

Fourth Friends of the Lower Mekong Ministerial Meeting

Ministerial Joint Statement

On August 9, 2014, the U.S. Secretary of State and the Foreign Ministers of Australia, Cambodia, Japan, Lao PDR, Myanmar, New Zealand, the Republic of Korea, Thailand, Viet Nam, the Managing Director of the EU, and senior representatives of the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and the World Bank joined the ASEAN Secretary-General in NayPyiTaw, Myanmar for the fourth Friends of the Lower Mekong (FLM) Ministerial Meeting. FLM advances sustainable and equitable growth and narrows the development gap within ASEAN through jointly coordinated development assistance.

At the Meeting, Ministers noted that the Mekong River is a powerful economic engine that underpins much of the economic growth and vitality of Southeast Asia. Sustaining broad-based economic growth will require smart infrastructure, responsive institutions, and resilient natural systems. Ministers agreed to continue to focus FLM on delivering a sustainable future for the Mekong, with special focus given to this issue in the lead-up to the ASEAN Economic Community to be realized in 2015. Ministers underlined that building partnerships at the local, national, regional and inter-regional levels is critical to addressing Mekong development and water-related challenges. Ministers also called for stronger cooperation on regional connectivity, sustainable water resources management, and environmental matters and agreed that transforming emerging challenges of the water, energy, and food security nexus into opportunities for growth and sustainable development is a shared priority.

To that end, Ministers committed to working together with donors, ASEAN, the Mekong River Commission, and other regional institutions to promote complementary efforts in the sub-region. Ministers reaffirmed their commitment to promote sustainable approaches to development; support the implementation of standards, safeguards, and economic and scientific analysis to maximize the positive benefits of infrastructure development; build technical capacity of regional institutions; and mobilize new investments necessary to achieve long-term economic growth, such as green infrastructure, clean energy, climate-smart agriculture, and platforms to foster innovation. Ministers also agreed to explore opportunities for further dialogue in the near-term, and agreed to seek increased involvement of private sector and other LMI development partners in future dialogues. Ministers also encourage greater scientific, technical, and financial support of the developing partners for narrowing the development gap among ASEAN members in general and among Mekong partner countries in particular.

Ministers welcomed the concerted efforts of all FLM Members to advance sustainable development in the sub-region and to jointly support regional development priorities. Ministers welcomed several examples of successful joint collaboration, including Japan's commitment to support the Lower Mekong Initiative (LMI) women's entrepreneurship network called Women's Entrepreneurial Center for Research, Education, Access, and Training for Economic Empowerment (WECREATE). Ministers also welcomed efforts to coordinate between sub-regional frameworks, as is the case with the United States' and Japan's commitment to closer collaboration between Mekong-Japan cooperation and LMI, coordination between the Initiative for ASEAN Integration and LMI, and between the ADB's Greater Mekong Sub-Region program and LMI. Ministers noted that collaboration among FLM Members should seek to improve sustainability, strengthen regional capacity, support development of scientific data and analysis, and promote smart infrastructure development.

Ministers agreed that a future “Extraordinary Meeting” that includes member country officials from appropriate line ministries could explore the theme of advancing sustainable development in the Lower Mekong sub-region.

List of Ministers:

1. Union Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar Wunna Maung Lwin (co-chair)
2. Secretary of State of the United States of America John Kerry (co-chair)
3. Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of the Kingdom of Cambodia Hor Namhong
4. Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Lao’s People Democratic Republic Thongloun Sisoulith
5. Acting Foreign Minister of Thailand Sihasak Phuangketkeow
6. Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister of Viet Nam Pham Binh Minh
7. Minister of Foreign Affairs of Australia Julie Bishop
8. Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan Fumio Kishida
9. Senior Official of New Zealand Alison Mann
10. Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Korea Yun Byung-se
11. Managing Director of the External Action Service of the European Union Viorel Istiociaia-Budura
12. Cambodia Country Director of the Asian Development Bank Erik Sidgwick
13. Lead Economist of the World Bank Claudia Sadoff
14. Secretary-General of ASEAN Le Luong Minh