

Chair's Statement  
of the Seventh Mekong-Japan Foreign Ministers' Meeting  
10 August 2014, Nay Pyi Taw, Myanmar

1. The Seventh Mekong-Japan Foreign Ministers' Meeting was held in Nay Pyi Taw, Myanmar, on 10 August 2014, back-to-back with the 47<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Ministerial Meeting. The Meeting was chaired by H.E. Mr. Fumio Kishida, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan, and participated by H.E. Mr. Hor Namhong, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of the Kingdom of Cambodia; H.E. Mr. Thongloun Sisoulith, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Lao People's Democratic Republic; H.E. Mr. Wunna Maung Lwin, Union Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar; H.E. Mr. Sihasak Phuangketkeow, Permanent Secretary, Acting for the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Thailand; and H.E. Mr. Pham Binh Minh, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam.
  
2. The Ministers underlined the importance of the development of the Mekong region for enhancing connectivity, promoting economic integration, and narrowing development gaps within ASEAN toward building the ASEAN Community in 2015, and reaffirmed the determination to strengthen the cooperation between the Mekong region and Japan. The Ministers also shared the view as to the importance of further promoting infrastructure development in the Mekong region, in terms of both hardware and software, and highly valued Japan's assistance in this area, known for achieving the long-term durability, resilience and high quality of the developed infrastructure, through building Mekong countries' capacity in maintaining and managing infrastructure. The Ministers also shared the view that they will work to meet financial demand for infrastructure development in the Mekong region by making good use of not only public funding such as ODA but also private funding. The Ministers supported Japan's idea to promote people-centered investment with an emphasis on inclusiveness to have as many people as possible enjoy economic benefits of investment, enhanced social resilience to climate change and natural disasters, and capacity building of local people, in the course of investing in infrastructure through efforts of both public and private sectors in the Mekong region.

3. The Ministers appreciated Myanmar's contribution in holding this meeting as this year's ASEAN Chair, and welcomed political, economic, administrative and private sector development reforms undertaken in Myanmar in the process of transition towards democracy.
4. The Ministers assessed the progress of the Mekong-Japan cooperation based on the mid-term review of the "Tokyo Strategy 2012" and the revised "Mekong-Japan Action Plan for the realization of the Tokyo Strategy 2012" adopted at the Fifth Mekong-Japan Summit Meeting held in December 2013. The Ministers welcomed Japan's contribution of approximately 224 billion yen in the first half of this year, in accordance with three pillars of the strategy; "Enhancing Mekong Connectivity", "Developing Together", and "Ensuring Human Security and Environmental Sustainability". The Ministers reaffirmed their determination to further strengthen the Mekong-Japan cooperation toward 2015.
5. For the sake of improving business connectivity, the Ministers requested that the Economic Ministers review the progress of the "Mekong Development Roadmap" based on the revised "Action Plan" and discuss the formulation of a medium- and long-term economic development strategy toward and beyond 2015 at the Mekong-Japan Economic Ministers' Meeting in August, and that they report their progress to the Mekong-Japan Summit Meeting to be held in Myanmar this year.
6. The Ministers appreciated efforts of the Governments of Viet Nam and the Lao PDR to fully implement "Single Stop, Single Window" Inspection (SWI/SSI) at Lao Bao-Densavanh international border checkpoints on the East-West Economic Corridor (EWEC) by early 2015. In this context, the Ministers also appreciated Japan's contribution for facilitating and expediting cross-border flow of goods in the Mekong region under the concept of an "Asia Cargo Highway" as referred in the Revised Mekong-Japan Action Plan for realization of the "Tokyo Strategy 2012", and looked forward to further assistance of Japan in this area, in particular, in the development of Economic Corridors in the sub-region.

7. The Ministers highly appreciated that Foreign Minister Kishida has been vigorously following up at the ministerial level on the achievements of the previous year in terms of moving the relationship between Japan and the Mekong countries closer, including by his visit to Myanmar in March, Cambodia in June, and Viet Nam in July this year, building on the momentum created by Prime Minister Abe's visit to all ASEAN countries and the ASEAN-Japan Commemorative Summit Meeting with the release of the "Vision Statement on ASEAN Japan Friendship and Cooperation," which celebrated the 40th Year of ASEAN-Japan Friendship and Cooperation.

8. The Ministers welcomed the launch of the OECD South East Asia Regional Programme at the margin of the OECD Ministerial Council which relevant ministers from all Mekong countries attended, and shared the view as to the importance of strengthening the relationship between OECD and Southeast Asia on the basis of partnership and mutual learning. The Ministers also expressed their expectation of further development of the partnership through the series of Regional Policy Network meetings to be held in Southeast Asia, including in the Mekong countries later this year.

9. The Ministers welcomed the outcome of the 4th Mekong-Japan Meeting of the Forum for the Promotion of Public-Private Cooperation in the Mekong Region held in Tokyo in February 2014, and noted the Chair's Summary of the meeting. The Ministers appreciated Japan for continuously hosting the Forum on public-private cooperation. In this connection, the Ministers took note the suggestion to promote business dialogues and cooperation between public and private sectors of Mekong countries and Japan, in such areas as modernizing agro-business, post-harvest processing technology, and tourism.

10. The Ministers appreciated Japan's efforts on expanding people to people exchange through various initiatives such as JENESYS 2.0 (Japan-East Asia Network of Exchange for Students and Youths). The Ministers welcomed Japan's implementation of the relaxation of visa requirements to Myanmar in January 2014, as well as Japan's decision of further visa relaxation to Viet Nam in June, following Japan's decision of visa relaxation to all Mekong countries in 2013. The Ministers also welcomed the progress being made in concluding air services agreements between Japan and all Mekong countries, as Japan reached a substantial agreement on the air services agreements with Cambodia and Laos, respectively, in June.

11. The Ministers welcomed the conclusion of the legal frameworks concerning investment between Japan and all Mekong countries, after the Myanmar-Japan investment agreement went into effect on 7 August, and appreciated Japan's proactive efforts to promote investment and economic exchanges including support through OECD Investment Policy Review and the opening of the JETRO office in Vientiane in April.

12. The Ministers stressed the importance of achieving human security and sustainable development by promoting low-carbon growth, building a climate-resilient society and preserving the natural conditions of the Mekong region. In this regard, the Ministers also reaffirmed their commitment to implement the measures based on the "Tokyo Strategy 2012" and the Action Plan for 'A decade toward the Green Mekong' Initiative, and to make tangible progress. The Ministers also expressed their appreciation for Japan's continuous hosting of the Green Mekong Forum with the support from Thailand as the venue country in 2011 and 2013.

13. The Ministers highly appreciated and welcomed that Prime Minister Abe and President Obama affirmed Japan-United States joint engagement and cooperation with Southeast Asian countries, as priorities in the bilateral relations, and both Japan and the United States were working to strengthen connectivity, including their efforts in the Mekong region through closer collaboration between Japan's "Mekong-Japan Cooperation" and the United States' "Lower Mekong Initiative" and "Friends of Lower Mekong." The Ministers also expressed their expectation of further development on the Japan-United States bilateral cooperation to assist Mekong countries in the areas of empowerment of women, removal of landmines, and disposal of unexploded ordnance, as well as further coordination between "Mekong-Japan Cooperation" and other regional cooperation mechanisms.

14. The Ministers affirmed that the 8<sup>th</sup> Mekong-Japan Foreign Ministers' Meeting would be held at the margin of ASEAN-related Foreign Ministers' Meetings in Malaysia in 2015.