coalition is an effective and inspirational collaborative to deliver on the 2030 Agenda.
- (2) The Delta Alliance is an existing network of 16 countries aiming at providing

the knowledge base for government to government dialogues, the logical counterpart for the Delta Coalition when seeking the science-policy interface in sustainable delta development.

- (3) The High-level Experts and Leaders Panel on Water and Disasters (HELP) provides a natural setting for the Delta Coalition to interact with on topics which refer to water-related disaster risk reduction and the resilience of deltas.
- (4) The Global Commission and Center on Adaptation and its recently launched Action Tracks provide a rationale for accelerating and upscaling adaptation interventions in deltas, the interface where the river meets the sea, and where many ambitions and challenges for sustainable delta development collide.

8. *Urging to :*

- (1) Address the enormous gap in funding investments in sustainable delta development including structural and non-structural disaster risk reduction measures, knowledge development and exchange, training and capacity building, thus stressing the need to invest both in the enabling environment as well as in the projects.
- (2) Close this gap using existing resources more efficiently – with stronger coordination bridging investment silos ensuring greater no-regrets investments and with combined additional financial resources from all sources: public investment budgets, private sector, capital markets, and community based finance, user and polluter charges; as well as international development financing from public, multilateral and private sources, particularly for developing countries to reflect the acute needs in urbanizing deltas. The latter will particularly support the mitigation and adaptation of climate change impacts and natural disasters on the most vulnerable groups with gender-responsive actions.

(1) 9. *Decide to:* Consider establishing a permanent secretariat for the Delta Coalition to be decided upon in the coming year. Members agree to work actively with the troika and present additional information in this decision making process, taking into account the proposal from Bangladesh among other information.

- (2) Commit to continue to raise awareness at all levels in the deltaic countries in tandem with the Non-Governmental Organizations, academia and experts with a view to promoting and deploying pragmatic response to the pressing delta issues.
- (3) Encourage to invite new national members and observers, and develop

relations with Non-Governmental Organizations and academia in order to strengthen and enhance the knowledge base of the Coalition at international level with promoting systematic adaptive delta knowledge management and active tailored-made learning exchange.

- (4) Increase the visibility of the Coalition in various multilateral and international conferences and programmes, ex. The COP 25 in Chile (2 – 14 December 2019), the Climate Action Summit in the Netherlands (22 October 2020) and the Asian Pacific Water Summit in Japan (19-20 October 2020).
- (5) Emphasize adaptive/alternative livelihood activities in the coastal regions where adverse impacts of climate change manifest.
- (6) Commit to work together to reduce, risks and vulnerability of the deltaic countries to extreme climate events like flood, cyclone and drought and thereby adopt preventive, adaptive and resilience measures and undertake and support project based activities and programmes.
- (7) Agree on developing planned urbanization and sustainably manage the urbanized areas as well as promote inclusive and sustainable rural economies in the deltaic region, also addressing the urban-rural interlinkages as appropriate.
- (8) Agree to actively address the situation emanating from the permanent loss of cultivable land and human habitats owing to coastal soil erosion, sea level rise, salinization, coastal flooding and subsidence due to over-extraction of groundwater.
- (9) Strengthen efforts to mobilize and allocate sufficient financial resources from private sector, bilateral development partners, international financing institutions and private financial institutions (including banks and insurance companies) for inclusive and sustainable development and management of the deltas, especially oriented towards developing countries and addressing their specific challenges, vulnerabilities and risks.
- (10) Resolve to develop strategic partnership with global key financial institutions, Non-Governmental organizations in order to mobilize financing for disaster risks reduction measures, water infrastructure development and management, knowledge development, and capacity development and raising awareness – communications, education and coalitions – and increased understanding in creating this so much needed enabling environment.
- (11) Extend mutual cooperation in research, innovation and technology transfer as well as capacity building, and share solutions with a view to realizing project based activities on critical delta issues, and recognize the effectiveness of using learning effective programs and/or platforms, such as

Learning Delta Asia Initiative and its Asia Delta knowledge hub, as a vehicle for peer to peer learning and joint collaboration to address critical Delta management issues.

- (12) Promote the potential of the young generation as agents for change and innovation in the search for solutions on pressing delta issues.
- (13) Recognize the importance of investment for ex-ante measures for water-related disaster risk reduction in delta regions in line with the HELP Principles on Investment and Financing for Water-related Disaster Risk Reduction launched at the 4th UN Special Thematic Session on Water and Disasters.
- (14) Urge delta countries to give the highest political attention to managing threats to deltas and building resilience by calling on public and private stakeholders to collectively design and implement a sustainable delta vision and governance system.
- (15) Strengthen understanding of deltaic river systems *from source to sea*, building awareness of the large scale natural processes that create and maintain deltas above sea level, and the factors that result in sinking and shrinking, including upstream and downstream root causes.
- (16) Agree to further a joint Delta Coalition and Delta Alliance Policy Brief on the important issue of *Subsidence* as to table and raise awareness for this typical delta relevant issue in relevant national and international fora of decision makers and investment and financing institutions.
- (17) Agree to work closely together with the Global Commission on Adaptation (GCA), to contributing to the sustainable adaptation and increased resilience of deltas worldwide by stimulating concrete action such as the Water Action Track.
- (18) Recognize the importance of the nature-based solutions as well as sustainable infrastructure projects throughout river systems and coastal zones as part of an effective mix of adaptation efforts to address both root causes of delta vulnerability and mitigate impacts of sea level rise and extreme weather events
- (19) Provide the (finance) world - in collaboration with its knowledge and finance partners - with a Delta Resilience Framework (based on the different assessments, build up understanding and policy evaluations) to help understand Deltaic Challenges, inform the development of sustainable delta interventions and support the organizing/management/governance and funding for these programmatically (pipeline and across sectors).
- (20) Express our support to the next chair of Delta Coalition, to continue and promote the agenda and activities of the coalition during the coming year.

- (21) Express our deep appreciation to the Government of Japan for hosting the Fourth Ministerial Conference and working group meeting, and extending warm hospitality to the delegates and infusing practicable thoughts/ideas to carry forward the agenda of the Coalition.

Adopted at Tokyo, Japan on 30th October, 2019

List of the participating countries:

1. Argentina
2. Bangladesh
3. Colombia
4. Egypt
5. Indonesia
6. Japan
7. Mozambique
8. Myanmar
9. Philippines
10. The Netherlands