

Co-Chairs' Statement
of the Ninth Mekong-Japan Foreign Ministers' Meeting
(Vientiane, July 2016)

1. The Ninth Mekong-Japan Foreign Ministers' Meeting was held in Vientiane, Lao PDR, on 25th July 2016, back to back with the 49th ASEAN Ministerial Meeting. The Meeting was co-chaired by **H. E. Mr. Fumio Kishida**, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan and **H.E. Mr. Saleumxay Kommasith**, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Lao People's Democratic Republic, and participated by **H. E. Mr. Prak Sokhonn**, Senior Minister, Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of the Kingdom of Cambodia, **H.E. Daw Aung San Suu Kyi**, State Counsellor and Union Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, **H. E. Mr. Don Pramudwinai**, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Thailand, and **H. E. Mr. Pham Binh Minh**, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam.
2. The Ministers strongly condemned the recent terrorist attacks perpetrated in different regions of the world, including the one in Bangladesh on 1st July 2016, and expressed their deep condolences to the victims and their families, to the peoples and Governments of Japan and other affected countries. The Ministers reaffirmed their commitment to continue close collaboration in fighting against terrorism.
3. The Ministers reviewed the Mekong-Japan cooperation based upon the "New Tokyo Strategy 2015" adopted at the 7th Mekong-Japan Summit held on 4th July 2015 and the "Mekong-Japan Action Plan for Realization of the New Tokyo Strategy 2015" adopted at the 8th Mekong-Japan Foreign Ministers' Meeting held on 5th August 2015, and reaffirmed their determination to further strengthen the cooperation. The Ministers also exchanged views on regional and global issues of common concern and stressed the need to continue close collaboration in the relevant regional and international fora including the East Asia Summit.
4. The Ministers of the Mekong countries welcomed the "Japan-Mekong Connectivity Initiative" proposed by Japanese Foreign Minister Kishida in his ASEAN Policy Speech in Bangkok on 2nd May 2016. The Ministers expressed their will to make further steps for the development of "hard" infrastructure, improvement of "soft" infrastructure, including human resource development, among others, in order to realize vibrant and effective connectivity. In accordance with the Initiative and noting the "Mekong-Japan Action Plan for Realization of the New Tokyo Strategy 2015," the Ministers decided to establish senior-level working groups to advance concrete work on economic corridors, including the identification of new projects,

which could also be regional/multilateral in nature, in order to efficiently and effectively utilize official development assistance of 750 billion yen in three years, announced in the “New Tokyo Strategy 2015.”

5. Regarding the industrial infrastructure development in the Mekong region and the strengthening of “hard connectivity”, the first pillar of the “New Tokyo Strategy 2015”, the Ministers reiterated the importance of promoting “quality infrastructure” to achieve “quality growth”. The Ministers of the Mekong countries expressed their appreciation for the newly announced “Expanded Partnership for Quality Infrastructure” of the Government of Japan with the financing of approximately 200 billion US dollars which could further support the infrastructure development in the Mekong region.
6. As for industrial human resource development and the strengthening of “soft connectivity”, the second pillar of the strategy, the Ministers of the Mekong countries welcomed Japan’s efforts on human resource development based upon the “Industrial Human Resource Development Cooperation Initiative”. The Ministers of the Mekong countries appreciated efforts carried out by Japan to promote cultural and people-to-people exchange with Mekong countries through various projects such as JENESYS 2016 (Japan-East Asia Network of Exchange for Students and Youths) , the “WA Project” for Japanese language education assistance and promoting two-way art and cultural exchanges, and cooperation in the field of sport. The Ministers welcomed that the agreements for air services between Japan and Cambodia, as well as between Japan and Lao PDR have recently come into force respectively, and that the operation of the direct flights between Tokyo and Phnom Penh will be inaugurated in September 2016.
7. The Ministers emphasized the importance of the realization of sustainable development, green growth and human security in the Mekong region, and underscored the significance of disaster risk reduction, climate change adaptation and mitigation, and sustainable management and utilization of water resources. In this connection and in line with “Sustainable Development towards the Realization of a Green Mekong”, the third pillar of the strategy, the Ministers expressed their strong commitment to further strengthen the collaboration between Mekong-Japan cooperation and the Mekong River Commission for the sustainable development in the Mekong River Basin. The Ministers also appreciated that the good practices contributing to “quality growth” of the Mekong region was shared among participants at the 4th Green Mekong Forum co-hosted by Japan and Thailand on 13th June 2016. The Ministers acknowledged the progress of the “Coordination with Various Stakeholders,” the fourth pillar of the strategy, through the participation of the major donor countries in the above-mentioned forum. The

Ministers were confident that the Mekong-Japan Cooperation framework, especially the “Japan-Mekong Connectivity Initiative”, will complement the realization of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

8. To ensure the successful implementation of the “Mekong-Japan Action Plan for the realization of the New Tokyo Strategy 2015”, the Ministers reaffirmed the efforts to follow up and monitor the implementation of activities under the Action Plan.
9. The Ministers confirmed the convening of the 8th Mekong-Japan Summit Meeting in Vientiane, Lao PDR on 7th September 2016, and the 10th Mekong-Japan Foreign Ministers’ Meeting in the Republic of the Philippines in 2017.

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