

**Co-chair Statement
of the 17th Mekong – Japan Foreign Ministers' Meeting**

on the implementation of the “Mekong – Japan Cooperation Strategy 2024”

22 July 2026, Manila, the Philippines

The text of the following statement was released by H.E. Mr. MOTEGI Toshimitsu, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan and H.E. Mr. Le Hoai Trung, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam, as co-chairs of the Seventeenth Mekong–Japan Foreign Ministers' Meeting being held in Manila, the Philippines on 22 July 2026.

1. We reaffirmed our commitment to the long-standing friendship and partnership between the Mekong countries and Japan. We underscored the importance of further deepening cooperation to co-create a resilient, sustainable and prosperous Mekong–Japan partnership, which is diverse, inclusive, free and fair, to jointly address common challenges, and to enhance resilience and promote their freedom to decide for themselves to ensure economic security and human security.

2. We reaffirmed the geopolitical, economic, and strategic importance of the Mekong sub-region for the stability, cooperation and sustainable development in the Indo-Pacific region, and remained committed to actively contributing to the development of this sub-region and beyond. In this connection, we acknowledged with deep appreciation Japan's continued strong commitment and significant contributions to the sustainable development of the Mekong sub-region, and recognized Japan as a reliable, and trusted and indispensable partner in advancing regional connectivity, economic resilience, digital transformation and environmental sustainability.

3. We welcomed the tangible progress achieved in implementing the Mekong–Japan Cooperation Strategy 2024 since the 16th Mekong–Japan Foreign Ministers' Meeting in July 2025. We acknowledged with satisfaction the continued advancement of Mekong–Japan cooperation through various initiatives and large-scale projects aimed at enhancing regional connectivity and logistics, promoting energy security and sustainable energy transition, strengthening capacity to respond to non-traditional security challenges and enhancing regional resilience. We welcomed the signing and exchange of notes concerning the Grant Aid “Project for Strengthening Water Quality Management in the Lower Mekong Basin”, implemented in cooperation with the Mekong River Commission (MRC), which aims to contribute to the sustainable economic development of the Mekong region by enhancing capacities for water quality monitoring, survey and

management, while laying the foundation for international cooperation in this field among the Lower Mekong Basin countries. We also welcomed the the ongoing implementation through the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), of Japan's support to strengthen Cross-Border Cooperation to Combat Transnational Organized Crime in the Mekong Region, as well as to disrupt Transnational Organized Crime and Cyber-Enabled Scams, which aims to strengthen investigative capacities and enhance regional law enforcement cooperation, information sharing, and operational cooperation among the Mekong countries to adress transnational organized crimes.

4. We reiterated our commitment to further effectively advancing the Mekong–Japan cooperation under the three pillars of the Strategy 2024, namely: (1) Resilient and Connected Society in the Post-COVID-19 World; (2) Digitalization; and (3) Proactive Response to Non-Traditional Security Issues.

A. Resilient and Connected Society in the Post-COVID-19 World

a. We reaffirmed our commitment to promoting quality infrastructure development, enhancing physical, institutional and people-to-people connectivity, strengthening logistics networks to facilitate trade and investment within the Mekong sub-region and between Mekong countries and Japan.

b. We underscored the growing importance of economic security in an increasingly uncertain global environment. We reaffirmed our commitment to advance cooperation to promote trade facilitation, logistics connectivity and strengthen resilient, transparent, trusted, diversified and sustainable supply chains to ensure reliable access, especially in emergencies such as disasters, epidemics, and conflicts, to food, energy, critical minerals, and other critical goods that are essential to economic stability and national security.

c. We reaffirmed our commitment to further cooperate in building resilient and sustainable agriculture, fisheries, and food systems in the Mekong sub-region, by leveraging Japan's technologies and experience through initiatives under ASEAN-Japan MIDORI Cooperation Plan adopted at the ASEAN-Japan Ministers of Agriculture and Forestry Meeting.

d. We reaffirmed the importance of maintaining well-functioning, free and transparent markets and rules-based trade amid uncertainty in global energy market. We also recognized the importance of international cooperation on strengthening oil stockpiles and close coordination on energy between producing and consuming

countries, as well as cooperation through regional initiatives including the Partnership On Wide Energy and Resources Resilience Asia (POWER Asia) and implementation of the ASEAN Plan of Action for Energy Cooperation 2026 – 2030, to build more resilient energy supply chains. We also welcomed Japan's continued support for clean energy transition, energy efficiency, renewable energy deployment and regional power connectivity. We also welcomed the progress of cooperation under the Asia Zero Emission Community (AZEC), and encouraged further collaboration in renewable energy, energy efficiency, sustainable fuels, smart grids, energy storage technologies and decarbonization initiatives, taking into account national circumstances and development priorities.

B. Digitalization

a. We reaffirmed the importance of digital transformation as a key driver of sustainable development and economic competitiveness. We therefore reaffirmed the importance of Japan's continued support for developing and improving digital infrastructure and connectivity in the Mekong countries, in support of the ASEAN Connectivity Strategic Plan.

b. We reaffirmed the importance of enhancing cooperation on safe, secure, inclusive and trustworthy Artificial Intelligence (AI), including through the exchange of knowledge and best practices, which would contribute to economic growth, innovation, and sustainable development under the Japan-ASEAN Co-creation Initiative for AI. We also reaffirmed the importance of cooperation on other emerging technologies in this regard.

c. We expressed our intention to explore ways to promote smart agriculture in the Mekong sub-region through the application of AI, IoT, remote sensing and data-driven technologies to improve productivity, resource efficiency, climate resilience and sustainable food systems.

C. Proactive Response to Non-Traditional Security Issues

a. We appreciated Japan's support to the Mekong River Commission in strengthening regional capacities to address emerging water-related challenges and promote sustainable development of the Mekong River Basin. We welcomed Japan's continued support for strengthening capacities of the Mekong countries in transboundary water resources management, including flood and drought risk management as well as water quality monitoring in the Mekong sub-region. We also welcomed the progress of

the ACMECS project supported by Japan to address cross-border environmental issues, including water resources management.

b. We expressed concern over the emerging threats posed by transnational organized crime, including cybercrime, online scams, money laundering, trafficking in persons, and terrorist financing. We welcomed Japan's efforts, in coordination with the ASEAN–Japan Cybersecurity Capacity Building Centre (AJCCBC) and the UNODC, to strengthen sub-regional law enforcement cooperation, coordination among relevant authorities, information sharing, cybersecurity exercises and capacity building, and public awareness in combating transnational organized crime. We also welcomed Japan's support for strengthening regional coordination among law enforcement agencies, including through relevant regional frameworks and noted the recent posting of a Japanese police liaison officer in Bangkok for regional cooperation.

c. We committed to further strengthening Mekong–Japan cooperation in addressing transboundary challenges, including climate change, natural disasters, environmental degradation, air pollution, public health emergencies. We reaffirmed the importance of deepening cooperation under the Asia Health and Wellbeing Initiative.

5. We emphasized the importance of promoting the engagement of the private sector in Mekong-Japan cooperation. We underscored the importance of empowering MSMEs to strengthen their integration into regional and global value chains. To this end, we took note of Viet Nam's proposal to encourage Mekong – Japan Cooperation members to establish a platform for business networking, private – public dialogue, trade and investment opportunities.

6. We acknowledged the contribution of Mekong–Japan Cooperation, among other sub-regional cooperation mechanisms, to ASEAN Community-building efforts, and reaffirmed the importance of ensuring connectivity between the Mekong–Japan Cooperation Strategy 2024, ASEAN Community Vision 2045, the ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific (AOIP), and Japan's updated Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP), which was presented during PM Takaichi's visit to Hanoi in May.

7. We encouraged greater synergies among existing regional and sub-regional cooperation frameworks, including ASEAN, the Greater Mekong Subregion (GMS), the Ayeyawady–Chao Phraya–Mekong Economic Cooperation Strategy (ACMECS), Friends of Mekong (FOM), the Mekong River Commission (MRC), and other relevant mechanisms.

8. We strongly supported the reconvening of the 13th Mekong–Japan Summit Meeting at the earliest appropriate time, to shape the vision for a new period of Mekong–Japan Cooperation.