



## 2<sup>nd</sup> World's Large Rivers Conference in Manaus, Brazil

The 2<sup>nd</sup> "International Conference on the Status and Future of the World's Large Rivers", initiated by Prof. Helmut Habersack from the University of Natural Resources and Life Sciences, Vienna, Austria, and organized together with Prof. Naziano Filizola from the Universidade Federal do Amazonas, Manaus, Brazil, took place from 21<sup>st</sup> to 25<sup>th</sup> of July 2014 and gathered more than 200 scientists and practitioners from all over the world. Besides attractive scientific sessions, interesting technical tours and charming social events, the UNESCO-supported World's Large Rivers Initiative, which aims to further intensify research and cooperation on large rivers, has been further developed.

The pressures and impacts on the World's Large Rivers have increased greatly in recent years, as a consequence of their exploitation to meet human needs. Large rivers are particularly exposed to problems of multiple uses, often with conflicting aims. At the global scale, there is no overview assessment of the current status of the World's Large Rivers, the conflicting demands on such rivers, and likely future anthropogenic impacts, as well as the potential for restoration and the associated problems.

In 2011 the first International Conference on „The Status and Future of the World's Large Rivers“ in Vienna, Austria, provided a global forum for a wide-ranging discussion of key issues related to research on large rivers and to their effective and sustainable management, involving both scientists and decision makers.

This successful event was continued in 2014 in Manaus, Brazil at the fascinating Amazon River. More than 500 submitted abstracts covering all relevant topics and rivers (from the Amazon over the Congo and the Yellow River to the Siberian Rivers) have been submitted to the conference and more than 200 participants coming from 36 nations proved the importance of this meeting and contributed significantly to its success.

The technical sessions gave up-to-date insight into the latest scientific findings on the situation and problems of large rivers in the thematic fields of "Hydrology, Hydraulics and Water Quality", "Sediment Transport and Morphodynamics" as well as "Ecology and Restoration". Special focus was also given to recent developments and research at the Amazon River Basin and other South American rivers facing the same challenges. The multilingual character (English – Portuguese – Spanish) of these sessions attracted a large number of local scientists and gave the opportunity for deep-insight discussions. This "Amazonia-Session" was therefore started by a keynote lecture given by Prof. Naziano Filizola who presented recent research results of this largest river of the world.

In the evenings, a variety of social events was offered, allowing the conference attendees to make contact with other scientists and researchers. The Welcome Reception took place on Monday, 21<sup>st</sup> of July at the Tropical Manaus Hotel and provided a relaxed ambience in a beautiful tropical setting. The Conference Banquet at the end of the meeting was also organized at the Tropical Manaus Hotel and offered local dishes as well as a folkloristic show.

On Friday, 25<sup>th</sup> of July, a large number of attendees took the chance to participate in one of the Technical Tours. The "Mixing of Waters"-Tours brought the participants by boat to one of the most fascinating natural spectacles in the world. At the "Meeting Point of Waters" the black Negro River joins the light brown Solimoes River (the Amazon) and both waters do not mix for several kilometers, creating a two-tone river. The second tour featured "The Anavilhanas" which is the biggest fresh water archipelago of river islands of the world positioned less than 100 kilometers from Manaus at the Negro River. More than 400 islands extending over 90 kilometers covered with native forest form a unique ecological system of extreme biodiversity in the Amazon.

Based on the Vienna Declaration, which has been adopted by the participants in 2011, the new UNESCO / IHP Initiative (**WLRI - World's Large Rivers Initiative**) has been established. In a Discussion Forum during the conference attended by the majority of conference attendees, the main issues of this upcoming Initiative have been debated.

The third World's Large Rivers Conference will be held in 2017. The venue will be announced in the beginning of 2015 according to the decision of an expert panel which will choose between the five submitted proposals.

We would be very happy to welcome you at this 3<sup>rd</sup> conference!

More information can be found on <http://worldslargerivers.boku.ac.at>.



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Murray-Darling  
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Congo  
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Yangtze  
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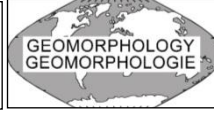


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Supported by:



Prof. Helmut Habersack and Prof. Naziano Filizola at the Opening Ceremony (© WLR)



Opening Ceremony (f.l.t.r.): Habersack (Initiator and Scientific Committee), Filizola (Local Organizing Committee), De Mendes (Rector of UFAM), De Dapper (IAG), Guyot (IRD), Mair (ICPDR) (© WLR)



Group photo at the Conference Venue (© WLR)



Technical Tour Mixing of the Waters (© WLR)



Technical Anavilhanas Archipelago (© WLR)