

Workshop on ‘Sediment Problems and Sediment Management in Asian River Basins’, Hyderabad, India, September 7-8, 2009

This 2-day workshop formed part of the Scientific Assembly of the International Association of Hydrological Sciences (IAHS) and the International Association of Hydrogeologists (IAH), which took place in Hyderabad, India from September 7th to September 11th, 2009. The workshop was a joint venture between the International Commission on Continental Erosion (ICCE) of IAHS and the UNESCO International Sediment Initiative (ISI). It was also co-sponsored by the World Association for Sedimentation and Erosion Research (WASER). The involvement of the UNESCO ISI was particularly important, because UNESCO provided funds to support the attendance of several invited speakers, who presented overview papers relating to sediment problems in their home countries or local regions. Dr Bhanu Neupane from the UNESCO Regional Office in New Delhi provided valuable support to the workshop, in making travel and accommodation arrangements for several of the invited speakers. Manfred Spreafico, Des Walling and Valentin Golosov attended the Hyderabad Assembly and were able to represent the ISI Steering Committee.

The workshop represented an explicit attempt by ISI to strengthen links with sediment specialists in Asia, and particularly in India and the surrounding region, and to focus attention on the many important sediment problems faced by the region. The workshop proved a very valuable and productive meeting and it fully achieved its objectives. The programme of the workshop centred on presentations made by the invited speakers and by others who had offered papers to the workshop. The presentations were structured into two main groups, each occupying a day. The first day was devoted to the invited papers that included an overview of the activities of the ISI presented by the chairman of the ISI Steering Committee, Professor Manfred Spreafico and contributions from invited speakers from India, Iran, Singapore, Taiwan, Nepal, Vietnam and Bangladesh. These invited contributions focussed on key sediment problems in those countries or particular regions and additionally provided valuable perspectives on important issues such as the design of sediment management and control programmes, the impact of climate change on sediment loads, the role of sediment fluxes in regional and global carbon budgets and the problems of reconciling the interests of farmers and reservoir managers for improved catchment management. By providing extended time slots for these invited presentations, it was possible for the authors to provide substantive overviews in their presentations and for the presentations to be followed by useful discussions.

The second day of the workshop was devoted to presentations based on the submitted papers. Ten papers were presented and again the timeslots were organised to provide time for discussion after each presentation. The papers presented were of a high standard and covered a wide range of important topics and issues ranging from the problems of managing erosion of lake shores and the environmental impact of sand mining, through the role of agricultural activity in causing aggradation of small rivers in Siberia and influencing runoff rates from steep slopes in Laos, defining baseline erosion rates and recent changes in the sediment load of the Mekong River, to modelling and predicting catchment sediment yields and reservoir sedimentation and the design of hydraulic structures for sediment-laden rivers. Several posters were also presented. The mix of review papers on the first day and papers providing more detailed coverage of particular topics and studies on the second day proved very effective and ISI looks forward to developing further contacts with sediment researchers and practitioners in the region. It is hoped to publish the papers presented at the workshop to make the material presented more widely available to the sediment community.

Des Walling