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Mississippi River Commission agreement creates unique partnership a world apart

May 12, 2010 – Vicksburg, Miss. – Two river management entities thousands of miles apart signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) today to create the first partnership between the Mekong River Commission and the Mississippi River Commission.

The MOU will promote and enhance public safety and community welfare by fostering research, improving water resources development, and advancing systems for more economical, efficient, and environmentally-sound water resource engineering.

“We will cooperate in the field of water resources development and management by sharing available technical expertise and lessons learned,” said Brig. Gen. (P) Michael J. Walsh, President of the Mississippi River Commission. “We will also explore ways to collaborate on water projects of mutual interest.” Walsh added.

The sister commissions will share research, expertise and experiences related to how river systems adapt to climate change, water resource management and forecasting during floods and droughts, hydropower, managing competing demands for water use, navigation improvements, food security, fish passage, wetland restoration and maintaining water quality.

“The Mekong River Commission and the Mississippi River Commission are very similar in terms of their principles and mandates,” said Jeremy Bird, CEO of the Mekong River Commission Secretariat. “Both organizations are therefore well-placed to benefit each other through a technical exchange and learn how to best manage their respective complex trans-boundary rivers.”

The MOU is the culmination of a year of collaboration between the two commissions brokered by the U.S. State Department and the Nations of Cambodia, Laos, Thailand and Vietnam.

Notes: The Mississippi River Commission

The Mississippi River Commission was established by an Act of Congress on June 28, 1879. Congress charged it with developing plans to improve the condition of the Mississippi River, foster navigation, promote commerce, and prevent destructive floods.

Today the organization, which is headquartered in Vicksburg, Miss., provides water resources engineering direction and policy advice to the Administration, Congress, and the Army in a drainage basin that covers 41 percent of the United States and parts of two Canadian provinces by overseeing the planning and reporting on the improvements on the Mississippi River. The Commission’s mission is to lead sustainable management and development of water related resources for the nation’s benefit and the people’s well-being.

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2-2-2 MOU

The Mekong River Commission

The Mekong River Commission is the intergovernmental body responsible for cooperation on the sustainable management of the Mekong Basin whose members include Cambodia, Lao PDR, Thailand and Viet Nam. It deals with all river related sectors including sustaining fisheries, identifying opportunities for agriculture, sustainable hydropower, maintaining the freedom of navigation, flood management and preserving important ecosystems. Superimposed on these are the future effects of more extreme floods, prolonged drought and sea level rise associated with climate change. In providing its advice, the Mekong River Commission aims to facilitate a broad range of dialogue among governments, the private sector and civil society on these challenges.

For more information, contact:

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