

Global water project spotlights Mekong kids

HÀ NỘI— The relationship between children and the water will be explored through a new global multimedia project entitled Tales of Water, addressing the numerous water management challenges facing the Mekong Region.

An international film crew and photographer will visit the region as part of the project from December 4-18, documenting the journey through the eyes of a child.

The project will be coordinated and managed by The World Conservation Union (IUCN), and implemented by the Tales of Water Foundation.

Focusing on children living in river basins around the world, the project will take in areas including the Middle East, Africa, Central and South America, Europe and Asia.

Asian nations including Cambodia, Laos, Thailand and Việt Nam will provide the backdrop for scheduled filming associated with the Mekong River Basin.

Tales of Water will provide a child's perspective on the subject, offering a new way of seeing, feeling and experiencing water and its use in society.

The venture will also address challenges facing children from around the world, demonstrating how they each deal with the water situation in a unique way.

Water is considered the essential function of life for river basin residents, directing their seasonal activities and functioning as both a product and a service.

The end result of the project will see a series of video products released (commercials, documentaries, short films), along with a glossy photo book, and a website (<http://www.talesofwater.com>).

Organisers will also set up a pavilion at the fourth World Water Forum, displaying the products and providing an insight on the different regions for the international audience.

The Mekong region's involvement in the Tales of Water project will be supported by the Mekong Wetlands Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Use Programme (MWBP), the IUCN,

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the Water and Nature Initiative (WANI) of the IUCN, and the governments of Cambodia, Laos, Thailand and Việt Nam.

The MWBP is a joint initiative of the four riparian governments from the Lower Mekong Basin – Cambodia, Laos, Thailand and Việt Nam – managed by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the IUCN and the Mekong River Commission (MRC).

Each supporter aims to strengthen the capacity of organisations and residents in order to develop sustainable livelihoods and manage wetland biodiversity resources wisely.

Film crews will visit the demonstration sites of the MWBP when shooting footage of the Mekong region, linking in the regional theme of Family, Friends, Fun and Future for the Tales of Water project.

The Mekong River is one of the great river systems of the world, with its diverse ecosystem playing a significant role in international biodiversity conservation.

Biodiversity is fundamental to the viability of natural resource-based rural livelihoods, supporting an estimated 55 million people in the Lower Mekong Basin – a population equivalent to more than 90 per cent of the entire Mekong Basin, and about one third of the total population of Cambodia, Laos, Thailand and Việt Nam combined.

Shooting schedules in the Mekong region for Tales of Water run as follows: December 4-8, in Việt Nam; December 8-12, in Cambodia; December 12-15, in Laos; and December 15-18, in Thailand. — VNS