



## Joint Statement of the 12<sup>th</sup> Mekong-Japan Summit

13 November 2020

1. The Heads of State/the Government of Japan, the Kingdom of Cambodia, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, the Kingdom of Thailand and the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam, gathered on 13 November 2020, for the 12th Mekong-Japan Summit via videoconference.
2. The Leaders **Expressed** deepest condolences and sympathies for the loss of lives and suffering caused by the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic, and Tropical Storms Linfa and Nangka and Typhoon Molave impacts in Cambodia, Lao PDR and Viet Nam since 10 October 2020.
3. The Leaders **Applauded** the solidarity and collaboration of international community against common threats, and **Underscored** the necessity of solidarity and collective action in overcoming the unprecedented and severe challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. The Leaders **Called** for enhanced collaboration in research, development, production and distribution of COVID-19 vaccines, making them available, affordable and safe to all as global public goods. In this regard, the Leaders **Expressed** their satisfaction with the adoption of “Joint Statement of the Special ASEAN Plus Three Summit on Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)” at the Special ASEAN Plus Three (APT) Summit on COVID-19 via videoconference on 14 April 2020.
4. The Leaders **Confirmed** the importance of following up the adopted resolution at the 73rd World Health Assembly which requests the Director-General of the World Health Organization(WHO) to initiate a stepwise process of impartial, independent and comprehensive evaluation to review experience gained and lessons learnt from the WHO-coordinated international health response to COVID-19.
5. The Leaders **Appreciated** the outcomes of the 13th Mekong-Japan Foreign Ministers' Meeting on 9 July 2020 and the 12th Mekong-Japan Economic Ministers' Meeting on 27 August 2020, and **Reaffirmed** their commitment to further promoting cooperation for the sustainable development of the Mekong region under “Tokyo Strategy 2018”.
6. The Leaders of Mekong countries highly **Appreciated** Japan's strong commitment to the Mekong region. Mekong countries particularly **Commended** Japan's pioneering and determination not to halt cross-border travel as well as Japan's support for addressing the negative impact of COVID-19. The Leaders **Stressed** that

high-level visits including Prime Minister Suga’s visit to Viet Nam in October and Foreign Minister Motegi’s visit to the Mekong region in August, provided even stronger trust on Japan’s commitment in the region in the midst of COVID-19 pandemic.

## **Progress under the Three Pillars of Tokyo Strategy 2018**

### **Vibrant and Effective Connectivity**

7. The Leaders **Reaffirmed** the importance of further enhancing “Hard Connectivity”, “Soft Connectivity” and “Industry Connectivity” in the Mekong region in line with the “Tokyo Strategy 2018”.
8. The Leaders **Welcomed** the second ASEAN-Japan Smart Cities Network High Level Meeting to be held in December 2020 under the co-chairmanship of Viet Nam and Japan. The Mekong countries and Japan **Expressed** their intention to continue close collaboration to realize smart cities based on the framework of ASEAN Smart Cities Network.
9. The Leaders **Decided** to further deepen and expand trade and investment relations including through the implementation of the ASEAN-Japan Comprehensive Economic Partnership (AJCEP) Agreement, and **Welcomed** the entry into force of the First Protocol to Amend the AJCEP Agreement to incorporate the Chapters on Trade in Services, Movement of Natural Persons (MNP) and Investment on 1 August 2020. The Leaders **Recognized** the benefits of globalization and **Looked forward to** signing of the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) while reiterating the RCEP remains open for India, and implementation of the modern, comprehensive, high-quality, and mutually beneficial agreement, which would demonstrate their firm commitment to upholding a free, open, inclusive, well-functioning and rules-based multilateral trading system.

### ***(Hard connectivity)***

10. The Leaders **Reaffirmed** their commitment to continue strengthening cooperation in enhancing connectivity through promoting quality infrastructure in line with international standards, recognizing the importance of such elements as openness, transparency, economic efficiency in view of lifecycle cost, and debt sustainability as stated in the “G20 Principles for Quality Infrastructure Investment” endorsed at the G20 Osaka Summit in 2019, and **Welcomed** Japan’s newly launched Japan-ASEAN connectivity initiatives which contributes to strengthening the connectivity in the Mekong region with its focus on East-West and Southern Economic Corridor.

The Leaders also **Encouraged** tripartite cooperation and Public Private Partnership (PPP) in the development of vibrant and effective connectivity.

11. The Leaders **Welcomed** the steady progress of key quality infrastructure projects for strengthening connectivity in the Mekong region, including the development of Sihanoukville Port New Container Terminal and the improvement of National Road No.5 in Cambodia, the construction of Ho Chi Minh City Urban Railway (Ben Thanh- Suoi Tien (Line 1)) in Viet Nam, the establishment of the Mass Transit System (Red Line) in Bangkok, Thailand and the construction of the East-West Economic Corridor (New Bago-Kyaikto Highway Section) in Myanmar and the Feasibility Study for the construction of Long Thanh International Airport in Viet Nam and the new Hanthawaddy International Airport in Myanmar.
12. The Leaders **Welcomed** Japan-US Mekong Power Partnership (JUMPP) as an initiative to encourage bilateral and regional power trade and integration, and the Japan-US Joint Ministerial Statement on the JUMPP adopted on 8 September 2020 by Foreign Minister of Japan and Secretary of State of the US. The Leaders of Mekong countries **Commended** the progress of the Japan's initiative including the project in Thailand to facilitate cross-border electricity flows and power exchanges and the project in Myanmar to increase transmission capacity and improve system reliability, the project in Phnom Penh City in Cambodia to expand transmission lines and build substations, the project in Laos to assist sustainable power sector development through a series of technical cooperation, and other projects.

*(Soft connectivity)*

13. The Leaders **Shared** the recognition that Information and Communications Technology (ICT) has become one of the most important elements in enhancing the connectivity of Mekong countries. In this regard, the Leaders **Welcomed** the progress of various projects related to enhancement of “soft connectivity” including Japan-funded projects in the field of ICT, cybersecurity and broadcasting, and Japan’s contribution to various activities of the Asia Pacific Telecommunity (APT) and communication infrastructure development through mobile network business.
14. The Leaders **Welcomed** the progress of cooperation in the field of digital - government, smart city, digital infrastructure and postal service, such as modernization of postal network and services. The Leaders of Mekong countries **Acknowledged** Japan’s contribution to technical cooperation for capacity building programs especially trade facilitation fields for customs officers. The Leaders of Mekong **Reiterated** the rising role of e-commerce in world trade under the COVID-

19 pandemic and called for Japan's support for Mekong countries in implementing and fulfilling their e-commerce commitments to efficiently utilize the benefits of FTAs/RTAs.

15. The Leaders **Stressed** the importance of strengthening the connectivity of the East-West and Southern Economic Corridor through structured and well-planned masterplans and through proactively introducing the electronic system for customs, immigration, and port related data. In this vein, the Leaders of Mekong countries **Welcomed** Japan's continued support for the modernization of Customs system in Myanmar through its electronification, intention to draft a master plan for the port sector in Cambodia and Myanmar, and efforts to enhance the capacity of Vientiane International Airport in Laos through technical cooperation.
16. The Leaders **Acknowledged** the importance of harnessing full potential of data and the opportunities of the digital economy, including the importance of facilitating data free flow with trust for development of the digital economy, while respecting applicable domestic laws and international legal frameworks and regulations, which strengthen consumer and business trust. The Leaders also **Expressed** expectations for the promotion of cooperation to create new rules in this field in the post COVID-19 era.

#### ***(Industry Connectivity)***

17. The Leaders **Welcomed** the endorsement of the Mekong Industrial Development Vision 2.0 (MIDV2.0) Work Programme at the Mekong-Japan Economic Ministers Meeting in August 2020 to further upgrade industry connectivity through improving border logistics, accelerating digital transformation and coping with social issues in the Mekong region. The Leaders **Underlined** that the implementation of the MIDV2.0, composed by three main pillars of Connectivity, Digital Innovations and SDGs, is a foresighted vision that address the challenges highlighted by the COVID-19 outbreak, such as strengthening supply chains and promoting digital economy.
18. The Leaders **Underlined** the importance of promoting investment in the regional supply chains and industrial linkages through various platform, including Mekong-Japan Industrial Government Dialogue, Forum for the Promotion of Public-Private Cooperation in the Mekong Region and ACMECS Business Council. The Leaders **Stressed** the necessity of establishing a sustainable and reliable supply system through diversification of the production base, particularly in the Asian region to minimize the risk of disruptions to the supply of important goods and production inputs in the event of unanticipated crises. In this regard, the Leaders **Welcomed** the

progress of projects in Mekong countries under "ASEAN-Japan Economic Resilience Action Plan" endorsed at the Special AEM-METI Video Conference on COVID-19 Response on 29 July 2020, and in particular, projects of medical supplies, automotive parts and others are adopted for Mekong countries in Japan's "Program for Strengthening Overseas Supply Chains".

19. The Leaders **Confirmed** the importance of digital transformation of various businesses in providing solutions to socio-economic challenges for the Mekong region, especially in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The Leaders **Welcomed** the initiative accelerating digital innovation, including "Asia Digital Transformation (ADX) projects" for ASEAN-Japan collaborative innovation, under "ASEAN-Japan Economic Resilience Action Plan". The Leaders **Highlighted** the importance of taking up the challenges of the Industrial Revolution 4.0 to further enhance industry connectivity and to exploit more potential benefit from the digital economy. The Leaders **Reiterated** the significant role of Japanese investment in manufacturing/service industries in the Mekong sub-region.
20. The Leaders of the Mekong countries **Welcomed** Japan's initiatives including the establishment of the COVID-19 Crisis Response Emergency Support Loan, in order to maintain and revitalize economies of developing countries, on which Japan signed the exchange of notes with Myanmar and Cambodia to extend approximately 270 million USD and 230 million USD loan respectively.

## **People-Centered Society**

### ***(Human Resource)***

21. The Leaders **Underlined** that a people-centered approach will make economic development in the Mekong region more balanced and sustainable. The Leaders **Stressed** the importance of promoting region-wide technical and digital cooperation to narrow the gaps in technical skills among the Mekong countries' experts. In this regard, the Leaders **Welcomed** the successful conclusion of the training on cybersecurity held in Tokyo in January 2020, based on Agreement on Technical Cooperation between ASEAN and the Government of Japan. The Leaders of the Mekong countries also **Welcomed** Japan's contribution to bolster cybersecurity of critical infrastructure and promote supply-chain risk management through conducting Japan-U.S. Industrial Control Systems (ICS) Cybersecurity Training for ASEAN Member States and other partners. Japan **Announced** its intent to increase such cooperation including future technical cooperation projects to be implemented under the recently signed Japan-Thailand Partnership Programme (Phase 3).

22. The Leaders of the Mekong countries **Welcomed** the continuous efforts of Japan for providing technical assistance to financial regulators and central bankers in the Mekong countries through tailored trainings and fellowship programs such as the Global Financial Partnership Center (GLOPAC). The Leaders of the Mekong countries **Welcomed** Japan's long-term efforts for promoting human resource development in the area of the protection of cultural heritage. The Leaders **Recognized** the importance of cooperation between defense authorities particularly for implementing Capacity Building projects on Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HA/DR), military medicine, search and rescue, and United Nations Peace Keeping Operation (UN PKO).

*(Healthcare)*

23. The Leaders **Reaffirmed** their commitment to accelerate progress towards Universal Health Coverage (UHC). In this regard, the Leaders **Encouraged** collaboration with the Economic Research Institute for ASEAN and East Asia (ERIA) for promoting all healthcare-related industries including medical care, elderly care, prevention and society development which enable healthy living under the Asia Health and Wellbeing Initiative (AHWIN).

24. The Leaders **Welcomed** a total of 125 million USD worth grant assistance by Japan in providing medical supplies and equipment, and extending technical cooperation catering the needs of each Mekong country.

25. The Leaders **Welcomed** the contribution of 1 million USD to the COVID-19 ASEAN Response Fund and the formal announcement of the establishment of the ASEAN Centre for Public Health Emergencies and Emerging Diseases (ACPHEED) to which Japan expresses its full support for, to strengthen the prevention, detection and response to future public health emergencies and emerging diseases and therefore **Reaffirmed** their strong supports to continue close collaboration and cooperation in this regard.

26. The Leaders **Welcomed** collaborative efforts among members in the field of public health capacity-building and pandemic preparedness, such as Thailand's initiative under Thailand International Cooperation Agency (TICA) on the "Project on Sharing experiences and knowledge transfer through cross-border medical networking system".

*(Education)*

27. The Leaders **Reaffirmed** their intention to promote collaboration in the field of

education through various initiatives including ASIA KAKEHASHI PROJECT (inviting Asian high school students to study in Japan), promotion of Education for Peace and Sustainable Development (EPSD), higher education cooperation, life-long learning and sharing of expertise. The Leaders **Welcomed** the Japan-Asia Youth Exchange Program in Science, which provides opportunities for young generation of Asian countries to experience Japan's cutting-edge science and technology. Through this program, 7,982 young students and researchers from the Mekong countries have visited Japan since 2014. The Leaders of the Mekong countries **Expressed** high expectation on further technical and financial assistances of Japan in the fields of (1)teacher training in particular Pre-service and In-service Training (PRESET and INSET), and (2)technical training, construction of lab, installment of general-study-related facilities, and other scientific equipment for general and technical high schools in both urban and rural areas. The Leaders **Appreciated** Japan's strong commitment to continue scholarship for undergraduate and graduate students and government officials from the Mekong countries to study in Japan.

***(Legal and Judicial Cooperation)***

28. The Leaders of the Mekong countries highly **Appreciated** the technical assistance of Japan to the Mekong countries in the field of law and justice towards legal and judicial reform and capacity building of practitioners in criminal justice field and other legal professionals for the purpose of strengthening the rule of law and good governance. In addition, the Leaders **Reaffirmed** the intention to continue Japan's international cooperation including technical assistance in the aforementioned field. The Leaders **Welcomed** Japan for hosting the 14th UN Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice (Kyoto Congress) in March 2021, and look forward to Japan's leadership to follow up its outcomes in the Mekong region.
29. The Leaders of Mekong countries **Appreciated** continued cooperation between Mekong countries and Japan in the field of developing the legal system to promote the rule of law in the countries, forming the basis of peace and prosperity in the Indo-Pacific region. In this regard, the Leaders **Stressed** the significance of enactment of the first civil code in the Laos in May 2020, thanks to continued legal advisory support from Japan.

***(Realization of a Green Mekong)***

30. The Leaders **Appreciated** Japan's support on environmental issues towards realizing the SDGs in the Mekong Region, including reduction of marine plastic litter,

promoting sustainable cities, and advancing decarbonization under the “ASEAN-Japan Environmental Cooperation Initiative”. The Leaders **Underlined** the importance of promoting action on marine plastic litter toward realization of the “Osaka Blue Ocean Vision”, and **Welcomed** the opportunity to synergize “G20 Implementation Framework for Actions on Marine Plastic Litter” with the “ASEAN Framework of Action on Marine Debris”. They also **Welcomed** the establishment of the Regional Knowledge Centre for Marine Plastic Debris operated by the Economic Research Institute for ASEAN and East Asia (ERIA) and capacity development for monitoring and combat measures, as well as implementation of “Strengthening Capacity for Marine Debris Reduction in ASEAN region through formulation of National Action Plans for ASEAN Member States and Integrated Land-to-Sea Policy Approach”. The Leaders **Acknowledged** the efforts by SDGs Frontrunner Cities that contribute to promote SDGs in the region, and expressed expectations for the 12th High-Level Seminar on Sustainable Cities to be held in Lao PDR in 2021. The Leaders **Welcomed** the Asia EST Regional Forum on 10-11 November 2020 via teleconference, which aims to realize Environmentally Sustainable Transport (EST) in the Asian region, and cooperation to advance lifecycle management of fluorocarbons including the Initiative on Fluorocarbons Life Cycle Management.

***(Disaster Risks Reduction and Climate Change)***

31. The Leaders **Shared** the common recognition of the serious consequences of both natural and man-made disasters to sustainable development. In this regard, the Leaders **Committed** to work closely together for the prevention and reduction of disasters in the Mekong region, taking into account the “Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030”, The Leaders **Welcomed** the progress towards the operationalization of the catastrophe risk insurance pool for Lao PDR and Myanmar, the first product of the Southeast Asia Disaster Risk Insurance Facility (SEADRIF). The Leaders **Reaffirmed** their efforts to strengthen the response and resilience capability and to work together to tackle climate change to bring about a green society in the region by creating a virtuous cycle of the economy and the environment, and reiterated strong commitment to fully implementing the Paris Agreement including through their respective Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC). In this context, the Leaders **Expressed** their intention to continue their cooperation on advancing the Joint Crediting Mechanism (JCM) under Article 6 of the Paris Agreement.
32. The Leaders **Noted** the ASEAN declaration on the strengthening of adaptation to



drought, bearing in mind that the Mekong region is facing a double burden of disasters, namely the stress and the threat of climate change and extreme weather events, as well as the impact of successive drought in Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar and Viet Nam. In this regard, the Leaders **Welcomed** the action toward the cooperation between ASEAN and Japan in field of disaster management on establishing the ASEAN Committee on Disaster Management Plus Japan (ACDM plus Japan) and ASEAN ministerial Meeting on Disaster Management Plus Japan (AMMDM Plus Japan) mechanism, as well as contribution to global commitment and agenda.

*(Water resource management)*

33. The Leaders **Stressed** their commitment to strengthening cooperation on sustainable water resources management and the collaboration between Mekong-Japan cooperation and the Mekong River Commission (MRC) in order to address water-related issues. In this regard, the Leaders of the Mekong countries **Expressed** their appreciation for Japan's generous support to the MRC by providing 3.75 million USD grant assistance for the Project for Flood and Drought Management in Mekong River Basin.

**Mekong-Japan Initiative for SDGs toward 2030**

34. The Leaders **Reaffirmed** that promoting Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to realize the society in which "no one left behind" based on among others the concept of human security taking into account the specificities of the Mekong countries, is a key to make the Mekong region further sustainable, diverse and inclusive. The Leaders **Affirmed** their commitment to continue their efforts for advancing the UN2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The Leaders **Reaffirmed** that realizing "Mekong-Japan Initiative for SDGs toward 2030" adopted at the 11th Mekong-Japan Summit, is of vital importance for the future generations both in the Mekong countries and Japan. The Leaders **Expressed** high expectations for the 1st Mekong-Japan SDGs Forum, upgraded from Green Mekong Forum, to be held in the foreseeable future, where inter-sectoral participants across generations will join discussions and exchange views on various issues to promote SDGs in the Mekong region. The Leaders **Appreciated** the readiness of Japan and Thailand to co-host the 1<sup>st</sup> Mekong-Japan SDGs Forum to promote the exchange of knowledge and best practices to achieve SDGs among member countries.

35. The Leaders **Welcomed** the announcement of the "Mekong SDGs Investment

Partnership” utilizing JICA’s overseas loan and investment to support development projects by the private sector and realize the sustainable development of the Mekong region, and further accelerate the private-sector led project formulation, such project as a combined cycle gas turbine power plant in the Rojana Rayong 2 Industrial Park of Thailand, a solar power plant in Tây Ninh Province in Vietnam, and the signing of the Loan Agreement with Hattha Bank (HB) of Cambodia for Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprise Development Project.

36. The Leaders **Welcomed** Japan’s initiative to implement 1 billion yen worth Grant Assistance for Grass-Roots Human Security Projects in FY2020, as KUSANONE Mekong SDGs initiative, aimed at supporting the social and economic development of local towns and villages across the Mekong region. The Leaders also **Welcomed** the approval of around 37 projects worth 5 million USD across Mekong countries since the inauguration of the initiative.

### **Mekong-Japan Cooperation and Free and Open Indo-Pacific**

37. The Leaders **Reaffirmed** the importance of continued efforts to maintain a free, open, transparent, inclusive and rules-based regional architecture. In this context, the Leaders **Underlined** the importance of the ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific (AOIP) and **Noted** that both the AOIP and Japan’s Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP) concept share relevant fundamental principles in promoting peace and cooperation. The Leaders therefore **Welcomed** Japan’s recommitment to supporting the efforts made by the Mekong countries in line with the AOIP with a view to promoting mutual trust, mutual respect, and mutual benefit as well as to contributing to peace, stability and prosperity in the region.

38. The Leaders **Underscored** that the Mekong region, linking the Indian Ocean and the Pacific Ocean, has the geographical advantage of receiving considerable benefits from the realization of peace, stability, and prosperity in the Indo-Pacific. In this regard, the Leaders of the Mekong countries **Noted** with appreciation on Japan’s vision to promote a Free and Open Indo-Pacific to contribute to the peace, stability and prosperity in the region and the world. The Leaders **Expressed** their determination to steadily implement the Mekong-Japan Cooperation projects to promote peace, stability and prosperity in the region.

39. The Leaders **Acknowledged** the need to promote greater synergy between Mekong-Japan Cooperation and other Mekong sub-regional cooperation frameworks with common principles and interests to support ASEAN Community building process. The Leaders **Welcomed** Japan’s active support to ASEAN’s efforts in aligning and

promoting complementarity between sub-regional cooperation and the overall development strategies of ASEAN.

### **Mekong-Japan Cooperation and Ayeyawady – Chao Phraya – Mekong Economic Cooperation Strategy (ACMECS)**

40. The Leader of Japan **Reiterated** its intention to support ACMECS through Mekong-Japan cooperation. Mekong countries especially Cambodia as the Chair of the 9<sup>th</sup> ACMECS Summit, **Expressed** high expectation for Japan's active role in supporting ACMECS initiative. The Leaders **Reaffirmed** their determination to make unified efforts in order to accelerate the realization of the ACMECS Master Plan (2019-2023), including formulation of the Joint Development Plan between ACMECS and Japan and the implementation of cross-border cooperation.

### **Olympic and Paralympic Games Tokyo 2020**

41. The Leaders **Underlined** that the Olympic and Paralympic Games Tokyo 2020 will provide many opportunities to deepen cooperation in the field of sport. The Leaders of Mekong countries **Welcomed** Japan's determination to fulfill its responsibility to host the Tokyo 2020. In this regard, the Leaders **Welcomed** the progress of Sport for Tomorrow (SFT) project, an international contribution through sport by Japan, in which more than 6 million people from Mekong countries participated since 2014.

42. The Leaders **Commended** the friendship among Japanese local communities and national teams as well as people of the Mekong countries based on the "Host Town Initiative", and **Stressed** that the Tokyo 2020 Games will be the perfect opportunity to develop people-to-people connectivity among the Mekong countries and Japan.

### **Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM)**

43. The Leaders **Expressed** their support for Cambodia as the host of the 13<sup>th</sup> Asia-Europe Meeting scheduled to be held in mid-2021 in Phnom Penh, the Kingdom of Cambodia, where all Mekong countries and Japan along with other ASEM partners will meet to further strengthen our solidarity in promoting Asia-Europe partnership pursuing multilateralism and tackling emerging regional and global issues.

### **Next summit**

44. The Leaders **Concurred on** holding the 13th Mekong-Japan Summit in 2021 in Japan and the Leaders **Expressed** their high expectation on the Summit as a vehicle to lift the Mekong-Japan relationship to the next level.