



**Greater Mekong Subregion Economic Cooperation Program
THE THIRD GMS ENVIRONMENT MINISTERS' MEETING**

JOINT MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

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Phnom Penh, Kingdom of Cambodia

1. We, the Environment Ministers from the six Greater Mekong Subregion (GMS) countries, namely, the Kingdom of Cambodia, People's Republic of China (PRC), Lao People's Democratic Republic (Lao PDR), Republic of the Union of Myanmar, Kingdom of Thailand, and Socialist Republic of Viet Nam, reaffirm the commitment adopted under the first GMS Summit in 2002 to better protect our environment. We take responsibility and leadership for sustainable management of our natural resources and uphold the relevant international agreements on sustainable development including the goals advanced at the World Summit on Sustainable Development and by relevant multilateral environmental agreements.
2. We reaffirm our commitment to pursue the shared vision of an integrated, harmonious and prosperous sub-region and a GMS characterized by steady economic growth, social progress and environmental sustainability adopted at the second GMS summit in 2005.
3. We appreciate the high rate of economic growth in the region averaging over 9% during 2000-2009, substantive progress toward halving of poverty goal, and the resilience of GMS economy even in the face of a global economic downturn. We also note the impact of this trend on the environment and seek to improve the balance between growth and environmental sustainability.
4. We recognize that conserving our ecosystems and associated biodiversity is the foundation upon which economic prosperity in the GMS has been built. We also recognize that the economic development aspirations of the GMS will require improved and more efficient management of our ecological infrastructure for meeting the current and emerging demand for food, water and energy that will underpin future economic growth and prosperity in the GMS. Maintaining the productivity of the inter-connected ecological systems, which span the GMS, also will provide resilience to the increasingly evident impacts of climate change. Improved capacity for planning and managing our ecosystems and the critical services they provide are key to making economic prosperity in the GMS inclusive, green, and balanced between rural and urban growth. Therefore, in the next phase of the GMS Core Environment Program and Biodiversity Conservation Corridors Initiative (CEP-BCI), we will continue to strengthen our regional collaboration.
5. We greatly appreciate the support of development partners to the GMS CEP-BCI since its inception in 2006. We applaud the CEP-BCI achievements in strengthening environmental planning and monitoring, piloting and expanding the concept of biodiversity conservation corridors, institution and capacity building, climate change adaptation and mitigation, and sustainable finance mechanisms in the CEP-BCI (2006-2011). We fully appreciate the role of ADB as a catalyst, coordinator, advisor and financier. We especially appreciate the ADB's role in mobilizing an additional US\$69 million investment in biodiversity corridors in Cambodia, Lao PDR, and Viet Nam under the Biodiversity Conservation Corridors (BCC) project. We also appreciate the efforts of ADB and other partners to develop a regional programmatic approach under GEF5 for the second phase of CEP-BCI.

6. While we have strengthened regional environmental institutions, improved environmental planning and monitoring, and established biodiversity corridors, we recognize the need to further enhance our capabilities to mainstream environmental aspects into national development planning and regional cooperation processes. We expect that our efforts through the CEP-BCI (2012-2016) will further strengthen institutional and human resource capacity which is key to achieving our vision of a poverty free and ecologically rich GMS.
7. We encourage the development of a green, inclusive, and balanced economy. We seek to increase natural resource use efficiency and sustainability, ecosystem services conservation, reduced economic and gender inequity, creation of green jobs without exposing current and future generations to significant environmental risks and natural resource scarcity. As a first step in this transition to a green economy, we aim to maintain and enhance ecosystems and the services they provide.
8. We will, therefore, continue to support balanced growth and effective mainstreaming of the environment into the GMS Strategic Framework 2012-2022 with a focus on the agriculture, energy, tourism, transport sectors as well as economic corridor development plans. We wish to continue to employ participatory and inclusive approaches to secure community and local ownership of sound environmental management in the GMS.
9. We recognize that the impacts of climate change will increase the frequency and intensity of natural disasters and present significant challenges for food, water and energy security. We acknowledge and highly prioritize the need to develop climate change adaptation and mitigation initiatives and related finance mechanisms, and mainstream them into the GMS Economic Cooperation Program (ECP).
10. We recognize the need to develop sufficient financing and economic incentives to mobilize society and change the behaviors and daily actions needed to achieve equitable, green economic outcomes. We therefore encourage market-oriented approaches to green economy investments, protection of ecosystem services, and/or climate change adaptation and mitigation.
11. We emphasize the important role of the private sector and public-private partnerships in achieving a green economy as a pathway to sustainable development. We support a conducive policy, institutional and regulatory environment to attract responsible private sector investments.
12. To strengthen our contributions to the GMS economic cooperation principles of connectivity, competitiveness and community, we will continue to focus on biodiversity conservation, climate change adaptation and mitigation, and strengthened environmental management for sustainable economic growth and poverty reduction through the implementation of the CEP-BCI (2012 – 2016). We emphasize the necessity for stronger environmental cooperation among the GMS countries, exploring linkages with MRC and ASEAN member states as appropriate, respective working groups of the GMS Economic Cooperation Program, relevant development agencies, development partners and stakeholders.
13. We, the Governments of Cambodia, PRC, Lao PDR, Myanmar and Viet Nam, endorse in principle, the Core Environment Program and Biodiversity Conservation Corridors Initiative (2012-2016) Program Framework Document (PFD). The Government of Thailand supports in principle the Core Environment Program and Biodiversity Conservation Corridors Initiative (2012-2016) Program Framework Document (PFD). We direct the Working Group on Environment (WGE) supported by the Environment Operations Center (EOC) to finalize the revisions discussed at the Senior Officials Meeting and submit the PFD for consideration by the 4th GMS Summit. We request the GMS Summit of Leaders to consider endorsing the Core Environment Program and Biodiversity Conservation Corridors Initiative (2012-2016) Program Framework Document (PFD).

14. We request the ADB to support GMS countries in mobilizing sufficient knowledge and financial resources, including those from the Global Environmental Facility, for scaling-up the CEP-BCI efforts to address biodiversity conservation, climate change, and poverty reduction challenges faced by the GMS Economic Cooperation Program. We request development partners to continue to support the GMS countries to strengthen our institutions to achieve related pro-poor and pro-environment development outcomes. We believe the Working Group on Environment supported by the GMS Environment Operations Center have the ability to deliver the CEP-BCI 2012-2016 action plan aimed at achieving biodiversity conservation, and balanced and sustainable economic growth outcomes.
15. We express our deep appreciation to the Royal Government of Cambodia, Ministry of Environment for hosting our Meeting and for the warm hospitality accorded to us and to all participants. We also record our appreciation to ADB and the GMS Environment Operations Center for their organizational and planning support for our meeting.

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