

Co-Chairs' Statement of the 4th Mekong-ROK Foreign Ministers' Meeting

Seoul, Republic of Korea, 28-29 July 2014

1. The 4th Mekong-ROK Foreign Ministers' Meeting was held in Seoul, Republic of Korea on 28-29 July 2014. The Meeting was co-chaired by H.E. Yun Byung-se, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Korea, and H.E. Sihasak Phuanketkeow, Acting for the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Thailand, and participated by H.E. Hor Namhong, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of the Kingdom of Cambodia, H.E. Thongloun Sisoulith, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Lao People's Democratic Republic, H.E. U Thant Kyaw, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, and H.E. Pham Binh Minh, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam.
2. Recalling the chairman's statement of the 16th ASEAN-ROK Summit in Bandar Seri Begawan, Brunei Darussalam in 2013, 'we also attached great importance to Mekong-ROK cooperation in contributing to ASEAN's endeavor to narrowing the development gap and enhance regional connectivity, economic integration and ASEAN community building', the Ministers reaffirmed their commitment to Han-River Declaration of Establishing the Mekong-ROK Comprehensive Partnership for Mutual Prosperity(2011) and the determination to strengthen cooperation for the prosperity and sustainable development of each country, and peace and stability in our region.
3. The Ministers reviewed the progress of cooperation between the Mekong region and the ROK, and adopted the Mekong-ROK Plan of Action(2014-2017), which sets out the future direction of Mekong-ROK cooperation for the next three years.

[Review of Mekong-ROK Cooperation]

4. The Ministers agreed to further strengthen cooperation in order to carry out the three visions of Mekong-ROK cooperation stated in the Han-River Declaration(2011): ASEAN connectivity, sustainable development, and people-oriented development. In this regard, the Ministers also agreed to review the status of the six priority areas of cooperation, as well as discuss ways to explore and expand on cooperation projects on a regular basis.
5. The Ministers noted with satisfaction the important progress achieved since the 3rd Mekong – ROK Foreign Ministers meeting, particularly the implementation of pilot projects.

5.1 The Ministers welcomed the progress of the ‘Mekong Transportation Institute Project’, the ‘Trade Policies and Agricultural Value Chains in the Context of ASEAN Integration Project’ and the ‘GMS Capacity Building on Logistics Project’, which are expected to contribute to human resource development in the Mekong region. The Ministers agreed to launch the research process to complete the Phase I of establishing the Mekong Transportation Institute.

5.2 The Ministers appreciated the progress of the ‘Reclamation, Rehabilitation, and Restoration of Degraded Forest Ecosystems’ project under the Agreement on ASEAN-ROK Forest Cooperation, and looked forward to its contribution to restoring forest ecosystems and improving the quality of life of citizens in the Mekong region.

[Future direction]

6. The Ministers emphasized the urgent need for closer cooperation among member countries to address the challenges faced by the Mekong region in reducing the development gap, maintaining strong economic growth and attaining sustainable development. They also shared the view that enhancing regional connectivity is prerequisite for socio-economic development in the Mekong region.
7. The Ministers agreed to strengthen cooperation in the six priority areas identified in the Han – River Declaration, namely: ASEAN connectivity (infrastructure, ICT), sustainable development (green growth, water development), and people - oriented development (agriculture and rural development, human resource development). In this regard, the Ministers adopted the Mekong – ROK Plan of Action (2014 – 2017), which comprises of concrete activities to be implemented during the next three years.

[Mekong-ROK Cooperation Fund]

8. The Ministers welcomed the MOU on cooperation between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the ROK and the Mekong Institute adopted at the Mekong-ROK SOM in Pattaya, Thailand on June 2 2014, the Mekong Institute is responsible for managing the Mekong-ROK Cooperation Fund.
9. Furthermore, the Ministers agreed upon the ‘Concept Paper on the Operation Method of the Mekong-ROK Cooperation Projects’, and adopted it as an annex to the ‘Mekong-ROK Cooperation Fund TOR’.

[Expanding Private Sector Exchanges]

10. The Ministers emphasized the importance of the private sector's role in expanding Mekong-ROK cooperation, and agreed to further promote interaction among business community. In this regard, the Ministers appreciated the success of the 2nd Mekong-ROK Business Forum held in Ha Noi, Viet Nam on May 29, 2014, and agreed to hold the 3rd Mekong-ROK Business Forum in Cambodia in 2015.
11. In addition, the Ministers agreed to promote people-to-people exchange in the future, reemphasizing the slogan of the Mekong-ROK Exchange Year, 'Miracle of the Han River, Rise of the Mekong River'.

[Exchange Views on Regional and Global Issues]

12. The Ministers exchanged views on regional and global issues of mutual interest in the region, such as natural disasters, food security, the Korean peninsula and the South China Sea. The Minister agreed to cooperate more closely in this regard.

[Mekong-ROK Meetings]

13. The Ministers agreed to hold the 5th Mekong-ROK Foreign Ministers' Meeting at the margins of ASEAN meeting in Malaysia, in 2015. The venue and timing will be communicated through diplomatic channels in due course. Viet Nam and Korea will assume co-chairmanship in the year 2015.

Annex: Mekong-ROK Action Plan (2014-2017)

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