

Chair's Statement of the Second Mekong-Japan Foreign Ministers' Meeting

Siem Reap, Kingdom of Cambodia, 3 October 2009

1. The Second Mekong-Japan Foreign Ministers' Meeting was convened in Siem Reap, the Kingdom of Cambodia, on 3 October 2009. The Meeting was chaired by H.E. Mr. **Hor Namhong**, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of the Kingdom of Cambodia and participated by H.E. Mr. **Katsuya Okada**, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan, H.E. Dr. **Thongloun Sisoulith**, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Lao People's Democratic Republic, H.E. Mr. **Nyan Win**, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Union of Myanmar, H.E. Mr. **Kasit Piromya**, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Thailand, H.E. Mr. **Dao Viet Trung**, Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam.
2. The Ministers held in-depth discussions on various issues of common interest, including the progress and the future direction of the Mekong-Japan cooperation, in the spirit of friendship, mutual understanding and cooperation to further promote Mekong-Japan cooperation for the sake of peace, development and prosperity in the Mekong region as well as in the wider region of East Asia. The Ministers also exchanged views on regional and global issues of common concern.
3. The Ministers recognized that since the launch of the "Japan-Mekong Partnership Program" in 2007, followed by the First Mekong-Japan Foreign Ministers' Meeting in Tokyo, in January 2008, the overall cooperation between the Mekong region countries and Japan has remarkably evolved in various fields of cooperation. The Ministers recognized that the Mekong region, despite its recent development, still confronts challenges that need to be overcome as soon as possible. The Ministers stressed, in this regard, the importance of further economic development and the necessity to enhance human security through strengthening the resilience of the society against various threats that endanger human being and dignity, such as natural disaster and epidemics. The Ministers, acknowledging the principles stated in the Preamble of the ASEAN Charter, shared the views that enduring peace, security, stability and sustainable development and prosperity of the Mekong region is essential to the building of the ASEAN Community as well as of an open East Asia community in the long term. The Ministers of the Mekong region countries highly appreciated Japan's active role in the region, in particular development cooperation and initiatives on human security within the region.

Partnership

4. The Ministers recognized the role of development partners and donor agencies, including the Asian Development Bank (ADB), of which part financial resources come from Japan, the major contributor and Thailand. The Ministers realized the importance to find ways and means to pull all financial resources, as well as to set the directions for the Mekong sub-region development. The Ministers also noted with satisfaction Thailand's strong commitment to the development of the Mekong sub-region in various kind of assistance ranging from enhancing regional transport linkages to empowering human resource capacity.

5. The Ministers noted with satisfaction the existing multi-sectoral cooperation mechanisms, which have been complemented each other in promoting development and prosperity in the Mekong region, such as the **Mekong River Commission (MRC)**, the **ASEAN-Mekong Basin Development Cooperation (AMBDC)**, the **Greater Mekong Subregion Cooperation (GMS)**, the **Ayeyawady-Chao Phraya-Mekong Economic Cooperation Strategy (ACMECS)**, the **Mekong-Ganga Cooperation with India (MGC)** and the recently conducted **U.S.-Lower Mekong Ministerial Meeting**. The Ministers reaffirmed their commitments to enhancing the role of each framework and the importance of further promoting high-level dialogues as well as other consultations between all stakeholders in order to achieve better cooperation in the region.
6. The Ministers of the Mekong region countries also welcomed Japan's recent initiatives to strengthen Asia's growth potential and expand its domestic demand, while supporting sectors and people vulnerable to the current global financial and economic crisis, through measures such as the Official Development Assistance, a new line of trade insurance for infrastructure improvement, and the facilitation of trade finance for the next two years. In this regard, The Ministers of the Mekong region countries appreciated Japan's commitment to consider the Mekong region as a "priority area" in Japan's new initiatives.
7. The Ministers looked forward to the convening of the First Mekong-Japan Summit in Tokyo in November 6-7, 2009, which demonstrates the political commitment of the Leaders of the Mekong countries and Japan to further develop, expand and strengthen the Mekong-Japan partnership and cooperation to the highest level.
8. The Ministers reaffirmed their determination to closely cooperate on regional and global issues of common concern, and to deepen and broaden the existing Mekong-Japan cooperation and cooperation under other frameworks, such as the ASEAN-Japan Dialogue Relations, the ASEAN+3, the East Asia Summit (EAS), as well as the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) to ensure peace, stability and prosperity in the region.
9. The Ministers underlined the importance of further promoting people-to-people contacts and cultural exchanges, particularly among the youths and intellectuals, with a view to boosting a sense of togetherness, mutual respect and understanding of each other. In this context, the Ministers of the Mekong region countries appreciated Japan's initiative, announced at the First Mekong-Japan Foreign Ministers' Meeting in Tokyo, to receive more than 10,000 youths of the Mekong region countries in a period of five years under various programmes, including the Japan-East Asia Network of Exchange for Students and Youths (JENESYS) Programme which was launched in January 2007.
10. The Ministers recognized that the **Mekong-Japan Exchange Year 2009** is an excellent tool for a promotion campaign to highlight the huge opportunities for the Mekong region countries and Japan, and a strong impetus for fostering partnership and better mutual understanding between the peoples the Mekong region countries and Japan.

Development

11. The Ministers of the Mekong region countries particularly appreciated the ongoing expansion of Japan' ODA to the Mekong region countries in the past three years under the "Japan-Mekong Region Partnership Program," which included the assistance to infrastructure development, human resource development, environmental protection and poverty reduction. The Ministers took note of the progress made on the implementation of

- the regional projects, such as the "CLV Development Triangle" and the Program for the East-West and the Southern Economic Corridor for Improving Efficiency of Logistics and Distribution using the Assistance of Japan through Japan-ASEAN Integration Fund (JAIF).
12. The Ministers of the Mekong region countries highly appreciated Japan's multiform contribution to ASEAN integration, including Japan's additional contribution of US\$ 90 million to the JAIF in March 2009, for implementation of the following components, namely "Disaster Management and Emergency Response in ASEAN Region," and "Emergency Assistance related to Financial Crises in ASEAN Region," among others.
 13. The Ministers appreciated the role of the ASEAN-Japan Center in promoting trade, investment and tourism as well as in raising public awareness on the potentials of the ASEAN market. The Ministers welcomed recent developments in economic relations, especially in trade and investment between Japan and the Mekong region countries, and also recognized that there is significant potential for further strengthening the relations. In this regard, the Ministers shared the views that the public-private partnership is essential in further boosting trade and investment through the existing mechanism between Japan and each of the respective Mekong region countries and the ASEAN-Japan Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement. The Ministers also reaffirmed the importance of improving, through closer consultation of all its stakeholders, the business environment of each country and of the region as a whole to accelerate trade and investment.
 14. The Ministers believed that in order to fulfill a vision of creating a more integrated region it is essential to focus on both hard and soft infrastructure of the region. In this context, the Ministers recognized Japan's important role in infrastructure development in the Mekong region, in particular its efforts, together with other partners, to transform the East-West and Southern road networks into "Economic Corridors" and shared the importance to develop the infrastructure of missing links along these important corridors.
 15. In light of the outbreak of the new influenza A (H1N1), the Ministers recognized the need to further strengthen cooperation with one another in various regional and multinational fora, particularly in the areas of timely data sharing, surveillance, preparedness and response to pandemic diseases. The Ministers of the Mekong region countries appreciated the provision of a total of 500,000 courses of anti-virals by Japan for each of the ASEAN Member-States to tackle the avian influenza as well as the influenza A (H1N1) in addition to the existing stockpile of 500,000 courses of anti-virals in Singapore.
 16. The Ministers recognized that the Mekong region is one of the most generative areas in the world for hydropower development and rich in biodiversity. The Ministers shared the view to explore new possibilities of hydropower development, provided that environmental and biodiversity protection be taken due account of, especially the preservation of water resource and social-economic implication of the lower Mekong countries.
 17. The Ministers of the Mekong region countries reaffirmed their support for Japan's initiatives in global environmental protection, and expressed their appreciation for Japan's new proposal 'Hatoyama Initiative' which aims at enhancing financial and technical support for developing countries, in accordance with the progress of the international negotiation, as expressed by Prime Minister Yukio Hatoyama in the UN Summit on Climate Change on September 22, 2009.
 18. The Ministers recognized that the climate change impact on the Mekong region has become a real problem, such as the increased occurrences of floods and droughts, acceleration of forest degradation and so forth. To cope with these emerging challenges, the Ministers

shared the view that any development of the Mekong River should take into account the environmental concerns. In this context, the Ministers of the Mekong region countries appreciated Japan's ongoing assistance on reforestation along the Mekong Basin, and called on Japan's further assistance for the improvement of weather and flood forecasting system, flood and drought management and mitigation of the Mekong River.

19. The Ministers also recognized the important role of the Mekong River Commission (MRC) in sustainable development and protection of the Mekong River Basin. The Ministers of the Mekong region countries appreciated Japan's financial and technical assistance to MRC, and the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan expressed its willingness to continue its support through the MRC.

Regional and International Issues

20. On the situation in Myanmar, the Ministers believed that the upcoming general elections in 2010 would be transparent, democratic and inclusive. The Ministers welcomed recent positive steps taken by the Government of Myanmar in its democratization process including the release of more than 7000 prisoners.
21. With respect to the Korean Peninsula, the Ministers urged the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) to fully comply with all relevant UNSC resolutions as well as to fully implement its commitments in the Six-Party Talks. The Ministers urged the immediate and unconditional resumption of the Six-Party Talks, which remains the most effective framework to discuss outstanding issues of concern regarding DPRK. The Ministers also stressed the need for the DPRK to address the humanitarian concerns of the international community including the abduction issue.
22. The Ministers reaffirmed the urgent need for the United Nations reform as indicated in the subsequent relevant resolutions and decisions of the General Assembly, especially the Security Council reform through expanding both its permanent and non-permanent membership. The Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan highly appreciated the Mekong region countries for their continuous support for Japan to become a permanent member of the UN Security Council.
23. The Minister reaffirmed that they cooperate towards the success of 2010 NPT Review Conference and strengthen the international disarmament and non-proliferation regime through measures such as early entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and universalization of Additional Protocol of IAEA Comprehensive Safeguards agreement. The Ministers stressed the need for addressing the humanitarian problem caused by cluster munitions and landmines. The Ministers welcomed the proposal of Laos to host the 1st Conference of State Parties to the OSLO Convention on Cluster Munitions in 2010.

Mekong-Japan Meetings

24. The Ministers shared the views that the Mekong-Japan cooperation has made a considerable progress in the past several years. In this regard, the Ministers confirmed that the Mekong-Japan meetings should be arranged frequently in order to move the Mekong-Japan cooperation forward effectively. The Ministers were of the view that the Mekong-

Japan Foreign Ministers' Meeting should be convened regularly, while the Senior Officials' Meeting should be held annually.