

4 February 2012

Sustainable Small Scale Watershed Resources Management through Participatory Process of Networks and Partners in All Sectors

The Fourth National Health Assembly

Have considered the report on sustainable small scale watershed resources management through participatory process of networks and partners in all sectors,

Bearing in mind that sustainable small scale watershed resources management is important and beneficial to the conduct of living of many people, and that the people can engage in water management jointly with relevant agencies, organizations, partners, or networks in basin areas,

Recognizing that presently sustainable small scale watershed resources management is undertaken by state agencies but the tasks performed are not harmonized. Despite support and participation of some private organizations and elements of the people sector, problems such as flood, drought, forest fire, and smog (or haze) appear to be increasingly more severe. This is because support mechanisms that facilitate the formulation of sustainable small watershed resources management policy with participation of civic sectors and other relevant sectors are lacking,

Concerned that water shortage and flood problems are symptoms, not root causes. Water management is still unable to supply sufficient water for domestic use and consumption, for usage in agriculture, industries, and tourism. To solve problems whether it be to control water volume and quality, or to take care of biological diversity, there needs to be management of the whole cycle of water (i.e. managing rainfall, storage/catchment areas, forests, and soil quality), and of the water supply (managing rivers and their flow). Water management is not systematic and comprehensive and, in particular does not engage the participation of all sections of the society.

Recognizing that policies and laws have to take into account the importance of managing water and small watershed areas together, that utilization of the information system must be efficient, that the people sector is part of the management mechanism and thus they too must be able to access such information system. These then are tools to develop and conserve natural resources and the environment on a sustainable basis.

Admiring people sector networks in many areas are able to undertake water management in small watershed ecological areas efficiently, even though they face

problems of not being accepted by the authorities at the level of implementation, policy and law.

Recognizing the necessity of having a public policy that manages small scale watershed resources in a sustainable way, with the participation of networks and partners from all sections of the society, so that water management can move towards a development outcome that is integrative, balanced, and just.

The NHA thereby resolves as follows:

1. Agreeing in principle that water is a valuable resource jointly owned by all members of society and property of the society which is collectively owned by water user groups/organizations, communities, and networks. Therefore, water user groups/organizations, communities, and networks shall have the right to participate in the decision-making and determination of the master plan and strategy on sustainable water resource management in small watershed ecological areas. They also want the concerned government agencies to be responsive to such plan and strategy.

2. Requests the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment, the Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives and the Local Administration Department and agencies which are involved with water management do the following:

2.1 To support establishment of a process of collaboration in a multilateral format that comprises the people sector/users/stakeholders, state agencies' officials, and the civil society. This is to be done in tandem with building up form of decentralization mechanism in small watershed management in every area of the country (that has small watersheds) which is in harmony with each watershed's ecosystem.

2.2 To establish a "joint agreement" on water management in small watershed ecological areas with participation of multilateral partners that encompasses all small watershed ecological areas. This is to lead to preparation of a statute on sustainable small scale watershed resource development.

2.3 To study, review, or develop policies, laws, acts, and other regulations such as the Water Resources Act B.E.....using the process of participation as contained in The Prime Minister's Office Ruling on Hearing the Opinions of the People B.E. 2548 (2005). Also, review and develop the structure(s) of various agencies connected with management of small watershed resources development so that they all work together at the local level with efficiency.

2.4 Promote and support a budget for setting up a small watershed development fund, the nature which is to have participation of state agencies, private sector organizations, local governmental organizations or special administrative areas and the

people sector. The aim of the fund being to support the management of watershed resources, this to include rehabilitation, conservation, protection of natural resources and the environment so that they are sustainable.

3. Requests that environmental networks for conservation and rehabilitation, academic institution networks, local research networks (such as networks that are receive funding from the Research Support Fund) and education institutions in the provinces join forces with local government organizations or special administrative areas, private sector development organizations, communities and allied parties to:

3.1 Support the management of knowledge, including respect for the local wisdom of each community. This could be done by: gathering effective experiences and learning lessons from them to be stored as knowledge; study and research (such as doing surveys of small scale watersheds, drawing maps of how the water there flows); developing systematically a data and information system for use in managing small scale watershed resources; developing a knowledge base, to include knowledge on how to use water efficiently. All this knowledge is to be included in a local curriculum that is congruent with the specific ecology of each particular small watershed area.

3.2 Disseminate and publicize the knowledge base on management of small watershed resources, especially through publications and community radios, so that all stakeholders will know about it equally.

3.3 Requests the Secretary of the National Health Commission report progress on management of small scale watershed resources for sustainability and with participation of all networks and allied bodies, to the 5th National Health Assembly.