

## **Closing Summary**

### ***Theme C: Water for Development and Ecosystems***

The overarching objective of Theme C is securing water for long-term, multi-sectoral needs, generating both development and environmental dividends. The goal was to present and confirm support for the policy recommendations and to launch Asia Pacific follow-up initiatives. Rigorous actions for securing the water needs of both development and the environment in the region were reaffirmed. Participants stressed a sense of urgency in taking concrete action towards integrated thinking in which development enhances sustainability instead of threatening it. The session highlighted the need to invest in ecosystems as development infrastructure which must be maintained, restored, monitored and managed. The session also reiterated the dependence of the region on water for food security under further threat from climate change, on agriculture and irrigation as a key area for reform and investment to increase its productivity and social economic and environmental outcomes. Panel speakers asserted that a mix of technical innovations and institutional reforms must form the basis for new strategies to manage agricultural water and achieve sustainable ecosystems and poverty alleviation. While the challenges to implementing the Theme C recommendations remain formidable, including the full range of difficult governance issues, it was clear that much progress has already been made in establishing shared goals and a common understanding of the ways forward. FAO launched an initiative with IWMI to re-invent irrigation and agricultural water governance in the Asia Pacific to meet the Millennium Development Goals which was supported by panellists, while IUCN stressed its commitment to establishing a network of practitioners and decision makers to implement environmental flows tools and applications in the region.