



# Mekong Wetlands Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Use Programme

**MEDIA RELEASE**

10 February 2006

## **World Wetlands Day celebrations in Tam Nong District and Tan An Town**

World Wetlands Day (WWD) 2006 celebrations will take place in Tan An town, Long An province on 10 February 2006, and at Tram Chim National Park, Dong Thap province on 12 February 2006 as part of the Mekong Wetlands Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Use Programme (MWBP)\*, with co-funding from Tram Chim National Park and Department of Science and Technology of Long An. This will be the fourth year that the area was celebrated WWD.

WWD falls on 2 February each year. It marks the date of the adoption of the Convention on Wetlands on 2 February 1971, in Iranian City of Ramsar on the shores of the Caspian Sea. In 1989 Viet Nam became the signatory of this Convention. In 1997, 2 February was selected to be World Wetlands Day. Since then WWD has been celebrated yearly by many countries to call attention to the value of wetlands and advocate for wetlands protection. This year 2 February fell on the Tet holidays in Viet Nam, thus the celebrations were moved to 10 and 12 February 2006.

The celebrations on **10 February 2006** will commence in the morning with a gathering at the **Conference Hall of Long An Provincial Party Committee** to commemorate WWD. Participants will include representatives of MONRE, VEPA, Viet Nam MRC, PPC Long An, provincial agencies of Long An and neighbouring provinces (Dong Thap, Tien Giang, Tay Ninh and Ben Tre), mass organisations of Long An, PCs of all Long An districts/towns; many renown wetland experts from universities and institutions such as Institute of Tropical Biology, Sub- FIPI (Southern Institute for Forest Inventory and Planning), VN Society of Soil Science, and Sub- institute of Geography in HCMC. The experts and government officials will be making catching speeches to raise awareness of values and importance of wetlands. There will be a public exhibit of the entries of the artistic wetland photography contest at the venue.

On **12 February 2006**, the celebrations will begin from 6:30-8:00am. Two decorated vehicles broadcasting music and bearing banners advocating wetlands conservation will be going around **Tam Nong district and Tram Chim National Park**, with a motorcade of 10 motorbikes accompanying. Banners will also be displayed at key locations in the district.

Following this representatives of Tam Nong PC, farmers' Association, Women's Union, Youth's Union from communities and teachers and students from schools surrounding Tram Chim National Park and community members will be gathering in front of the District Culture House for the main event which will feature an award giving ceremony to winners of wetlands painting and essay writing contests which school children took part in several days before. Representatives of the district and the park will be delivering lively speeches conveying wetlands conservation messages.

The slogans for the event this year worldwide are "*in the face of poverty...wetlands are lifelines*", "*Wetlands and water-supporting life, sustaining livelihoods*", "*No water, no wetlands: no wetlands, poorer quality of life*", "*Don't just talk about habitat conservation, get out there and do it*".

A JOINT UNDP - IUCN - MRC GEF-FUNDED PROGRAMME



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**For more information please contact:**

Mr Nguyen Huu Thien  
Project Co-Manager  
Mekong Wetlands Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Use Programme (MWBP)  
Provincial Project Office  
7 Truong Dinh Street, Cao Lanh Town, Dong Thap province  
Vietnam  
Phone: (+84-67) 873 150; Fax: (+84-67) 873 151  
Hand phone: (84) 913 619159  
E-mail: [thien.mwbp@plainofreedsppo.org](mailto:thien.mwbp@plainofreedsppo.org)  
Website: [www.mekongwetlands.org](http://www.mekongwetlands.org)

\* The Mekong Wetlands Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Use Programme (MWBP) is a joint programme of the four riparian governments of the Lower Mekong Basin – Cambodia, Lao PDR, Thailand and Viet Nam – managed by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the World Conservation Union (IUCN) and the Mekong River Commission (MRC), in collaboration with other key stakeholders. With funding from the Global Environment Facility (GEF), UNDP, The Royal Netherlands Government, MRCS, the Water and Nature Initiative (WANI) and other donors, the programme tries to address the most critical issues for the conservation and sustainable use of natural resources in the Mekong wetlands. The programme aims to strengthen the capacity of organisations and people to develop sustainable livelihoods and manage wetland biodiversity resources wisely. The programme is a five-year (2004-2009) intervention at three levels – regional, national and local – with demonstration wetland areas in each of the four countries: in Stung Treng, Cambodia; in Attapeu province in southern Lao PDR; in the Songkhram river basin, Thailand; and in the Plain of Reeds in the Mekong Delta, Viet Nam.

The programme aims to:

- Improve coordination for wetland planning from regional to local levels
- Strengthen policy and economic environments for wetland conservation
- Generate and share information
- Train and build capacity for the wise use of wetlands
- Create alternative options for sustainable natural resource use and improve livelihoods

The programme, a partnership between governments, aid agencies and NGOs, provides a framework for complementary work for wetland conservation and sustainable livelihoods in the Lower Mekong Basin.

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