

Sixth Mekong-Japan Foreign Ministers' Meeting

June 30, 2013

On June 30, from 6:00 p.m. for approximately 45 minutes, the Sixth Mekong-Japan Foreign Ministers' Meeting was held in Bandar Seri Begawan, Brunei Darussalam. From Japan, Mr. Fumio Kishida, Minister for Foreign Affairs, chaired the meeting. The overview of the meeting is as follows (attending from the Mekong region countries were: H.E. Mr. Hor Namhong, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of the Kingdom of Cambodia; H.E. Mr. Alounkeo Kittikhoun, Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Lao People's Democratic Republic; H.E. Mr. U Wunna Maung Lwin, Union Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar; H.E. Dr. Surapong Tovichakchaikul, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Thailand; and H.E. Mr. Pham Binh Minh, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam). Chair's statement was issued after the meeting.

1. Minister Kishida stated in his opening remarks that economic development in the Mekong region contributes to narrowing development gaps and promoting regional integration in ASEAN, Reiterating that Japan would continue to contribute to the development of the Mekong region, he expressed hope that the meeting would serve as an opportunity to renew a shared resolve to deepen Mekong-Japan cooperation.
2. Subsequently, the foreign ministers discussed progress and future directions of Mekong-Japan cooperation.

(1) Minister Kishida stated that based on the "Tokyo Strategy 2012 for Mekong-Japan Cooperation" and the "Mekong-Japan Action Plan for realization of the «Tokyo Strategy 2012»" adopted in 2012, Mekong-Japan cooperation had developed steadily over the last year, including the signing of Memorandum on the Cooperation for the Development of the Thilawa Special Economic Zone. He also expressed intention to continue Japan's sincere efforts toward 2015, and to work with the Mekong region countries to address various challenges that are evolving in the Asia-Pacific region.

(2) Other foreign ministers stated the following:

- expressed appreciation for Japan's initiatives under Mekong-Japan cooperation to date as well as assistance to the Mekong region.
- stated that issues, such as the Mekong connectivity and the narrowing development gaps should be focused upon toward the establishment of the ASEAN Community in 2015, and strongly expected Japan's continued support.
- expressed strong expectations for investment by Japanese companies into the region toward further development, noting that the economy of the Mekong region is growing steadily.
- welcomed the relaxation of VISA requirements by Japan for nationals of ASEAN countries, amid the increase in the number of tourists travelling between Japan and the Mekong region countries.

- reiterated the importance of the East-West Economic Corridor and Southern Economic Corridor and gratitude for Japan's cooperation on the related projects, while also pointing out the importance of environmental issues and disaster management.
 - stated that the economic policy of the Abe Administration is not just benefiting Japan, but also having a good impact on the vitalization of the economy of the Mekong region.
3. In addition, the ministers confirmed that the Fifth Mekong-Japan Summit would be held in Tokyo in December this year, that the Second Green Mekong Forum would be held in Bangkok by the end of the year to discuss environmental issues, and that the Fourth Forum for the Promotion of Public-Private Cooperation in the Mekong Region would be held in Tokyo in 2014.
 4. Lastly, Minister Kishida stated, "Passion and expectations have been expressed by each country toward the development of the Mekong region. I felt that there are strong expectations for the implementation of the «Action Plan» in particular, and that cooperation in the fields of trade, investment, tourism and environment particularly stressed upon. I want to collaborate closely toward 2015 while keeping in mind the opinions of each country."