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Sociohydrology: “Imagineering” Not Just Engineering Needed to Solve Water Security Challenges

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Abstract: Many parts of the world are facing severe water crises. Historically engineers and domain experts are tasked with design and implementation of technological solutions to water problems, such as the building of dams, pipelines and desalination plants. These work well in the short term, but non-involvement of the beneficiaries of the water works, the people themselves, in conceptualization and execution of otherwise well-intentioned and well-designed solutions often leads to unintended, even adverse, consequences due to issues not considered in designs and due to non-acceptance by society. I will illustrate this through examples of water management problems in Sri Lanka, Australia, USA, China, Europe, which prompted the launch and growth of the field of sociohydrology. I will put these in the context of UN Sustainable Development Goals related to water, which provide renewed motivation for engineers, social scientists and humanists to come together and work towards developing imaginative solutions for many water security challenges faced by communities around the world.

Moderated by Talha Manzoor, Assistant Professor, Centre for Water Informatics & Technology (LUMS)

Speaker Biography: Murugesu Sivapalan holds a B.S. Civil Engineering (University of Ceylon), M.Eng in Water Resources Engineering (AIT, Thailand), and obtained his 1986 Ph.D from Princeton University. He was Professor of Environmental Engineering at the University of Western Australia for 17 years, before joining University of Illinois in 2005. Siva has published on a wide range of topics, including effects of heterogeneity and scale, flood frequency, ecohydrology and water balance and water quality modeling. He was Executive Editor of the Hydrology and Earth System Sciences journal, and was founding chair of the International Association of Hydrological Sciences' Decade on Predictions in Ungauged Basins initiative. He is also co-founder of the new subfield of sociohydrology. Sivapalan has received several awards for his research contributions, including the John Dalton and Alfred Wegener Medals of the European Geosciences Union and the Robert Horton Medal of the American Geophysical Union. He was joint recipient of the Prince Sultan Bin Abdulaziz International Prize for Water (Creativity Prize) awarded in recognition of his role in developing and leading the new field of sociohydrology.

The webinar can be attended via Zoom. In order to attend, the participants must register at the following link:

<https://wit.lums.edu.pk/BWSR2021>

Instructions to log into the webinar will be sent via email.

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