

**Co-chair Statement
of the 16th Mekong – Japan Foreign Ministers' Meeting**

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

10 July 2025, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

The text of the following statement was released by H.E Mr. IWAYA Takeshi, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan and H.E. Mr. Bui Thanh Son, Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam, as co-chairs of the Sixteenth Mekong – Japan Foreign Ministers' Meeting being held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia on July 10th 2025.

1. We reaffirmed our commitment to the long-standing partnership between the Mekong countries and Japan and underscored the importance of further deepening cooperation in this new phase.

2. We expressed our deepest condolences and sympathies for the loss of lives and the suffering caused by the 7.7 magnitude earthquake in Myanmar and its aftereffects in Thailand on March 28, 2025. We underscored the necessity of regional cooperation in mitigating the impact, addressing the damages, and supporting the recovery process posed by this disaster. We also stressed the importance of creating a safe and conducive environment to ensure the delivery of humanitarian aid and assistance to reach those in need.

3. We acknowledged with deep satisfaction that the cooperative relationship between Japan and the Mekong countries has made significant progress across a wide range of fields over the past 17 years. Many large-scale initiatives and projects between Japan and the Mekong countries have been implemented and put into operation, contributing to regional development, enhanced connectivity, and strengthened responses to non-traditional security challenges. This underscores Japan's role as a long-standing, reliable, and indispensable partner for the Mekong sub-region.

4. We welcomed the positive developments in implementing the Mekong – Japan Cooperation Strategy 2024 (MJC Strategy) since last year in three pillars, namely: (1) Resilient and Connected Society in the Post-COVID-19 World; (2) Digitalization; (3) Proactive Response to Non-Traditional Security Issues. Based on those progresses, we reaffirmed our commitment to further advancing Mekong – Japan cooperation to co-create a prosperous and sustainable economy and society, which is diverse, inclusive,

resilient, free, and fair. In this regard, we reiterated our commitment to effectively implementing the Strategy, while prioritizing, though not exclusively, areas of mutual interest during the 2025 – 2026 period.

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

a. We reaffirmed the commitment to improve and develop both hard and soft connectivity, particularly high-quality infrastructure, logistic network connectivity, trade facilitation and supply chain resilience.

b. We also acknowledged Japan's efforts in collaboration with the OECD to implement the project "Improving the Investment Environment in Southeast Asian Countries", including in Cambodia, Lao PDR, Thailand, and Viet Nam.

B. Digitalization

a. We emphasized Japan's support for the Mekong countries in enhancing capacity and developing human resources in cybersecurity through year-round training provided at the ASEAN – Japan Cybersecurity Capacity Building Centre (AJCCBC) and in AI through contributing to an OECD co-creation workshop on AI Toolkit to be held in Bangkok in August.

b. We emphasize the need to improve infrastructure and upskill the workforce to advance digitalization.

C. Proactive Response to Non-Traditional Security Issues

a. We underscored the need to strengthen sub-regional resilience and capacity to address transboundary issues through capacity building and technical support in areas such as sustainable and effective water resources management; haze pollution mitigation; climate change; disaster forecast and preparedness; environmental protection; public health; resilient climate-smart agriculture, fisheries, and food systems; energy transition; and the prevention of transnational crimes, including cyber crimes, online scams, money laundering, and of criminal misuse and theft of cryptocurrency.

b. We recognized the importance of Japan's humanitarian assistance for the people severely affected by floods and landslides in Viet Nam and Myanmar caused by the Typhoon Yagi, as well as recent contributions to strengthen public health emergency preparedness in the region. We also highlighted Japan's humanitarian assistance for those affected by the 7.7 magnitude earthquake in Myanmar, including an emergency grant of approximately 6 million US dollars through international organizations, the

dispatch of the Japan Disaster Relief (JDR) Medical Team and Self Defence Force Unit; contributions to the Japan-ASEAN Integration Fund (JAIF) to the Disaster Emergency Logistics System for ASEAN (DELSA) in the ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance on Disaster Management (the AHA Centre). We also underscored Japan's support to Thailand through the dispatch of expert teams in the fields of road sector and building.

c. We noted Japan's contribution to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) to support regional and sub-regional coordination efforts against scam centers, cyber fraud, and online casinos linked to organized crime in Cambodia, Lao PDR, Thailand, and Viet Nam as well as a working level networking meeting, held in Bangkok on May 1st.

d. We welcomed the outcome of the 2nd Mekong – Japan SDGs forum, co-chaired by Thailand and Japan, on the current social and environmental situation relating to water resources management and transboundary haze and pollution in the Mekong sub-region.

e. We highlighted Japan's additional contribution to the Mekong River Commission (MRC) to strengthen flood and drought risk management in the Lower Mekong Basin by supporting comprehensive forecasting and early warning systems, formulating adaptation guidelines, and strengthening implementation capacity.

f. We noted the ongoing joint efforts for decarbonization under the platform of Asia Zero Emission Community (AZEC).

5. We acknowledged the contribution of the Mekong – Japan Cooperation, among other sub-regional cooperation mechanisms, in realizing ASEAN's Community-building goals, as well as promoting complementarity between Mekong – Japan Cooperation and Japan's New Plan for a "Free and Open Indo – Pacific", and ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific. We encouraged the synergies of existing sub-regional cooperation efforts, including the implementation of MJC Strategy to align with the cooperation mechanisms of ASEAN, the Greater Mekong Sub-region (GMS), the Ayeyawady-Chao Phraya-Mekong Economic Cooperation Strategy (ACMECS), Friends of Mekong (FOM), the Mekong River Commission (MRC), and others. In this regard, we underlined Japan's additional contribution to an ACMECS project conducted by the Mekong Institute on preventing and mitigating transboundary environmental issues aligned with the SDGs.

6. We acknowledged the importance of fostering greater cooperation among the private sector to ensure the effective utilization of emerging development trends in a

variety of sectors, and specifically, we concurred in promoting the engagement of the private sector at the working level. In this context, Mekong countries and Japan noted Viet Nam's proposal of holding a Mekong – Japan business forum. Viet Nam will coordinate with relevant agencies and follow up with the Mekong countries and Japan to ensure its effective implementation.

7. We recognized the importance of resuming the 13th Mekong – Japan Summit at the earliest appropriate time, as it serves as a key driver for further advancing cooperation.