

Mekong - Republic of Korea Plan of Action

(2014 – 2017)

The Mekong Region Countries and the ROK adopted the Mekong – ROK Plan of Action at the 4th Mekong - ROK Foreign Ministers' Meeting held in Seoul on July 29, 2014. The Plan of Action presents concrete activities/programs to be implemented between the Mekong Countries and the ROK over the next three years to realize the visions and objectives outlined in the Han-River Declaration of Establishing the Mekong – ROK Comprehensive Partnership for Mutual Prosperity.

The Mekong Countries and the ROK agreed to focus their attention on strengthening the six cooperation sectors of priority, namely Infrastructure, Information Communication Technology, Green Growth, Water Resource Development, Agriculture and Rural Development, and Human Resource Development. The implementation of the Mekong-ROK Plan of Action will be reviewed regularly at the Mekong-ROK Senior Officials' and Foreign Ministers' meetings. The Plan of Action will be updated, when necessary, to timely address the changing environment of the development cooperation in the Mekong region and the needs of the Mekong countries on a regular basis.

I. Implementing Priority Areas in Development Cooperation

[Enhancing ASEAN Connectivity]

The Mekong Countries and the ROK seek to make important improvements in the local hard and soft infrastructure in order to enhance connectivity in the Mekong region and beyond, and contribute to the implementation of the ASEAN Master Plan of Connectivity and the launch of the ASEAN Community by 2015.

(Infrastructure)

The Mekong Countries and the ROK will implement ‘the Projects for Enhancing Partnership in Transportation between the ROK and the Mekong Countries’ for the next three years. The ROK will set up a comprehensive transport infrastructure development strategy for roads, railroads, airports and ports, and support the establishment of a comprehensive transport institute facility. In this regard, Laos expressed its interest in improving the Mekong River navigation channel.

Vietnam will propose a study project on ‘logistics development of the Southern Coastal Corridor Bangkok – Trat - Hot Lek(Thailand) – Cham Yeam – Koh Kong – Sre Ambil – Kampot Lork (Cambodia) –Ha Tien – Ca Mau (Vietnam)’.

(ICT)

The Mekong Countries and the ROK intend to strengthen the cooperation in the ICT sector, as the improvement of soft infrastructure will accelerate the development of hard infrastructure and other various sectors.

The Mekong Countries and the ROK will conduct knowledge sharing activities, such as inviting Mekong ICT sector officials to the ROK to promote the utilization of ICT in various social and economic sectors.

The Mekong Countries and ROK will jointly undertake various ICT cooperation projects, including ‘the Project on the Use of ICT in Healthcare Management and Payment of Medical Insurance in Vietnam’ and ‘the Project for the Establishment of Law Information System in Myanmar’.

[Sustainable Development]

The Mekong Countries and the ROK seek to preserve the ecosystem, promote green growth in the Mekong region, and strengthen capacity of the Mekong countries in

sustainable water resources management and climate change adaptation and mitigation. This will help improve the quality of peoples' lives and prepare the region for future challenges. The ROK will share its own knowledge and technology in this regard.

(Green Growth)

The ROK will share its own knowledge and technology of green growth with the Mekong region. The Mekong Countries and the ROK will cooperate to restore the forest ecosystem of the Mekong region through activities such as the 'Reclamation, Rehabilitation and Restoration of Degraded Forest Ecosystems (RRR-DFE) project in Mekong Basin Countries' which is based on the 'Agreement between the Governments of the Member States of Association of South East Asian Nations and the Republic of Korea on Forest Cooperation (AFoCo)'.

The Mekong Countries and the ROK will cooperate on strengthening the Mekong region's capacity to address climate change, including through 'the Establishment of the Master Plan for the Modernization of National Metrological System in the Socialist Republic of Vietnam and the Republic of the Union of Myanmar' and 'the Support Program to Respond to Climate Change in Viet Nam', while taking into consideration environmental improvement when implementing projects with the five Mekong countries.

The ROK will support Mekong countries in raising awareness and building capacity for the implementation of green strategy, particularly through:

- Supporting provinces of Mekong countries along the Mekong River in developing their green growth action plans.
- Engaging private sector of Mekong countries in the implementation of Green growth strategy
- Supporting government agencies in implementing national green growth strategy.

(Water Resource Development)

The Mekong Countries and the ROK will strengthen cooperation in sustainable usage and development of water and related resources of the Mekong River. We will cooperate through the implementation of collaborative projects, including flood and drought risk management, the maintenance of irrigation facilities, and integrated water resources management (IWRM) of the Mekong River.

The ROK will continue to support effective water resource management through the provision of financial and technical assistance and dispatching experts to the Mekong countries with projects such as ‘the Project for Krang Ponley River Basin Irrigation System Improvement and Agricultural Productivity Enhancement in Cambodia’.

[People-oriented Development]

Improving the quality of life for their citizens of the Mekong countries and the ROK is the ultimate goal of the Mekong-ROK cooperation.

(Agriculture and Rural Development)

The Mekong Countries and the ROK agreed to strengthen the agricultural and rural development sector, noting that agricultural and rural development in the Mekong region is directly linked to the net income of citizens, long-term food supplies, and an increase in self-sufficiency. The Mekong Countries and the ROK will share with each other’s agricultural and rural development experience and knowledge, such as establishing a master plan for rural development in the Mekong region and skills for human capacity building in the farming industry through the *Saemaoul Undong* (the ROK’s representative agricultural development project). In this context, Thailand will propose a project on ‘Comprehensive Training to Enhance Rice Productivity in the Mekong Region’ for consideration with partial contribution in kind.

(Human Resource Development)

The ROK will share knowledge of capacity building with the Mekong region in developing human resources in order to prepare the Mekong countries for ASEAN Community in 2015, as one of the key strategies for economic development in Mekong region countries.

The Mekong Countries and the ROK will implement ‘the Freight and Transport Association(FRETA) Certified Logistics Master’ and ‘the Project on Promoting Regional Agriculture Value Chains on the GMS Southern Economic Corridor’ under the lead of the Mekong Institute in Thailand, and as a part of the human capacity building project in the region’s trade and logistics sector.

The ROK will support CLMV countries in improving market accessibility of agricultural products.

The ROK will agree to continually support the Mekong countries in their work towards improving the environment of higher education and quality of vocational skills training in the Mekong region as well as fostering talented technical personnel, in the areas of science, technology and innovation in the region.

The ROK will assist Mekong countries in strengthening the system of mutual recognition of vocational training and skills development for technical experts.

II. The ROK’s Greater Mekong ODA Policy and the Expansion of Mekong-ROK Cooperation Fund

The ROK intends to make the Mekong countries the priority partner countries in ODA, and plans to increase its ODA to the Mekong region, excluding Thailand, which will cooperate with the ROK as an active emerging ODA provider in the region. The Mekong-ROK Cooperation Fund is expected to increase throughout the next three years for the overall balanced growth of the Mekong region. Besides the Mekong-ROK Plan of Action, the Mekong countries and the ROK will also identify and implement medium and long-term cooperation projects.

III. Expansion of the Mekong-ROK Exchange

During the Mekong-ROK Exchange Year 2014, the Mekong countries and the ROK will organize various cultural events and implement exchange projects to enhance friendly cooperation, and plan to continue to actively pursue cooperation projects to promote people-to-people contact and cultural exchange. The ROK will especially focus on public outreach and communication projects that help raise awareness and inform the public about the Mekong region within the ROK.

The Mekong countries and the ROK will conduct people – to – people exchange programs for media personnel and cooperate on TV programs, media productions, and publications in order to enhance mutual understanding about the people and the countries.

IV. Expansion of the Mekong-ROK Private-Public Cooperation

The Mekong Countries and the ROK acknowledged that the participation of the private sector is crucial for the expansion of exchange between the ROK and the five countries in the Mekong region, and agreed to build the Mekong-ROK Business Forum as a driving force of private-public cooperation.

V. Promotion of the ROK's Role in Sub-Regional Cooperation

The Mekong Countries welcome ROK as a development and investment partner and encourage ROK to further enhance its role within sub-regional cooperation frameworks.

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