



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

JOINT MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

29 January 2008

Vientiane, Lao People's Democratic Republic

1. We, the 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), Union of Myanmar, Kingdom of Thailand, and Socialist Republic of Viet Nam, assembled for the first time in Shanghai, PRC in May, 2005 to reaffirm our commitment to the pursuit of the shared vision of an integrated, harmonious and prosperous sub-region and a GMS characterized by steady economic growth, social progress and environmental sustainability as enunciated by the second GMS Summit of Leaders held in Kunming in July, 2005. We also affirm that the key building blocks for attaining this vision are enhanced connectivity, increased competitiveness and a sense of community among GMS countries.
2. We reaffirm to follow the guiding principles for GMS cooperation adopted at the second GMS summit in 2005, which are equality and mutual respect, consensus-building in decision making, pragmatism and an outward-looking orientation, and a step by step approach. In particular, we assert that such an approach has proven to be pertinent and effective in promoting the GMS cooperation especially in environment, having a clear long-term road map which is essential for delivering our common GMS vision for sustainable and inclusive economic growth.
3. Considering our common concern that poverty alleviation remains at the core of our developmental efforts, we are confident that our efforts through the Core Environment Program/Biodiversity Conservation Corridors Initiative (CEP/BCI) can assist us in promoting sound environmental management and contribute toward generating income and reducing livelihood vulnerabilities. We direct the Working Group on Environment (WGE) to expand and accelerate the pro-poor activities of CEP/BCI especially among the socio-ecologically vulnerable upland communities for ensuring biodiversity conservation.
4. We are convinced that clean and good environment is essential for sustainable economic development and poverty reduction. This requires that economic growth must go hand in hand with sustainable natural resource use and sound environmental management.
5. We recognize the importance of finance, knowledge and technology in improving our environmental management performance and preparedness for addressing the emerging challenges of climate change. We are committed to the principles of the United Nations

Framework Convention on Climate Change and consider its importance to implement the relevant mitigation and adaptation measures.

6. Considering environmental risks and vulnerability from climate change to biodiversity, livelihoods and economic competitiveness of the subregion, we urge the Asian Development Bank (ADB), United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and other development partners to mobilize additional financial and technical resources to enable the GMS countries to undertake assessment of risks to investments and local livelihoods in the CEP/BCI program. This would include exploring Clean Development Mechanism and other possible opportunities to address climate change issues, and help manage new risks and maintain our competitive edge in the global market.
7. Cognizant of the need to improve our economic competitiveness as well as environmental management performance, we acknowledge the need for mainstreaming environmental considerations in land and resource use planning and extraction, production and processing – such as infrastructure development and mining – to minimize damage to natural ecosystems in the GMS. We also acknowledge the need to adopt best practices on natural resource use in the GMS with respect to each country's conditions. This necessitates strengthening the national and local capacity for integrating environmental consideration into economic development planning and investments. For this, we request ADB's support to help raise national and local awareness, build knowledge and skills in advanced methods and tools in resource use efficiency such as materials flow analysis and life cycle assessments.
8. We believe in the potential of our children and youth and their positive energy that can be unleashed for pro-environment actions, skills, and team-building for the benefit of the GMS. We strongly encourage increased activities by WGE and Environment Operations Center (EOC), projects and programs to catalyze the participation of young generation in enhancing environmental management performance and nature conservation in the subregion.
9. We are immensely encouraged by the early achievements of the CEP/BCI since its inception in April 2006. The implementation of a comprehensive program to address the environmental management challenges of the GMS Economic Cooperation Program including the establishment of pilot biodiversity conservation corridors is in full gear. These gains have laid a strong foundation for sustaining and deepening our cooperation in the coming years. We direct WGE and EOC to prepare the CEP/BCI 2011-2015 plan of action and investment framework for consideration by the GMS Environmental Ministers by 2011.
10. We greatly appreciate the contributions by development partners to the GMS CEP/BCI and request them to continue to support the GMS countries in strengthening our institutions for pro-poor and pro-environment development in the subregion. We also welcome the role of GMS universities and civil society in supporting us in this endeavor. We fully recognize and greatly appreciate the role that the ADB has played as a catalyst, advisor and financier. ADB's and other development partners' active participation has helped move CEP/BCI and our cooperation in the GMS to a higher level of engagement.
11. We appreciate the work carried out by the WGE and EOC for providing technical and secretarial support in implementing the CEP. We urge the ADB, UNEP and development partners to keep strengthening the role of WGE, the National Support Units, and the EOC

for accelerated CEP/BCI implementation in coordination with the overall GMS Economic Cooperation Program.

12. We are convinced that environmental management will play an important and proactive role in sustaining increased connectivity for enhanced economic competitiveness of our subregion. We commit to provide our ministries, administrations and relevant institutions with appropriate and adequate human and technical capacity to enable them to influence the key development sectors in support of the GMS Economic Cooperation Program.
13. We request the 3rd GMS Summit of Leaders to consider supporting our vision of “Environment *for* Development” as embodied in the CEP/BCI through enhanced support for the environment sector under the proposed GMS Vientiane Plan of Action (2008-2012).
14. Conserving our common heritage is not only to improve the environmental and economic performance but also to protect our shared natural resources for generations to come and as a contribution to our own people and the world at large. We believe the CEP/BCI vision of “Poverty Free and Ecologically Rich GMS” manifests this in spirit and letter. Therefore, we reaffirm our commitment to support efficient and effective implementation of CEP/BCI.
15. We express our deep appreciation to the Government of Lao People’s Democratic Republic, the Water Resources and Environment Administration for hosting our Meeting and for the warm hospitality accorded to us and all participants.

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