

**DECLARATION OF THE THIRD SUMMIT
OF THE AYEYAWADY- CHAO PHRAYA- MEKONG ECONOMIC
COOPERATION STRATEGY**

We, the Heads of the Government of the Kingdom of Cambodia, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, the Union of Myanmar, the Kingdom of Thailand and the Socialist Republic of Vietnam gathered in Hanoi, Vietnam on 7th November 2008 for the 3rd Summit of the Ayeyawady - Chao Phraya - Mekong Economic Cooperation Strategy (hereinafter referred to as ACMECS).

We reaffirmed our determination to deepen the traditional relations of friendship, good neighbourliness and mutual benefits among the ACMECS countries in the light of the Bagan Declaration.

We appreciated the significant outcomes of the 3rd GMS Summit in March 2008 in Vientiane, Lao PDR and reaffirmed our strong commitments to strengthen the closer cooperation in the implementation of the Vientiane Plan of Action 2008-2012 to realize the vision of developing the Mekong sub-region into a region of “integrity, harmony and prosperity”.

We reviewed the implementation of the Second ACMECS Summit Declaration and the ACMECS Plan of Action with satisfaction on the significant progress in the areas of cooperation such as trade and investment facilitation, transport, agriculture, industry and energy, public health, tourism and human resource development.

We were fully aware of the need for the ACMECS countries to redouble their efforts individually and collectively to move ACMECS forward more effectively and substantively, not only for the interests and benefits of the ACMECS countries, but also for the acceleration of economic integration and development in the Mekong sub-region.

We hereby declared as follows:

1. In **trade and investment facilitation** cooperation, we are pleased to witness that the trade and investment volumes among the ACMECS countries have been increasing significantly. To make the best use of great potentials of the ACMECS countries for trade and investment cooperation, we agreed to:

- 1.1. Adopt the ACMECS Leaders' Declaration on Facilitation and Promotion of Trade, Investment and Tourism with a view to creating favourable business environment in border areas in an effort to accelerate economic growth and social progress in such areas of the ACMECS countries;
- 1.2. Strengthen the ACMECS Business Council as a real bridge for enhancing the partnership between the ACMECS countries' Governments and business

circles. In this connection, we expressed our high appreciation to the successful organization of the ACMECS Business Forum following the first which was held in Bangkok in 2005, and the 1st Dialogue between ACMECS Leaders and business sectors on the occasion of the 3rd ACMECS Summit, and took into serious consideration the recommendations submitted by the business circles at the ACMECS Business Forum with a view to create a pro-business environment in the ACMECS countries. We encouraged the ACMECS Business Council to convene regularly, preferably back - to - back with the ACMECS Summits;

- 1.3. Facilitate and promote foreign direct investment, particularly among ACMECS member countries, through the provision of investment incentives under the respective domestic laws and regulations of ACMECS countries; and
 - 1.4. Encourage the organization of joint trade and investment promotion events and exhibitions in rotation among the ACMECS countries.
2. In **agricultural cooperation**, we agreed to:
- 2.1. Welcome the recommendation of the first Ministerial Meeting on ACMECS Rice Cooperation on 24 - 25 September 2007 in Siem Reap, Cambodia to establish ACMECS Rice Cooperation mechanism;
 - 2.2. Encourage cooperation in technology transfer in agriculture production to increase productivity, food security, and food safety and enhance the competitiveness of agricultural products;
 - 2.3. Promote information sharing in animal disease control and improve quarantine inspection procedures of cross-border agricultural products;
 - 2.4. Strengthen close cooperation in bio-fuel crops production in the ACMECS countries in order to provide materials and inputs for bio-fuel development;
 - 2.5. Note that contract farming contributes to the increase in international trade in agricultural products and is an efficient mechanism to guarantee food sufficiency, which benefits all ACMECS countries. The contracting parties shall facilitate the implementation of contract farming schemes;
 - 2.6. Consider supporting financial institutions to provide credit for small farmers for agriculture related activities under ACMECS schemes;
 - 2.7. Expedite the implementation of ACMECS Plan of Action 2006 by promoting close consultation and cooperation of the private sector of the ACMECS countries in investments in agriculture and agro-industry;
 - 2.8. Encourage consultation and cooperation between the ACMECS countries and development partners to tackle challenges and risks from food crisis and to ensure food security.

- 2.9. Encourage and promote awareness of producers, farmers, business sectors and local authorities on the benefits, rules and procedures of the contract farming scheme by organizing seminars or workshops.
3. In **industrial and energy** cooperation, we agreed to:
 - 3.1. Encourage feasibility study and expand application and production of bio - energy in the ACMECS countries through experience and information sharing and technology transfer:
 - 3.2. Facilitate investments in energy development projects, particularly hydro - power, and oil and gas exploration:
 - 3.3. Promote the development of power transmission lines and networks across the ACMECS countries:
 - 3.4. Promote investment in industrial infrastructure, particularly supporting and logistic industries along the East - West Economic Corridor (EWEC), the North South Economic Corridor (NSEC) and the Southern Economic Corridor (SEC); and
 - 3.5. Promote and enhance the competitiveness of the ACMECS SMEs.
4. In **transport** cooperation, we emphasized the importance of transport infrastructure linkages in the socio- economic development of the ACMECS countries. We welcomed Thailand's initiative on positioning the sub-region as a transportation hub. To expedite the progress in sub-regional transport network development, we further agreed to:
 - 4.1. Make full use of existing road transportation networks and economic corridors, particularly the East - West Economic Corridor (EWEC), North South Economic Corridor (NSEC) and Southern Economic Corridor (SEC) under the Greater Mekong Sub-region (GMS) cooperation programme to promote trade, investment and tourism among ACMECS member countries;
 - 4.2. Welcome the considerable progress made under the negotiations and implementation of the Cross Border Transport Agreement (CBTA) under the GMS Programme, Initial Implementation of the CBTA (IICBTA) and bilateral road transport arrangements between and among the ACMECS member countries, particularly, the conclusion of the MOU between and among Lao PDR, Thailand and Vietnam on IICBTA;
 - 4.3. Strengthen our cooperation in further development of transport linkages, in particular the parts with the remaining missing links/bottlenecks in the EWEC, NSEC, SEC and other corridors as well as maintenance of existing networks;
 - 4.4. Welcome the successful organization of the "East West Economic Corridor

Week” in August 2007, in Da Nang, Vietnam and encourage ACMECS member countries to further organize similar trade, investment and tourism marketing promotion activities in other Economic Corridors;

- 4.5. Encourage the negotiations to establish the agreements between and among the ACMECS countries on the admittance of tourism vehicles on designated routes and welcome the conclusion of the Arrangement between and among Lao PDR, Thailand and Vietnam on the Operation of Tourism Road Transport and encourage other ACMECS member countries to participate in this arrangement; and
- 4.6. Encourage the development of air linkages among major cities, cultural and natural heritage sites in the ACMECS countries to increase trade, investment and tourism flows.

5. In **tourism** cooperation, we welcomed the conclusion of the Agreement between Cambodia and Thailand on the Implementation of ACMECS Single Visa and looked forward to other ACMECS countries to join the scheme. For further enhancing tourism cooperation, we agreed to:

- 5.1. Simplify the entry formalities to promote cross border movement within the ACMECS countries;
- 5.2. Effectively implement joint marketing promotion under the "Five Countries, One Destination" concept, including conducting joint promotion activities and feasibility studies of joint tour packages in eco - tourism and cultural/historical tourism such as the Bagan - Sukhothai - Siem Reap – Luang Phrabang - Hue-Hoi An tour package;
- 5.3. Promote the human resource development for tourism, with priority given to programmes and projects for skill training in tour-guide, marketing, tourism planning and management; and
- 5.4. Strengthen closer coordination in development and linking ACMECS member countries' tourism websites.

6. In **human resource development**, we re-emphasized the need for enhancing quality of human resources in the ACMECS countries. We highly appreciated Thailand and Vietnam for their efforts to extend scholarship programmes to other ACMECS members. We welcomed Vietnam and Thailand to conclude the MOU on vocational training development for the ACMECS countries and looked forward to this MOU to be concretized soon into practical work plans and programmes. For further enhancing the effectiveness of cooperation in human resource development, we agreed to:

- 6.1. Encourage the establishment of the partnership and network among academic institutions, in particular higher education and vocational training in the ACMECS countries in order to build up human resource capacity, promote

experience sharing and enhance programmes of trainer and trainee exchanges:

6.2. Continue implementing the current scholarship and fellowship programmes, particularly vocational training programmes in the cooperation sectors of ACMECS; and

6.3. Encourage and call upon concerned Development Partners to participate in training projects of ACMECS and substantiate their financial and technical assistance to the ACMECS countries in human resource development.

7. In **public health** sector, we fully recognized the threats and detrimental impacts on human lives and economic development of the ACMECS countries posed by infectious diseases and called for collective efforts and measures of the ACMECS countries to enhance their preparedness and response in the prevention and control of emerging infectious diseases through the followings:

7.1. Continuing the implementation of the Immediate Action Plan for Preventing and Controlling Avian Influenza Pandemic adopted at the ACMECS Special SOM on Avian Influenza Pandemic Preparedness in May 2006;

7.2. Facilitating information sharing on infectious disease surveillance, prevention and control through collaborative activities and dissemination of best practices;

7.3. Strengthening and better coordinating national epidemic prevention plans of the ACMECS countries, particularly disease control and quarantine inspection at border checkpoints; and

7.4. Promoting capacity building in animal and human health sector.

8. With regards to natural resources and environment, we fully recognized the vital part of environmental conservation and the sustainable use of shared natural resources, including water resources, in the Ayeyawady, Chao Phraya and Mekong river basins, for the sustainable development in the ACMECS countries. We are determined to protect our natural environment and are committed to use our natural resources wisely. We reaffirmed our strong will to strengthen closer coordination and consultation in undertaking our commitments to use, manage, and conserve natural and environmental resources for sustainable development under the bilateral and multilateral frameworks such as the Mekong River Commission (MRC) and the Greater Mekong Sub-region (GMS) where applicable. *In this connection, we decided to set up a new Working Group on environment cooperation and tasked our Ministers to implement this decision at the earliest.*

9. With regards to cooperation with Development Partners, we highly appreciated their active and effective support to the ACMECS countries in socio - economic development. We were fully aware that the implementation of ACMECS projects is primarily in the self-help principle to make the best use of all resources available and to encourage the active participation of the Development Partners in the implementation of ACMECS projects. For further strengthening of the partnership

between the ACMECS countries and the Development Partners, we agreed to:

- 9.1. Instruct our SOM officials to finalize the draft Guidelines for Development Partners' Participation in ACMECS Projects based on in-depth discussion among each others and with the Development Partners and to submit to the next ACMECS Ministerial Meeting for adoption. We endorsed the proposal by our SOM officials and Ministers on posting the final Guidelines for Development Partners' Participation in ACMECS Projects and the list of flagship ACMECS projects on the ACMECS official website;
 - 9.2. Explore the possibility to hold the ACMECS plus Development Partners working level meetings, preferably back-to-back with the meetings of ACMECS SOM and the sector Working Groups in order to discuss in detail the assistance of the Development Partners to the ACMECS prioritized projects; and
 - 9.3. Diversify the Development Partners' participation in ACMECS projects with different levels and scopes, including, *inter alia*, bilateral, trilateral, and multilateral frameworks.
10. We emphasized that strengthening closer coordination among the ACMECS countries is crucial in coordinating our efforts to implement ACMECS projects. In this connection, we agreed to:
- 10.1. Urge the sector Working Groups to convene regularly in rotation among the ACMECS countries to discuss and update the progress in the implementation of the ACMECS projects;
 - 10.2. Strengthen the ACMECS Working Group (AWG) in Bangkok for regular communication and coordination and task the AWG to update the status and progress in the implementation of ACMECS projects on ACMECS official Website periodically; and
 - 10.3. Task our SOM officials to convene a workshop to update the list of the ACMECS projects for the phase 2009-2012 and the ACMECS Plan of Action 2006 in Thailand and report to the ACMECS Ministerial Meeting in Thailand in 2009 for adoption. The progress evaluation of the ACMECS Plans of Action is necessary for the effective economic cooperation and future implementation.
11. We welcome the offer of the Kingdom of Cambodia to host the fourth ACMECS Summit in 2010. The specific date and venue will be coordinated through diplomatic channels.

Adopted in Hanoi, the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, on 7 November 2008./.
