

**Twenty Eighth Meeting of the Regional Power Trade Coordination Committee (RPTCC-28)
Virtual Meeting – 26–27 August 2021**

OPENING REMARKS

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Chairperson of the meeting, Dr. Akhomdeth Vongsay, Director General, Department of Planning and Cooperation, Lao People's Democratic Republic. His Excellencies Ho Taing Eng, Secretary of State from the Ministry of Planning; Srey Da, Deputy Director of Cabinet and Spokesperson from the Ministry of Planning, Kingdom of Cambodia; Directors General, Deputy Directors General of the Ministries, and distinguished participants from the GMS countries; Development partners from AFD, GIZ, UN ESCAP, UNOPS; ADB team colleagues; ladies and gentlemen:

Good morning! It's so wonderful to see all of you. On behalf of the Asian Development Bank, it is my great pleasure to welcome you to this 28th Meeting of the Regional Power Trade Coordination Committee, RPTCC.

I would like to express my sincere appreciation to the delegations from the GMS countries for joining this meeting out of your busy schedules. Our special thanks to the Chairperson for his insightful and forward-looking remarks, and unwavering commitment to our shared objectives under this RPTCC which has entered its 16th year. We really would've loved to visit you in beautiful Vientiane, but we'll keep that as an aspiration for next year.

First and foremost, we sincerely hope that you all have been safe and well. Many of our colleagues and loved ones have suffered from COVID-19; and on top there have been countless flooding and extreme weather events at the frequency, intensity, and scale unseen before. We've really come to terms on what's the most important in our lives being forced to confront these two crises: one – a pandemic – that we hope to overcome soon with the hope of vaccines, and another – our climate – that, according to the global scientific community, will increasingly become volatile and wreak havoc on our communities.

As I said last year, the people in this virtual room, and all your teams, have been doing an amazing job to keep the lights on, work and education to continue, and essential health services running. Without electricity, none of us would be able to stay connected, and keep the economy running.

Now, let us continue to power our economy, and enrich livelihoods, towards a robust recovery from COVID-19. We need to aim for a just, more inclusive, resilient, Green recovery, that positions our region for the future.

This is our 28th gathering, but it is no "routine" meeting. It comes at a very important juncture. It marks 5 years of GMS cooperation in harmonizing GMS power systems to facilitate regional power trade. The RPTCC has made commendable progress on regulatory and technical harmonization among the GMS power systems - a step toward advancing GMS power cooperation with the vision for greater integration and resource optimization.

The **working group on technical performance standards**, reviewed country specific standards and suggested a GMS set of performance standards such as for frequency and voltage control.

The **working group on planning and operations**, after extensive analysis and benchmarking, has proposed the **GMS common grid codes** that could be adopted by the members.

The **working group on regulatory issues** has made progress on regulatory harmonization, such as examining rules for third party access, a methodology for estimating power wheeling charges, examining a balancing mechanism to support trade deviation from contracts, and a metering and settlement arrangement to support bilateral trade.

The RPTCC has also updated the regional transmission master plan, identifying potential beneficial interconnections for the time period up to 2030.

These results demonstrate significant efforts that the member countries put into real cooperation, paving the way for physical interconnections with rules and terms for multi-directional, multi-country power trade.

So, coming back to this 28th meeting, it is the time to **discuss, decide, and trigger action** – action to implement our vision of deeper collaboration for power trade that will allow for enhanced grid stability, affordability, and resource optimization.

The current decade is being called the decade of “**energy transitions**”. Globally, decarbonization, decentralization with multi-directional power flows and the growth of “prosumers”, and digitization are the core drivers, which will become essential to strive for resource optimization and maintain the competitiveness of our economies. Integration of our power systems across national borders and regional power trade is going to be a significant enabler for the region to stay ahead of this transition.

RPTCC has done a commendable job of exploring the feasibilities of regional power trade, helped identify opportunities, which has contributed to several interconnections. We can make this platform catalyze much more. This platform is ideal for addressing the emergent opportunities and challenges related to energy transitions while continuing to advocate for regional power trade.

We have in front of us a very intensive, forward looking two-day meeting agenda. May I call on all delegates to please actively contribute your insights and expertise to key decision-making items and make the meeting meaningful, and a platform for future success.

Lastly, let me once again thank the Chair, Dr. Akhomdeth Vongsay, the delegations, and our development partners who joined today.

I wish you all a very successful meeting ahead. Thank you.