

Joint Statement of the Eighth Mekong-Japan Summit

7 September, 2016
Vientiane, Lao PDR

1. The Heads of the State/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, met in Vientiane, Lao PDR on 7 September 2016, for the Eighth Mekong-Japan Summit.
2. The Leaders commended the outcomes of the Ninth Mekong-Japan Foreign Ministers' Meeting on 25 July 2016 and the Eighth Mekong-Japan Economic Ministers' Meeting on 6 August 2016 both held in Vientiane, Lao PDR, and determined to continue working for the development and prosperity of the Mekong region through various frameworks.
3. The Leaders welcomed that in line with the "New Tokyo Strategy 2015 for Mekong-Japan Cooperation", the "Mekong-Japan Action Plan for realization of the New Tokyo Strategy 2015" and the "Mekong Industrial Development Vision" were respectively adopted in August 2015 at the Eighth Mekong-Japan Foreign Ministers' Meeting and at the Seventh Mekong-Japan Economic Ministers' Meeting. The Leaders of the Mekong countries appreciated that since April of this year, which is the first year of implementation of the strategy (2016-2018), Japan has already pledged more than one-third of 750 billion yen announced to implement the "Mekong-Japan Action Plan for realization of the New Tokyo Strategy 2015" and the "Mekong Industrial Development Vision". Furthermore, the Leaders of the Mekong countries commended that since the 7th Mekong-Japan Summit held last year, Japan has been accelerating its efforts on quality infrastructure, including the implementation of the following projects; the groundbreaking ceremony of Wattay International Airport Terminal Expansion Project last December in Lao PDR; the construction of the Ho Chi Minh City Urban Railway Project Line 1 in Viet Nam; the National Road No.5 Improvement Project in Cambodia; the construction of Bago River Bridge in Myanmar; the construction of city railways in Thailand.
4. Noting that this year marks the auspicious inauguration of the ASEAN Community, the Leaders shared the view on the importance of maintaining the ASEAN

centrality. The Leader of Japan strongly commended own efforts made by the Mekong countries and stressed its continued assistance in order to promote further development and “quality growth” of the region as a whole. The Leaders of the Mekong countries appreciated Japan’s constructive role in the region as well as its consistent assistance which places importance on member countries’ ownership. The Leaders welcomed the promotion of democratization in Myanmar and reaffirmed their support for Myanmar’s development process. They welcomed significant progress in the Mekong-Japan cooperation, and reaffirmed their commitment to continue working on various issues including economic cooperation and regional challenges.

5. The Leaders of the Mekong countries welcomed Japan’s intention to contribute even more proactively in securing peace, stability and prosperity of the region and the international community, under its policy of “Proactive Contribution to Peace” based on the principle of international cooperation, including “Legislation for Peace and Security”, which took effect in March 2016.

Mekong-Japan Cooperation for Comprehensive, Balanced and Sustainable Development of the Mekong Region

6. The Leaders noted with appreciation the constructive role of Thailand as co-donor and development partner in the Mekong-Japan cooperation framework. In this regard, they welcomed the cooperation between Thailand International Cooperation Agency (TICA) and Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), which have jointly conducted Third Country Training Programme (TCTP) for Mekong Countries in Thailand, as one of their cooperation scheme. They also appreciated the signing of the Partnership Arrangement between JICA and Neighbouring Countries Economic Development Cooperation Agency (NEDA) of Thailand in July 2016, which complements Japan-Mekong Connectivity Initiative. They further welcomed the General Agreement on Triangular Cooperation with the Republic of the Union of Myanmar in 2015, which promotes short-term training courses in responding to Myanmar’s needs. The Leaders were pleased to learn that TICA and JICA are exploring possibilities to sign a partnership arrangement which would contribute to the promotion of the development and the enhancement of the connectivity within the region.
7. The Leaders expressed their commitment to accelerate efforts to promote ASEAN

integration through addressing development gap within the region. Given the increasing downside risks to the global economy outlook, the Leaders underscored the importance of strengthening the ASEAN economy, which encompasses a huge market with more than 600 million people, and reconfirmed the need to further develop the Mekong region, which is rich in potentials. In this respect, they welcomed, vis-a-vis the economic component of the “New Tokyo Strategy 2015”, the formulation of the “Work Programme” that identified concrete projects in order to realize the “Mekong Industrial Development Vision”. The Work Programme would cover comprehensive economic and industrial measures, including the necessary hardware and software infrastructure, to achieve economic growth of the whole Mekong region. They further praised the outcomes of the Eighth Mekong-Japan Economic Ministers' Meeting, which have formulated policies for the “Plan – Do – Check – Action” (PDCA) Mechanism in line with the progress of the “Mekong Industrial Development Vision”.

8. The Leaders welcomed the official establishment of the Japan-Mekong Connectivity Initiative at the Ninth Mekong-Japan Foreign Ministers' Meeting. To further promote ASEAN economic integration, they were determined to implement prioritized projects under this initiative with the aim to realize an integrated market and a vibrant and effective connectivity within the region. They also took note of the “Mekong-Japan Action Plan for realization of the New Tokyo Strategy 2015”, as well as the outcomes of the Mekong-Japan Economic Ministers' Meeting, such as “Mekong Industrial Development Vision” and the Work Programme. The Leaders of the Mekong countries welcomed Japan's support to the development of the East-West economic corridor, the Southern economic corridor and Vientiane-Hanoi connectivity.
9. The Leaders confirmed the importance of advancing PPP (Public-Private Partnership) projects in order to promote quality infrastructure investment. They acknowledged the significance of foreign investment as a driving force for promoting the Mekong region's industrial development and enhancing its function as an integrated production base. In this regard, they noted with appreciation the presence of approximately one thousand Japanese companies, which have already commenced business in the Mekong region in the past three years, in particular in the Special Economic Zone (SEZ) in Thilawa, which has the potential to create approximately 50,000 to 60,000 jobs and the Pakse-Japan Small and Medium-sized

Enterprises Special Economic Zone (SEZ) in Lao PDR, that were established last year. The Leaders also recognized the need to harness other opportunities such as the Forum for the Promotion of Public and Private Cooperation in the Mekong Region and the Mekong-Japan Industry Government Dialogue held last 7 July 2016 to advance the development of industrial structures.

10. The Leaders shared the view that human resource development is crucial for the sustainable development of the Mekong region. In this regard, the Leaders of the Mekong countries welcomed Japan's "Industrial Human Resource Development Cooperation Initiative", as announced last year to assist industrial human resource development of 40,000 people in the coming three years. They further appreciated Japan's efforts under the initiative to build the capacity of more than 16,000 people in ASEAN.
11. The Leaders welcomed the enhancement of cultural and people-to-people exchange between Japan and the Mekong countries. They welcomed the opening of Japan-Viet Nam University in September 2016. The Leaders of the Mekong countries appreciated numerous efforts made by Japan to promote cultural and people-to-people exchanges through various projects such as; the JENESYS 2016 (Japan-East Asia Network of Exchange for Students and Youths) ; the "WA Project" for Japanese language education assistance; the promotion of two-way art and cultural exchanges, and cooperation in the field of sports. Moreover, they expressed their appreciation for the training of administrators and the reconstruction of schools. They also appreciated that Mekong students can benefit from Japan's human resource development project "Innovative Asia", which offers opportunities for study and internship for one thousand Asian students over the next 5 years.
12. The Leaders welcomed the entry into force of the air services agreements between Japan and Cambodia, as well as between Japan and Lao PDR. They noted with satisfaction the Tokyo-Phnom Penh direct flight operations, commencing with the inaugural flight on 1st September 2016, which are expected to boost exchanges in various fields, in particular, people-to-people exchange.
13. The Leaders highly appreciated the continuous contribution to the Mekong countries from the Economic Research Institute for ASEAN and East Asia (ERIA). In this connection, they commended the completion of its report on "Lao PDR at the

Crossroads: Industrial Development Strategies 2016-2030”.

Human Security and Green Mekong

14. The Leader of Japan expressed Japan’s willingness to contribute in the improvement of the standard of living in ASEAN countries including the Mekong region, by way of utilizing Japan’s knowledge and know-how. He also expressed Japan’s commitment to assist in the empowerment of women through the “Japan-ASEAN Women Empowerment Fund”, as well as address new emerging challenges such as lifestyle-related diseases, inequalities in access to healthcare and aging of population.
15. The Leaders expressed concerns over damages caused by natural disasters such as drought and flood, salinity intrusion, and stressed the importance of sustainable development, human security and water resource management of the region, by way of building a society, which is resilient to natural and other climate change-related disaster. They highly appreciated the holding of the Fourth Green Mekong Forum, co-hosted by Japan and Thailand 13 June 2016, where inter-sectorial participants joined the discussion and exchanged their knowledge and views.
16. The Leaders reconfirmed the utmost importance of sustainably developing and managing the Mekong River, in close cooperation with regional and international organizations, particularly, the Mekong River Commission (MRC). The Leaders of the Mekong countries expressed their appreciation to Japan for assisting the MRC with flood and drought projects. The Leader of Japan expressed Japan’s willingness to make further contributions related to preservation of the environment of the Mekong River, which was appreciated by the Leaders of the Mekong countries. He also expressed his gratitude for the support of the Mekong countries with regard to the establishment of “World Tsunami Awareness Day”. The Leaders welcomed the High School Student Summit on “World Tsunami Awareness Day” to be held in November 2016, to which high school students from 29 countries including all the Mekong countries will be invited.
17. The Leaders reaffirmed the importance of sustainable use of aquatic fishery resources including cetaceans, based on scientific evidence, taking note of the decision by Viet Nam to participate as an observer in the 66th Biennial Meeting of the International Whaling Commission to be held in October, 2016.

18. Taking into consideration the importance of disaster risk management, the Leaders reconfirmed the importance of quality infrastructure investment and welcomed the adoption of “G7 Ise-Shima Principles for Promoting Quality Infrastructure Investment” which incorporates the basic principles of quality infrastructure investment such as ensuring safety and resilience against natural disaster. The Leaders of the Mekong countries welcomed the “Expanded Partnership for Quality Infrastructure” proposed by Japan, and hoped that the quality infrastructure investment will also bring benefits to the Mekong region.
19. The Leaders of the Mekong countries welcomed various cooperation mechanisms, which include the Mekong-Japan cooperation, and stressed the need of having efficient collaboration among those frameworks. The Leader of Japan, in this regard, commended Mekong countries’ own efforts such as the Ayeyawady-Chao Phraya-Mekong Economic Cooperation Strategy (ACMECS), and Cambodia, the Lao PDR, Myanmar, Viet Nam cooperation. The Leaders were convinced that strengthening collaboration among these existing cooperation frameworks including those within the region is important.

Regional and Global Issues

20. The Leaders strongly condemned the recent terrorist attacks perpetrated in various regions in the world, and expressed their deep condolences to the victims and their families, to the peoples and Governments of the affected countries. The Leaders reaffirmed their continuous commitment to closely cooperate in the fight against all forms of terrorism especially under the ASEAN – Japan Joint Declaration for Cooperation to Combat Terrorism and Transnational Crime.
21. The Leaders underlined the importance of maintaining peace, security and stability of the Korean Peninsula. They shared concerns over the recent developments in the Korean Peninsula, including the nuclear test and launches using ballistic missile technology, including submarine-launch ballistic missile on 23 August 2016 by the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (DPRK), which are in violation of the relevant United Nations Security Council (UNSC) resolutions. They urged the DPRK to comply with the relevant UNSC resolutions. They called for the peaceful denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula and highlighted the importance of creating conducive environment towards the early resumption of the Six-Party Talks to help pave the way for maintaining and strengthening peace, security and

stability in the Korean Peninsula. They also emphasized the importance of addressing humanitarian concerns of the international community, including the abductions issue.

22. The Leaders emphasized the importance of maintaining peace, security and stability, freedom of navigation in and over-flight above the South China Sea. They underscored the importance of exercising self-restraint in the conduct of the activities, and for the states concerned to resolve disputes through peaceful means in accordance with international law, including the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). They also emphasized the importance of non-militarization. We underlined the need for ASEAN Member States and China to ensure the full and effective implementation of the Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China (DOC) in its entirety, and welcomed the efforts of ASEAN Member States and China to work towards the early conclusion of an effective Code of Conduct in the South China Sea (COC).

Future Mekong-Japan Cooperation

23. The Leaders expressed deep appreciation for all the efforts made by Lao PDR, chair of ASEAN, regarding the Summit and affirmed their commitment to further cooperate in the development of Lao PDR as well as the whole Mekong region.
24. The Leaders discussed the future Mekong-Japan cooperation and confirmed their intent to hold the Ninth Mekong-Japan Summit 2017 in the Philippines.

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