



**Twenty-third Meeting of the Greater Mekong Subregion
Subregional Transport Forum
Bangkok, Thailand
14-15 August 2019**

SUMMARY OF PROCEEDINGS

Introduction

1. The Twenty-third Meeting of the Greater Mekong Subregion (GMS) Subregional Transport Forum (STF-23) was held in Bangkok, Thailand on 14-15 August 2019. The Forum, with the theme “*Expanding GMS Transport Cooperation to Vital Multi-sector Concerns*”, was jointly organized by the Ministry of Transport (MOT) of the Kingdom of Thailand and the Asian Development Bank (ADB). The objectives of the forum were to: (i) review the status and update the pipeline of GMS transport sector projects in the GMS Regional Investment Framework (RIF) 2022; (ii) review efforts toward increasing the private sector’s engagement in implementing TSS 2030; (iii) review the progress of the GMS Cross Border Transport Facilitation Agreement (CBTA) “Early Harvest” implementation; (iv) review the progress of work and plans for the Greater Mekong Railway Association (GMRA); (v) review further efforts toward enhancing road safety in GMS countries; (vi) share specific country experiences in highway development; and (vi) discuss other topics that have a bearing on the GMS transport sector. (The meeting program and agenda are attached as **Appendix 1**).

2. The Forum participants included delegations from the Kingdom of Cambodia, the People’s Republic of China (PRC), the Lao People’s Democratic Republic (Lao PDR), the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, the Kingdom of Thailand, the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam, and ADB. Representatives from development partner organizations, namely the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade of Australia; the Neighboring Countries Economic Development Cooperation Agency (NEDA) of Thailand; and the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP) also attended the Forum. (The list of participants is attached as **Appendix 2**).

3. The Forum was chaired by Mr. Chirute Visalachitra, Deputy Permanent Secretary, MOT, Thailand and co-chaired by Mr. Hiroaki Yamaguchi, Director, Southeast Asia Department Transport and Communications Division, ADB.

Day 1 (14 August 2019) Proceedings:

Opening Session

4. In his Welcome and Opening Remarks, Mr. Chirute Visalachitra, Chair, stated that Thailand maintains regional transport policy cooperation in its National Socio-Economic Development Plan, in partnership with neighboring countries. He noted that that transport projects dominates the GMS Regional Investment Framework, covering infrastructure development in various transport modes, such as roads, rail, ports, and inland waterways. The objectives include filling up the remaining gaps along the corridors, including infrastructure gaps as well as people-to-people connectivity. Priority is also given to transport and trade facilitation and the accelerated

implementation of the GMS Cross Border Transport Facilitation Agreement (CBTA).

5. In his opening statement, Mr. Hiroaki Yamaguchi, Co-Chair, noted that the theme of STF-23, “*Expanding GMS Transport Cooperation to Vital Multi-sector Concerns*”, is in line with the strategic thrusts of the new GMS Transport Sector Strategy, or TSS 2030. One of the key cross-cutting themes in the TSS 2030 is the participation of the private sector in GMS transport development, first, in financing and constructing transport infrastructure; second, as provider of transport services; and third as the main users of transport infrastructure and services. In this regard, the GMS Freight Transport Association (FRETA), which is made up of private sector transport operators, has been supporting efforts toward efficient cross-border transport flows, will brief the Forum on its initiatives to improve the region’s transport industry. As regards, facilitating cross border transport, recently, the GMS countries launched an effort toward accelerating implementation of the CBTA -- the “Early Harvest” program, under which Road Transport Permits and Temporary Admission Documents are issued to trucks and buses to allow them to cross borders unimpeded.

6. The TSS 2030 also focuses on multi-modalism and inter-modal links, with particular emphasis on railway development and connectivity as an efficient, safe and environmentally sustainable transport mode. The Forum will also be briefed on the work of the Greater Mekong Railway Association (GMRA) toward the goal of a wider-reaching, inter-connected and efficient GMS railway network. The Forum will also further discuss a topic in which country delegations in the STF-22 expressed interest, namely, road safety. This time, the focus will be on further efforts and possible next steps, thus focusing on post-crash activities.

7. Further, following the discussion during STF-22 on the state of development of the GMS economic corridors, countries expressed interest in learning more from the experience of the GMS countries that have a relatively more advanced experience in highway and expressway development. In this Forum, therefore, certain countries have agreed to share their experiences and lessons learned.

8. Lastly, the Forum will be briefed on a major GMS-wide undertaking that will impact on all sectors of cooperation in the GMS Program, namely, the preparation of a new long term GMS Strategic Framework covering the period up to 2030. This has been necessitated by a recognition that rapid changes and critical new trends are taking place in the regional and global context that present challenges as well as opportunities for all sectors under the GMS cooperation program, including the transport sector. The sector will continue to play a critical role in this new Strategic Framework, being the backbone of GMS Connectivity. Lastly, the Forum will again have the opportunity to hear from some of our development partners on updates on their activities in the region’s transport sector and hopefully also we will have the chance to explore further potential collaborations with them. (His opening Statement is in **Appendix 3.**)

9. Mr. Hideaki Iwasaki, Country Director, ADB Thailand Resident Mission, also welcomed th participants. He said that having had the chance to also participate in previous STFs and continuing to be involved in the GMS transport sector, he is very happy to see that STF-23 is covering important topics. Chair also confirmed that Mr. Iwasaki is closely involved in CBTA matters.

Session 1. Review of the Pipeline of GMS Transport Sector Projects in the GMS Regional Investment Framework (RIF) 2022

10. Mr. Kong Sophal, Deputy Director General, General Department of Land Transport,

Ministry of Public Works and Transport (MPWT), Cambodia presented Cambodia's progress report on its transport projects in RIF 2022. (His presentation is in **Appendix 4.**)

11. In the following open discussion, Co-Chair made the following remarks:

- ADB is trying to support the Road Network Improvement Project along the southern Economic Corridor, but there are some issues, such as the prevalence of overloading, which seems to be neglected; he said he hoped that this can perhaps be discussed further in the CBTA.
- The establishment of the Bus/Truck Drivers Training Center is a noteworthy project, but this may need private sector participation.
- The Phnom Penh – Sihanoukville Expressway is a very important PPP project.

12. Mr. Kong Sophal said that with regard to the AH21 project, although there is no longer any missing link, they do not want this highway to connect directly to Siem Reap City Center to avoid further traffic congestion in the area. With regard to the Bus/Truck Drivers Training/Testing Center, he informed with technical assistance from SCG of Thailand, MPWT recently established the Center, but what they want to do now is to update their training curriculum with higher standard and provide the Center with training equipment and facilities.

13. Mr. Shan Hongjun, Deputy Director General, International Cooperation Department, Ministry of Transport (MOT), PRC presented their RIF progress report. (His presentation is in **Appendix 5.**)

14. In the following discussion, Viet Nam (Mr. Le Tuan Anh, HOD) thanked the PRC for funding the preliminary study for the Lao Cai-Hanoi-Haiphong Railway Project. He said he will share the completed report with the local authorities involved and get their comments and communicate these to PRC. He said he hopes that the connecting points and route alignments can be finalized soon.

15. Mr. Sengdarith Kattingasack, Director General, Department of Planning and Cooperation, MPWT and HOD, Lao PDR gave short introduction to Lao PDR's RIF progress report, saying that there had been good progress in their pipeline of transport projects, including the completion of the Lomsak Road project funded by NEDA of Thailand, the signing of the MOU on the 5th Thai-Lao Friendship Bridge across the Mekong. However, there has not been little progress in inland waterway ports, where they would need more assistance from DPs and the private sector. He also outlined their transport sector priorities, including commitment to SDGs, development of feeder links, priority for the development of economic corridors, strengthening capacity building. Mr. Visara Khamvongsa, Technical Officer, Department of Planning and Cooperation, MPWT, Lao PDR then presented their RIF progress report. (His presentation is in **Appendix 6.**) No further discussion followed.

16. Mr. Ba Myint, Managing Director, Myanmar Railway, Ministry of Transport and Communications, Myanmar presented Myanmar's progress report. (His presentation is in **Appendix 7.**) Ms. Aye Aye Hla noted that there is also good progress in Myanmar's pipeline of projects in the RIF. She reported the completion of the 2nd Myanmar- Thailand Friendship Bridge under the Myawaddy-Mae Sot Border Crossing Project between Thailand and Myanmar. Although the border control facility (BCF) is expected to be finished by September 2019. With regard to the Initial Implementation of the CBTA between Thailand and Myanmar, they are awaiting the opening of the Myanmar-Thailand Friendship Bridge, which is expected to be ready the end of September 2019.

17. Mr. Punya Chupanit, Director, Bureau of International Highways Cooperation, Department of Highways, Thailand presented their RIF progress report. Thailand has 59 investment projects in its transport sector pipeline in the RIF. Three of these have been completed (the Mae Sot-Myawaddy Border Crossing and Infrastructure Improvement project, Single Rail Transfer Operator Development Project of Laem Chabang Port, and the Coastal Terminal Development Project of Laem Chabang Port). Thailand also has a number of ongoing highway improvement projects and a major intercity motorway project. In Railways, there is an ongoing major National Railway Improvement, involving upgrading to double track of existing single track railways, and two proposed new railways. (His presentation is in **Appendix 7**.) No further discussion followed.

18. Mr. Le Duc Trung, Official, International Cooperation Department, Ministry of Transport, Viet Nam presented their RIF progress report. Viet Nam has a number of major highway and expressway projects, including those that link to the GMS economic corridors. Viet Nam also proposes a major road system (Ho Chi Minh City Third Ring Road) that aims to contribute to the socioeconomic development of the Southern Economic Region, exploiting the economic development of, and attracting investment and tourism to HCMC, and reducing the pressure on and congestion of Highway1. (His presentation is in **Appendix 12**.)

19. In concluding Session 1, the Co-Chair noted that ADB is trying its best to support various projects in the RIF. However, the Bank has its Country Partnership Strategies with individual countries under which there are limitations on funding allocations for each country. He said ADB will take note of funding requests and look into possibilities. Relatedly, Country Director ADB TRM remarked that ADB is generally keen in supporting RIF projects, but other development partners may also be interested.

Session 2. Report of the GMS FRETA on their Activities Toward the Successful Implementation of TSS 2030

20. Mr. Chalot Wongsanguan, Chairman, GMS Freight Transport Association (FRETA) (Thailand) Committee gave a presentation on the activities of the FRETA, which support the GMS TSS 2030. The presentation included the structure of GMS FRETA (Thailand) Committee, its basic business model, the elements of its strategy on trade facilitation, and its focus activities for 2019, which includes road safety training, eco-driving training, and training on customs formalities process improvement. (His presentation is in **Appendix 8**.)

21. In the discussion that followed, Mr. Iwasaki, Country Director, ADB TRM, noted the importance of public sector-private sector collaboration on initiatives aimed at improving road safety. Cambodia noted that the establishment of the Bus/Truck Drivers Training/Testing Center in their country is aligned with FRETA's efforts toward this goal, and suggested that ADB could support the Center through a technical assistance.

Session 3. Report on the Progress of the CBTA “Early Harvest” Implementation

22. In introducing the topic, Co-Chair requested Mr. Iwasaki to give a few remarks since the latter has been closely involved in CBTA-related work. Mr. Iwasaki noted that work on the implementation of the CBTA is difficult, time-consuming and labor-intensive, since the CBTA covers both trade and transport aspects and involves very complex issues. However, the potential outcomes are great and lead to broader economic benefits.

23. Mr. Kong Sophal, DDG, Department of Public Works, MPWT, Cambodia presented the report on the CBTA “Early Harvest” (EH) program, which included an overview of the CBTA, the

rationale and nature of the EH program, a report on the outcomes of the 7th CBTA Joint Committee Meeting held in March 2019 in Siem Reap, Cambodia. (His presentation is in **Appendix 9**.)

21. Ms. Rhodora B. Concepcion, Senior Regional Cooperation Specialist, SERD, ADB provided additional information and points regarding the CBTA. She informed that the monitoring of the CBTA EH implementation is being undertaken by the Meokong Institute. She noted that the CBTA is a good area for private sector engagement, and they could provide good inputs for the development of policy reforms. The CBTA is also a good vehicle for providing demonstration initiatives for ASEAN, and its possible extension to the ASEAN umbrella may be considered. She noted that ADB has continuing commitment to support the implementation and completion of CBTA Version 2.0.

24. Co-Chair said that ADB is exploring possible funding sources for CBTA Version 2.0. He noted that it is also important to address the customs aspects of the program. He remarked that there would be more good news and positive developments to report at the next Joint Committee Retreat slated to be held in November 2019.

Session 4. Updates on the Greater Mekong Railway Association (GMRA)

25. Mr. Daosadeth Soysouvanh, Technical Officer, Department of Railways, MPWT, Lao PDR briefed the forum on the activities of the GMRA, its mission and goals, and the various TA projects that support, its organizational structure and its various Working Groups (on Network Connectivity, on Network Integration and Inter-operability, and on Partnerships and GMRA Operation). He gave updates on the various priority activities of the Association, including the work related to the identified nine priority railway links to be developed and the work on the proposed Cross Border Rail Framework Agreement. Finally, he presented some issues that and challenges for GMS railway network development, as well as future directions for the GMRA. (His presentation is in **Appendix 10**.)

26. In the following open discussion, the countries gave the following comments:

- PRC: Noted that the GMRA has made substantial progress since its inception; On the Framework Agreement, after the negotiations in the meeting held in Manila in May 2019, the revised version was left to the care of ADB. However, there are still some outstanding issues, and it is our view that the document is not mature enough for the next step. After the negotiations at the technical level, the Agreement still has to be approved by each country internally. We are happy to see that ADB is working on finding funding for Working Group No. 3. We request that we be updated in a timely manner.
- Thailand: Expressed gratitude to ADB and Lao PDR for advancing the work on the draft Framework Agreement; requested ADB to update the countries on developments on the Agreement in the next meeting in September.
- Cambodia: Noted that there are now two missing links in their railway connections with their neighbors, namely, the 6.5 kilometer rail link with Thailand at Aranyaprathet-Poipet, with the bridge renovation completed; and the missing link at the border with Viet Nam.
- Myanmar: Informed that the feasibility study (?) for the rail link with PRC at Muse-Ruili is to be completed in 2019. There is an increase in the estimated project cost of the Mandalay-Muse railway in the technical report.

27. Mr. Yamaguchi, Co-Chair, said that he has taken note of the issues raised and that ADB will continue to work on the Framework Agreement and will try to find funding for the TA on this. He informed that an application for funding has been submitted to the PRC Poverty Reduction and Regional Cooperation Fund (PRCF). He then called on Mr. Markus Roesner, Principal Transport Specialist, Transport and Communications Division, Southeast Asia Department, ADB to provide some updates on ADB technical assistance to the GMS railway sector.

28. Mr. Roesner informed that a new TA to support GMRA activities is under processing. He noted that ADB has previously provided five TAs so far to support the GMRA. The new Knowledge and Support Technical Assistance (KSTA) being processed aims to provide continuing support for the GMRA's work, and will have the following intended outputs: (i) reestablishing governance principles, including a preferred organization structure of the GMRA; (ii) development of an operational readiness plan for the GMRA; (iii) updating of the GMS railway strategy updated; (iv) updating of the GMS transport demand model, and (v) updating of the list of identified priority and bankable railway projects in GMS countries. Funding of \$1.0 million has been applied for the KSTA with the PRCF, and it is hoped that by November 2019 this would be approved and GMRA work can be supported in the next two years. ADB shall continue to be the secretariat for GMRA.

Session 5. Updates on Road Safety Measures in GMS Countries

29. Mr. Shiharu Date, Senior Transport Specialist, Southeast Asia Department, ADB, made a presentation on road safety in GMS countries, focusing on post-crash activities and emergency response and insurance for victims. He first focused on background information on global experience with road crashes, followed by data on road crash fatality rates in GMS countries. He then presented an example of actual the situation with regard to emergency response, using the case of the Yangon-Mandalay Expressway. He then showed statistics on emergency response times in GMS countries, followed by data on health insurance coverage for road crash victims in Myanmar. He concluded his presentation with some recommendations on possible ways of improving emergency response and insurance coverage for road crashes. (His presentation is in **Appendix 11.**)

30. In the following discussion, Myanmar informed that the road crash fatality rate in their country has since declined, and this is due in part to the effects of the ADB-assisted project to upgrade sections of the road and to set up countermeasures, such as the installation road signages. Also, there have been some improvements in services, including cooperation among the various agencies involved, e.g., highway patrol.

31. Mr. Yamaguchi, Co-Chair, informed that ADB is looking into possible ways to help improve road safety and post-crash response time. He noted that this is particularly challenging in the case of countryside roads, including ensuring the safety of pedestrians. With regard to insurance, he noted that in some countries, many people do not have insurance and some hospitals do not accept cases without insurance. In this regard, certain arrangements are required to address this issue. It may be possible to consider a TA to help guide governments on how to set up systems to provide this.

Session 6. Presentation of the Proposed New GMS Strategic Framework

32. Ms. Rhodora B. Concepcion, Senior Regional Cooperation Specialist, SERD, ADB and

member of the GMS Central Secretariat present the key elements of the draft proposed new *GMS Strategic Framework (GMS 2030)*, including its background and rationale; the GMS Vision and Mission Statement; its proposed innovative cross-cutting approaches; the strategic pillars of the 3Cs of connectivity, competitiveness, and community; and the proposals on institutional arrangements. With regard to the transport sector, the new framework proposes the deepening of the thrusts in the current TSS 2030, namely, inter-modal transport, cross-border transport – CBTA, logistics, asset management, and road safety. In addition, it proposes new initiatives in railways, sea and river ports, inland waterways, coastal shipping, passenger services, air transport, and urban transport. (His presentation is in **Appendix 12.**)

33. Co-Chair explained that the proposed new GMS Strategic Framework goes beyond the transport sector and covers the entire spectrum of sectors under the GMS Program. The Framework is being prepared in a consultative manner. He requested the participants to give any additional comments they may have on the Framework, if not during the meeting, they may send them to the GMS Secretariat in ADB.

Wrap Up of First Day Sessions

34. Upon the Chair's request, the Co-Chair gave a brief summary of the first day's proceedings, as follows:

- In the first session, we heard reports on the progress of the countries' RIF pipeline of transport projects
- In the second session, we were briefed on the activities of the FRETA, which represent a first attempt at private sector engagement in this forum, and we hope there will even be more engagement in the future
- In the third session, we looked into other soft side, the efforts in transport and trade facilitation across borders, particularly the progress of the Early Harvest implementation of the CBTA. We were briefed on the results of the March 2019 meeting of the Joint Committee on the CBTA, and we look forward to more good news when the Joint Committee meets again in November.
- In the fourth session, we were briefed on the activities and next steps for the GMRA and the railway sector. We noted that there is a short break in TA assistance for GMRA work, but we are exploring a financing source for a new TA and the work could continue thereafter.
- In the fifth session, we looked at the experience and some recommendations in addressing road safety issues, particularly post-crash issues, including emergency response and insurance issues.
- Lastly, we were briefed on the ongoing preparation of a new GMS Strategic Framework, which is a mandate of the 6th GMS Summit in Ha Noi in 2018. The new Framework covers the entire GMS program and all sectors of cooperation where transport continues to have dominant role in the program. We would appreciate your additional comments on the new Framework, which you can send to the GMS Secretariat in ADB.

35. The Chair concluded the first day of the meeting, expressing that the discussions have been extensive and fruitful. He thanked the participants for their active participation and reminded them of the next day's continuation of the meeting and site visit to the Wat Mangkon Station and Sanam Chai Station of the Bangkok MRT.

Day 2 Proceedings:

Session 7. Presentations on the Experience of GMS Countries on Highway Development

36. In response to requests made by some GMS countries during STF-22, countries with extensive experience in highway and expressway development shared this experience with the other countries, as follows:

- For the PRC, Mr. Liu Zengjun, Senior Engineer, Transportation Planning Research Institute, Ministry of Transport made a presentation on Achievements and Experiences of China's Expressway Development. (His presentation is in **Appendix 13**.)
- For Thailand, Dr. Punya Chupanit, Director, Bureau of International Highways Cooperation, Department of Highways, Ministry of Transport made a presentation on *Highways Development in Thailand*. (His presentation is in **Appendix 14**.)
- For Viet Nam, Mr. Tran Xuan Binh, Official, Directorate of Road of Viet Nam, Ministry of Transport made a presentation on Experiences on Highway and Expressway Development in Viet Nam. (His presentation is in **Appendix 15**.)

37. In the discussion that followed, Viet Nam, noting the impressive achievements shared by PRC, raised the following questions: (i) Where are the investments coming from (PPPs, state budget, development partners)?; (ii) How are the investment expenditures recovered?; (iii) How are the investors/contractors selected (international, domestic)?; and (iv) What are the future prospects (say, for 2025-2030)?

38. PRC responded that, with regard to investment/funding, in the 1980s, this was sourced mainly by government's borrowing from banks. Recovery was mainly from toll collections. In the last 30 years, as economic growth proceeded well, expressway projects had increasing rates of return and more investors encouraged to invest in expressways. Contractors were usually invited openly, and majority were state owned enterprises. For the future, there is a new highway development plan, involving mostly public highways.

39. Myanmar posed technical questions to Thailand, e.g., on the average cost of construction per kilometer (km) of highways. Thailand responded that for 2-lane highways average per km cost is Baht 20 million (\$670,000) while for 4-lane highways, Baht 40-50 million (\$1.3 to 1.7 million). For bridges, average construction cost depends on the type of bridge, for instance, for the Thailand-Myanmar Friendship Bridge, the cost was Baht 900 million (\$30 million).

40. Cambodia also raised technical questions to Thailand: (i) For planning road widening projects, what are the land acquisition issues and challenges?; and (ii) What are the challenges due to differences in road design and standards for implementing cross-border road projects? Thailand responded as follows: For a 4-lane highway, land acquisition is for a 50meter (m) width. Then, land acquisition of 80 m width allows us to build up to 8-lane highway. Differing road standards between the countries concerned does pose a problem in the construction of cross-border roads; a technical assistance is necessary to help in setting international standards.

41. Lao PDR had questions for each of the presenters:

- For Thailand: With a master plan covering 20 years, how do you the budget for long term projects. Response, one approach is to break down a project into phases. For instance, the intercity motorway project was split down into 2 phases, with the first phase

implemented over 10 years and with the government responsible for construction while in the second phase the private sector takes care of operation and maintenance.

- For Viet Nam: Do you have sufficient laws/rules governing private sector investments in highway/expressway projects? How do you select investors and is there a private pricing policy? Response: Since the emergence of the debt sustainability problems, Viet Nam has avoided international/foreign borrowing. It is expected by 2019, a new Public Private Partnership law to be passed. The terms of concession agreements depends on negotiations and the government's pricing policy. International bidding is used in the selection process. A Steering Committee oversees the process of selection and execution of projects, with the Ministry of Planning and Investment being responsible for the financing aspects while the Ministry of Transport is the executing agency.
- For PRC: How do you undertake the operation and maintenance of your expressways and highways? Response: The expressways are operated by the respective companies. For national/public highways, operation and maintenance can either be from the national or provincial budgets. However, the quality of construction is usually high such that the infrastructure can be maintained in good condition for over 10 years.

Session 7: Statements/Updates from Development Partners

42. (Ret.) Sr. Col. Saranyu Viriyavejakul, D.Sc., Vice President, NEDA of Thailand, presented the key features and updates on specific ongoing and pipeline projects supported by NEDA in GMS member countries. (His presentation is in **Appendices 16.**)

43. Mr. Sandeep Raj Jain, Economic Affairs Officer, Transport Connectivity and Logistics Section, Transport Division, UNESCAP presented UNESCAP's various activities intended to support international transport connectivity, including those aimed at strengthening international railways, regulatory formalities for international road transport, and dry ports development. (His presentation is in **Appendices 17.**)

Other Matters

44. In line with the tradition of rotating the venue of the STF among the GMS members according to the alphabetical order of country names, Viet Nam confirmed that they will be pleased to host the Twenty-fourth Meeting of the GMS Subregional Transport Forum (STF-24) in 2020. However, the final confirmation will still have to go through their internal processes. Therefore, the specific venue will be provided in due course.

Wrap up and Closing

45. On the presentations on the experiences of certain GMS countries on highway and expressway development, the co-chair remarked that this topic is certainly of interest to transport officials of all the GMS countries. It is a rich and broad topic, and he suggested that it may be useful to narrow down the discussion to key aspects, such as financing or private sector participation. He said the secretariat will try to determine a topic and these could be focused on during 24th STF meeting. On the statement by the development partners, he said these have been very informative, and expressed hope that there will be even more and closer collaboration between the GMS transport sector and development partners for supporting the GMS transport interventions.

46. The Chair thanked the country delegations, the development partners, the secretariat, and all participants for their active participation in the meeting, which he noted has been very fruitful

and successful. He noted that much success has been achieved in the GMS transport sector and in overall connectivity through cooperation under the STF. He expressed hope that the countries will continue their close cooperation towards even greater achievements. He then formally closed the meeting.

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