



Supporters:



3rd Mekong Mangrove Forum

Blue Carbon Ecosystem Conservation, Restoration and Sustainable Utilization in the Greater Mekong Sub-Region and beyond

(01/10/2020)

In celebration of International Day for the Conservation of Mangrove Ecosystems

Concept Note

International Day for the Conservation of Mangroves was adopted by the UNESCO General Conference in 2015 and celebrated annually since. In 2018, UNESCO Bangkok co-organized a field excursion and seminar on mangrove management in Thailand and Myanmar, in partnership with national authorities, the foundation Manfred-Hermsen-Stiftung for Nature Conservation and Environmental Protection, the Mangrove Action Project and Fauna & Flora International. The event was based on our mutual concern about illegal charcoal production and its adverse impacts on mangrove ecosystems in Myanmar.

The Mekong Mangrove Forum was subsequently organized, with a sub-regional and international approach, to urgently conserve existing blue carbon ecosystems and restore those that have been degraded, as well as to promote scientific research in support of science-based environmental management. Blue Carbon Ecosystems include those coastal vegetation types that store large amounts of atmospheric and oceanic carbon in their soils, such as, for example, mangroves, seagrass beds, and salt marshes. The 1st and 2nd Mekong Mangrove

Forums took place in Vietnam (March 2019) and in Myanmar (November 2019), to encourage more participation in the World Network of Biosphere Reserves. The 3rd Mekong Mangrove Forum was planned to take place in Thailand (September 2020), but the event is no longer possible because of the COVID-19 pandemic. A series of annual online events will be organized instead, with an inter-regional scope because of the global importance of the issue.

Mangroves and other blue carbon ecosystems have been lost at alarming rates, mainly because of adverse anthropogenic coastal environmental impacts. Yet, they provide essential services for coastal communities, support rich coastal biodiversity, protect coastlines against storm surges, sequester vast amounts of carbon. Moreover, these systems are seawater tolerant, and since more than 96% of the planet's water is saline. This fact offers a huge potentiality for the science-based management development of cash crop halophytes.

Mangroves are disappearing fast, with serious ecological and socio-economic impacts. Current estimates indicate that more than 50% of mangroves have already been lost. This requires urgent action.

UNESCO is uniquely placed to develop initiatives for relevant and concerted action, building on strong networks of sites such as the World Network of Biosphere Reserves, World Heritage sites and the Global UNESCO Geoparks Network, which are already demonstrating that harmonious interactions between people and nature are possible. UNESCO is engaged in supporting the conservation of mangroves, while advancing the sustainable development of local communities. Within UNESCO sites, we will test ideas, develop best practices and behavioural improvements, and implement the most effective ecosystem management strategies in local communities. These strategies will be promoted throughout UNESCO's networks to achieve a strong multiplier effect.

UNESCO has developed platforms to turn ideas into action. One of these platforms is the Mekong Mangrove Forum. This celebration is the beginning of a number of events and activities to conserve, restore and better utilize blue carbon ecosystems.

1st of OCT Programme

13:45 – 14:00	Joining Zoom	All	All
14:00 – 14:05	Welcome by Master of Ceremony	Montakarn Suvanatap	UNESCO
14:05 – 14:10	Opening Remarks	Miguel Clüsener-Godt	UNESCO
14:10 – 14:15	Keynote I: Mangroves in Myanmar	Nyi Nyi Kyaw	Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation, Myanmar
14:15 – 14:20	Film on Carbon Accounting Field Work	Daniel Murdiyarto	CIFOR
14:20 – 14:25	Keynote II: Mangrove Conservation at MCF	Wansu Xu	Mangrove Conservation and Restoration Program, China
14:25 – 14:30	Mangrove & People Slide Show	Multiple supporters	UNESCO, FAO, IUCN
14:30 – 14:40	Mangrove Foto Contest Results	Multiple participants	Mangrove Action Project
14:40 – 14:45	The Mangrove Forum 'An Open Science Platform' for blue carbon ecosystem conservation, restoration, and scientific research and development'	Benno Böer	UNESCO
14:45 – 14:50	Presenting a new scientific book series 'Blue Carbon Ecosystems for Sustainable Development'	Bilquees Gul	ISHU
14:50 – 14:55	Aramco's mangrove program: activities and aspirations	Ronald Loughland	Saudi Aramco
14:55 – 15:10	Panel discussion	FAO, UNEP-WCMC, IUCN, RECOFTC	Moderator
15:10 – 15:15	Concluding Remarks and Way Foreword	Benno Böer	UNESCO

This will be the fourth meeting of participants to continue the Mekong Mangrove Forum. During and after the event, foundations and the private sector will be able to participate and demonstrate their social and environmental community support on a credible and transparent platform, and to participate as long-term partners rather than only as donors. Partners will discuss how best to strengthen each other's individual activities, as well as develop joint activities, step-by-step conservation improvements, restoration, and scientific research and monitoring of mangroves and other blue carbon ecosystems, involving Governments, the private sector, school students, teachers, and communities.



The United Nations has recognized that climate change is a threat to global peace and security. Extreme weather events cause adverse impacts on the food-, water-, energy-security nexus, with the potentiality to trigger social discontent and unrest. In recent years, we have observed massive wildfires, unusual droughts, extreme hurricanes, and immense floods. These weather-related phenomena are linked to the increase of greenhouse gases in the Earth's atmosphere. Therefore, the conservation and restoration of Blue Carbon Ecosystems, and its important mitigation effect on climate change, is of substantial importance for World Peace.