

## The USGS Delta Research and Global Observation Network Update – August 2008

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### DRAGON Institute to be established at Can Tho University, Vietnam

President George W. Bush welcomed Prime Minister Nguyen Tan Dung to the United States of America and to the White House on June 24, 2008 for the fourth bilateral meeting between leaders of the two countries in as many years. The President and the Prime Minister discussed the progress made since they last met in Vietnam in 2006 and committed to specific efforts to carry this increasingly robust bilateral relationship forward. The two leaders agreed the relationship is based on a positive, growing friendship, mutual respect, and a shared commitment to pursuing constructive and multifaceted cooperation on a wide range of issues that will contribute to the development of the depth of the relationship, which is in the long-term interests of both countries. They also shared their vision and goals for a stable, secure, democratic, and peaceful Asia-Pacific region and discussed future U.S.-Vietnam contributions to that end.

The two leaders discussed cooperation on climate issues. Prime Minister Dung and President Bush welcomed the commencement of the Delta Research and Global



Observation Network (DRAGON) project in Vietnam, which will establish an institute at Can Tho University to cooperate on training and research to produce healthy ecosystems and sustainable deltas. The two leaders also agreed to work together to promote Vietnamese climate change adaptation and mitigation efforts, including the formation of a new subcommittee under the bilateral Science and Technology Agreement to discuss and coordinate joint initiatives.

[News Release from The White House](#)

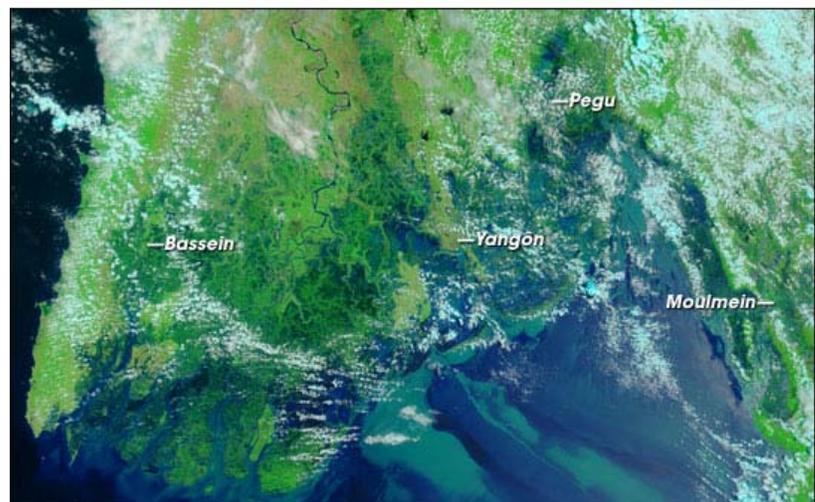
[News Release from Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Vietnam](#)

### **DELTA in crisis: the Irrawaddy Delta in Myanmar (Burma)**

Tropical Cyclone Nargis formed into a tropical cyclone on April 27, 2008, in the central Bay of Bengal about 360 miles off the southeast coast of India. On 2 May 2008 Tropical Cyclone Nargis made landfall near Cape Negrais on the coast of Myanmar (Burma) with sustained winds of 130 mph and gusts of 150-160 mph, which is the equivalent of a strong Category 3 or minimal Category 4 hurricane on the Saffir-Simpson Scale. The storm maintained its strength as it tracked across the Irrawaddy Delta on its way towards the capital city of Yangon (Rangoon). As of May 26, 2008, the official death count was 77,738 confirmed dead with 55,917 missing and 19,359 injured. The United Nations has estimated that up to 2 million people have been affected by the storm. See the DRAGON Web site for more information on the Irrawaddy Delta and Cyclone Nargis:

<<http://deltas.usgs.gov/irrawaddy.aspx>>

The Irrawaddy Delta was recently added to DRAGON because of its international importance. The Irrawaddy Delta is known for its fertile alluvial soils, rice production, and dense human population. The nine mouths of the Ayeyarwady River disburse river water heavily laden with silt, deposition from which created the rich 13,500 mi<sup>2</sup> (35,000 km<sup>2</sup>) delta ecosystem. The delta continues to actively accrete seaward. The low-lying delta has an average elevation of just 3 m above sea level.



May 5, 2008

## **DRAGON II (Addis Ababa, Ethiopia) and III (Bangkok, Thailand) held in April and May 2008**

DRAGON II was held in conjunction with International Symposium, GLOW V, Great Lakes of the World and Rift Valley Lakes: Sustainability, Integrity and Management conference <<http://www.aehms.org/pdf/GLOWV-2ndCircular.pdf>> April 26-30, 2008 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

The Delta Research and Global Observation Network (DRAGON) partnered with the [Aquatic Ecosystem Health and Management Society](#) (AEHMS) to sponsor a program, devoted to understanding ecological, hydrological, geological, and biogeochemical processes and management of deltaic coastal ecosystems. DRAGON II built on the first international meeting aimed at building a community of practice to develop tools for ecological forecasting in these ecologically critical deltaic systems.

A DRAGON III workshop was held in conjunction with the Southeast Asia University Network and an international wetland training course in Bangkok, Thailand, in May 2008. More than 30 participants, including the [International Crane Foundation](#), contributed to sharing information about wetlands in the Mekong and other deltas around the world.

Conference papers will be published in [Aquatic Ecosystem Health & Management](#).

## **DRAGON IV held in Brazil in July 2008**

A symposium entitled "USGS Delta Research and Global Observation Network: Large River Floodplains and Deltas in South America" has been organized by Dr. Beth Middleton, USGS [National Wetlands Research Center](#). The DRAGON IV symposium was held in conjunction with the [8<sup>th</sup> Intecol Wetlands Conference](#) in Cuiaba, Brazil, July 20-25, 2008. The purpose of the symposium was to continue to develop a world community of practice focused on delta and large river science.

## **DRAGON bibliography**

The [delta research bibliography](#) on the DRAGON Web site includes over 1,400 citations related to research on deltaic systems. Records link to abstracts and/or full-text or real- or near-time data. Some full-text is free while other items are restricted to subscribers or pay-per-view access. Users may search by title, author, or other fields. The asterisk (\*) may be used for truncation. Clicking on the arrow labeled "all indexed fields" on the Advanced Search page will provide more options. The bibliographic database is updated monthly. If you have a paper or dataset to add to the network, please click the [Data Upload tab](#) on the DRAGON Web site for instructions.

## **DRAGON community contributions**

Dr. Michiel van der Meulen has a recent publication in the *Journal of Soils and Sediments* that focuses on stakeholder relationships and aggregate extraction plans in the Dutch Rhine and Meuse Rivers.

van der Meulen, Michiel J., Rijnveld, Marc, Gerrits, Lasse M., Joziase, Jan, van Heijst, Max W.I.M., and Gruijters, Stephan H.L.L., 2006, Handling Sediments in Dutch River Management: The Planning Stage of the Maaswerken River Widening Project <<http://dx.doi.org/10.1065/jss2006.06.165>> : [Journal of Soils and Sediments](#), vol. 6, no. 3, p. 163-172.

If you have a paper or dataset to add to the DRAGON network, please click the [Data Upload tab](#) on the DRAGON Web site for instructions.

### **What's available on the USGS DRAGON Web site?**

DRAGON includes information on 14 deltas of international importance: the Amazon, Danube, Ganges, Huang He, Irrawaddy, Lena, Mekong, Mississippi, Nile, Okavango, Rhine, Selenga, Volga, and Yangtze. The site includes a description and several maps of each river and delta, an interactive Google map viewer highlighting the 14 deltas, and useful Web links related to delta research, universities, government agencies, and non-governmental organizations working in delta environments, sources for spatial or water data, and USGS resources available to all.

The Proceedings page provides presentations and abstracts from the 2007 International Delta Roundtable held in Lafayette, Louisiana, USA. A 10-minute podcast of key parts of the conference is provided at the top of the page.

The DRAGON Web site also provides useful tools such as a searchable digital library related to delta science. The comparison maps tool allows the user to choose two deltas for comparison through side-by-side maps of cyclone risk, elevation, flood risk, irrigated land, land cover, population density, protected land, RAMSAR wetlands, and reservoir volume.

For a list of past and upcoming meetings, select "Meetings" on the left side of the DRAGON home page.

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### For more information, contact:

Gregory J. Smith, Ph.D.  
U. S. Geological Survey  
National Wetlands Research Center  
700 Cajundome Boulevard  
Lafayette, LA 70506  
Phone: 337-266-8501  
E-mail: [gregory\\_smith@usgs.gov](mailto:gregory_smith@usgs.gov)  
[Http://www.nwrc.usgs.gov](http://www.nwrc.usgs.gov)

