

Extraordinary Friends of the Lower Mekong **Conference on Mekong Sustainability**

Draft Summary of Joint Discussion

On February 2-3, 2015, the Friends of the Lower Mekong (FLM) -- representatives of Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Thailand, Viet Nam, the United States, the Asian Development Bank, Australia, Denmark, the European Union, Germany, Japan, the Netherlands, Republic of Korea, the World Bank Group – and the Mekong River Commission Secretariat – met in Pakse, Lao PDR, for the Extraordinary Meeting of Friends of the Lower Mekong (FLM).

The FLM are joined together by a shared commitment to ensuring a prosperous and sustainable future for the Mekong sub-region, mindful of the importance that this will have for the ASEAN integration process. Since its founding in 2012, the FLM have made real progress in identifying common approaches to shared challenges. By narrowing regional development gaps, and building enduring partnerships across Southeast Asia, the FLM are contributing to the realization of ASEAN goals.

The Asia-Pacific is an engine of global economic growth, however, managing increasing pressures found at the nexus of water, food, energy and the environment will take new thinking, and new modes of cooperation. The Extraordinary Meeting brought together senior regional leaders to discuss the challenges and opportunities around the nexus to improve sustainable growth, reduce risks, and lead to greater economic, social and environmental benefits.

During the meeting, representatives agreed to continue to focus FLM on delivering a sustainable future for the Mekong, with particular emphasis given to this issue during 2015 with the launch of the ASEAN Economic Community:

1. Representatives acknowledged the need for strengthening river basin cooperation, with all Mekong bordering states, as an important instrument for sustainable development in the region.
2. Representatives stressed the importance of a nexus approach taking into account the linkages among water, energy, and food to advance economic growth, especially in the context of accelerating climate change.
3. Representatives agreed on the importance of prioritizing sustainable development pathways nationally and together with regional partners to utilize best practice tools for assessing impacts of development plans and to strengthen evidence-based decision-making processes.
4. Representatives agreed that building multi-sector partnerships at the local, national, and regional levels is critical to addressing Mekong Basin development and water-related challenges.

5. Representatives agreed that transforming the emerging challenge of the water, energy, and food security nexus into opportunities for growth and sustainable development is a shared priority.
6. Representatives agreed to support sustainable development in the Mekong region, including in the areas of smart agriculture, water management, energy efficiency, and environmental safeguards. Representatives agreed on the importance of an integrated regional power grid to support equitable, basin-scale nexus tradeoffs and the need to assist Mekong countries in harmonizing technical and performance standards.
7. FLM members and regional institutions, in particular the Mekong River Commission, affirmed support for implementing technical programming to advance sustainability in the sub-region.
8. Representatives welcomed input from the LMI Eminent and Expert Persons Group (EEPG), including contributions provided by EEP members present at the Extraordinary Meeting of FLM.
9. Representatives affirmed the importance of efforts to coordinate between sub-regional frameworks, as is the case with the commitment of the United States and Japan to closer collaboration between the Mekong-Japan Cooperation Program and LMI.

List of Heads of Delegations:

1. Vice Foreign Minister Saleumxay Kommasith of the Lao People's Democratic Republic
2. Counselor Thomas Shannon of the United States of America
3. Advisor to the Royal Government Dr. Sok Siphana of the Kingdom of Cambodia
4. Deputy Foreign Minister U Thant Kyaw of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar
5. Deputy Permanent Secretary Noppadon Theppitak of the Kingdom of Thailand
6. Vice Foreign Minister Bui Thanh Son
of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam
7. Director Javed Mir of the Asian Development Bank
8. Ambassador Simon Merrifield of Australia
9. Ambassador John Nielsen of Denmark
10. Head of Division Ranieri Sabatucci of the European Union
11. Deputy Director General Shigeki Takizaki of Japan
12. CEO Hans Guttman of the Mekong River Commission Secretariat
13. Strategic Advisor Koos Wieriks of the Netherlands
14. Ambassador Baek Seong-taek of the Republic of Korea