



**Greater Mekong Subregion
Statement of the Sixth Meeting of the Joint Committee
for the Cross-Border Transport Facilitation Agreement**

Preamble

We, the members of the Joint Committee for the Agreement between and among the Governments of 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, and the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam for Facilitation of the Cross-Border Transport of Goods and People in the Greater Mekong Subregion (referred to as the "CBTA"), met in Hanoi, Viet Nam, for the Sixth Meeting of the Joint Committee on 15 March 2018. We were pleased to be joined in our discussions by staff of the Asian Development Bank.

Recognizing that the reduction of non-physical barriers to transport and trade is key to increasing the benefits of improved connectivity in and between our countries, boosting trade, tourism, and investment, increasing competitiveness through cutting costs, and improving living standards throughout the GMS, we continue to work towards the common goals of transforming transport corridors into economic corridors and aligning our transport and trade facilitation (TTF) efforts with the ASEAN Economic Community Blueprint 2025 and investment needs identified in the GMS Regional Investment Framework.

Implementation of the CBTA

We are pleased to announce completion of the signature of the Memorandum of Understanding of the 'Early Harvest' Implementation of the CBTA by all GMS counties, allowing the effective launch of GMS Road Transport Permits and Temporary Admission Documents for commercial vehicles starting on 1 June 2018. We tasked our Senior Officials of the National Transport Facilitation Committees (NTFCs) to actively monitor 'Early Harvest' implementation, address operational issues and bottlenecks as may occur, and report twice-yearly to the Joint Committee on the progress and outcomes of these actions.

Recalling our earlier decisions on the MOU on 'Early Harvest' Implementation of the CBTA, and desirous to launch the GMS Road Transport Permit scheme as expeditiously as possible, whilst taking into-account the need for sufficient time to prepare all stakeholders, for the launch of the 'Early Harvest' scheme, we agree that:

- (i) The 'Early Harvest' shall be based on the signed text of the MOU provided in **ANNEX 1** of this Joint Committee Statement, noting that it includes simplified

- procedures, such as simplified, standardized, Temporary Admission Documents for vehicles, the waiver of guarantees for vehicles and containers, and waiver of TADs for containers.
- (ii) The “Early Harvest” shall be subject to annual review by the Joint Committee Meeting.
 - (iii) Contracting Parties may start to issue GMS Road Transport Permit and Temporary Admission Documents to licensed international transport operators in their country with immediate effect. However, actual movement of vehicles and mutual recognition of GMS Road Transport Permits and Temporary Admission Documents shall commence on 1 June 2018, as the effective launch date for CBTA transport operations.
 - (iv) As provided by Protocol 2 Article 2b, the least developed GMS countries (determined on the basis of the United Nations’ designation of least developed countries) may apply preferential toll rates and other charges to the vehicles registered within their territories, when undertaking domestic transport. For this purpose, ADB shall support the study of appropriate mechanisms in time for the implementation of the ‘Early Harvest’.
 - (v) Myanmar shall join the ‘Early Harvest’ CBTA implementation through Initial Implementation of the CBTA-type agreements with neighboring countries, during a grace period until 1 June 2020.

Operationalizing the exchange of commercial traffic rights (for both vehicles and containers) along the CBTA route network on a subregional basis is a significant milestone towards full implementation of the CBTA. In view of this, we reiterated our decision on the need for a parallel process of CBTA updating and tasked our Senior Officials of the NTFC to commence their deliberation on the matter, and report on progress achieved to the Seventh Joint Committee meeting.

Expansion of Protocol 1 of the CBTA (Routes and Border Crossings)

We are pleased to note substantive progress in negotiations for the extension of corridors, routes and border crossings (the route network along which GMS Road Transport Permit bearing vehicles may operate) under CBTA Protocol 1, as well as its draft MOU. We tasked our senior officials with finalizing the revised List of Corridors Routes and Border Crossings and draft MOU text on or before 1 June 2018 for ad-referendum endorsement by Joint Committee members. We further encouraged countries to complete their respective necessary domestic procedures for effective implementation of the expanded route network by 31 December 2018.

Status and treatment of IICBTAs

We reaffirmed the decision to retain an upper limit of 500 Permits under CBTA Protocol 3 for the purposes of the ‘Early Harvest’ Implementation of the CBTA, and confirmed these as ‘additional’ permits to the transport permit quotas agreed under current bilateral IICBTAs. Given the delays in launching the ‘Early Harvest’, we further agreed to extend the deadline for phasing out the current IICBTAs to 1 June 2020.

Monitoring and evaluation

We reiterated the importance of TTF monitoring mechanisms to facilitate informed decision-making processes and tasked the Senior Officials of the NTFC to implement previous commitments with respect to data collection at the border crossings listed in Protocol 1. We welcomed the engagement of Mekong Institute to support the monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of the MOU on 'Early Harvest' and look forward to their report at the 7th Joint Committee Meeting in 2019.

Acknowledgments

We appreciated the continued support from ADB in serving as the Secretariat of the Joint Committee and helping to coordinate and facilitate implementation of the MOU on 'Early Harvest' Implementation of the CBTA, the CBTA updating process, and accompanying actions, with support from other development partners, including the Government of Australia.

We also expressed our appreciation and gratitude to the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam for its warm hospitality and excellent arrangements made for the Sixth Meeting of the Joint Committee, and to the NTFC, ADB and development partners for their continued support for TTF in the GMS.

Endorsement

This Statement of the Sixth Meeting of the Joint Committee for the Cross-Border Transport Facilitation Agreement was endorsed in Hanoi on 15 March 2018 by members of the Joint Committee,

- (i) H.E. Mr. Sun Chanthol, Minister of Public Works and Transport, Government of the Kingdom of Cambodia
- (ii) Mr. Wang Shuiping, Director General, Department of Transport Services, Ministry of Transport, Government of the People's Republic of China
- (iii) H.E. Dr. Bounchanh Sinthavong, Minister of Public Works and Transport, Government of the Lao People's Democratic Republic
- (iv) H.E. Mr. Thant Sin Maung, Minister of Transport and Communications, Government of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar
- (v) H.E. Mr. Arkhom Termpittayapaisith, Minister of Transport, Government of the Kingdom of Thailand
- (vi) H.E. Mr. Nguyen Van The, Minister of Transport, Government of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam