

World Conference on

# Climate Change

October 24-26, 2016 Valencia, Spain

## The values and recovery progress of floating rice-based agro-ecological systems for adaptation to climate change in the Vietnamese Mekong Delta

Nguyen Van Kien<sup>1,2</sup><sup>1</sup>An Giang University, Vietnam<sup>2</sup>Australian National University, Australia

People have a long tradition of living with the floods in the Vietnamese Mekong Delta by harvesting the floating rice. This floating rice-based agro-ecological system exploited seasonal floods for rural livelihoods until 1980s. In 1974, there were 0.5 million hectares of the floating rice in the VMD, but by 2013, this dropped to 50 hectares (ha), found in Vinh Phuoc and Luong An Tra communes of Tri Ton district in An Giang province. Recognition of the important ecological, economic and cultural values of this floating rice-based agro-ecological system, Research Center for Rural Development (RCRD) of An Giang University has co-designed with local farmers, private sectors and local authorities to initiate a series of research and development outreach activities which aims to help rural communities to restore this valuable geneses as well as ecosystem services for improving rural livelihoods and adaptation to climate change. After operating these research and development activities for two years, we found that behaviours of different stakeholders have changed positively towards this recovery activity. Policy makers recognized the opportunity costs of this system in comparison with intensification of rice, from two to three crops, changed their attitudes toward profitability rather than production. Significantly, the market price of the floating rice was improved by double, giving incentives for farmers to return to the floating rice. More importantly, this system allow farmers to adapt well to floods and droughts because floating rice can elongate well with the flood condition, while farmers can save water for irrigating upland crops thank to the thick layers of rice remaining straws. This paper provides the quantitative economic and ecological values of the floating rice-based agro-ecological systems, describes the co-design participatory processes of floating rice recovery in the Mekong Delta, and suggests avenue for adaptation to climate change in the future.

linhthuydhtl@gmail.com