

Strengthening Partnership for Common Prosperity

(The ministerial meeting

the 3rd MRC summit, Siam Reap, 4th April)

by Mr. Li Hong,

Permanent Representative of China to UNESCAP

Your Excellency, Mr. Lim Kean Hor, Minister of Water Resource and Meteorology of Cambodia,

Your honorable Ministers, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen:

It is my great honor to attend the ministerial meeting of the 3rd MRC summit. On behalf of Chinese delegation, I wish to express my sincere appreciation to the host, the government of Cambodia and the MRC secretariat for all the considerate arrangement and warm hospitality accorded to my delegation. I am confident that the international conference in the last two days and the ministerial meeting today will offer fruitful inputs for the success of tomorrow's summit.

Dear colleagues,

China and Mekong countries are long-standing friends, natural partners and close neighbors. China adheres to the principle of amity, sincerity, mutual benefit, inclusiveness in its foreign policy towards the neighboring countries. China has established comprehensive strategic partnership with five Mekong countries and views the cooperation in the sub-region as the priority and pilot region for building a community of shared future and for a new type of international relations.

In 2017, the total trade value between China and Mekong countries reached \$220 billion with 16% growth to the previous year. China has invested \$42 billion in total to the riparian countries, with 20% growth in 2017. The personnel exchange have hit up to 30 million in the last five years. Mega projects like China-Lao railway, China-Thailand railway has been kicked off for construction. Up to 330 new airlines between China and the Mekong countries has been added in the last two years. The infrastructure and connectivity cooperation is laying new impetus for long term and sustainable economic growth and people-people exchange.

Nowadays, the economic cooperation mechanism in the Great Mekong sub-region has ever been so active. With three Summits within 3 months respectively on Lancang-Mekong cooperation, the Great Mekong Sub-regional economic cooperation and the Mekong River Commission, the importance of the sub-region and the strong political will for economic cooperation have been fully reflected. We believe that different initiatives and mechanisms could be complement to each other, and the collaboration and coordination among them could improve their effectiveness and forging joint force for sub-regional sustainable development and integration.

Distinguished delegates:

Water is precious resource for human being's living and development. China has endorsed the development notion of innovation, coordination, green, open and inclusiveness. We will firmly adhere to the path of harmony between people and water. China is taking comprehensive measures to regulate the development and protection of water resource. Huge government investments both in the central government level and the provincial/municipal level have been allocated to water, land and ecosystem preservation and pollution prevention.

Lancang-Mekong river connects us and bring our destiny together. China attaches great importance to the utilization and protection of Lancang water resources not only for the the

interests of our own people, but also for interests of people from all riparian countries. We understand and respect the reasonable concern of the Mekong countries on hydropower development. Huge efforts have been made to respond to the demands and expectation of the down stream countries.

Since 1996, 21 formal dialogue meetings have been conducted between China and MRC. China was invited as an observer to the council meetings, Joint Committee meetings and other academic forums. Such mechanism provided good platform for expressing and addressing misgivings and concerns in constructive manner.

Since 2003, China has been providing the flood season hydrology data of upstream to MRC. Emergency fluctuation of hydrological information on Lancang were notified to MRC from time to time. In 2016, China conducted emergency water supplement to Mekong River upon request, which effectively released the drought situation in the downstream. This was highly welcomed and appreciated by the Mekong countries. Since then, China and MRC have been conducting a Joint Study on Hydrological Impacts of the Hydropower Cascade on Downstream Extreme Events. Such joint study set new modal of cooperation and increased mutual understanding.

Meanwhile, there has been frequent personnel exchange between China and MRC secretariat. The CEO, Mr. Pham Tuan Phan, visited China in June 2016 and in February 2018 respectively. In his latest visit, the CEO were invited to visit the Jinghong hydropower station. Actually, there were more than 300 officials, scholars, journalists and youths from Mekong countries who were invited to field visit to the hydropower stations at Xiaowan, Nozadu and Jinghong etc in 2017 alone. MRC also invited quite a few Chinese young scholars to the secretariat for short term research since last Summit. Chinese officials, scholars, enterprises were frequently attending the MRC hosted meetings.

In 2015, China and MRC jointly held the 2nd Symposium on Key Technology on Environment Protection in Hydro-power Development, the theme of the symposium were set on immigration. In October 2017, the 3rd joint Symposium was convened in Nanjing, China. This time, the theme were put on management and control of sediments in the context of cascade dams. Such joint symposiums brought together officials and scholars from the sub-region to explore the most sensitive and controversial issues and concerns in relation to hydro-power development. They greatly helped common understanding on dams and on water utilization.

Ladies and Gentlemen:

China commends the positive contribution which MRC has made for the sustainable development of Mekong basin. We view MRC as a key cooperation partner on water related issues in the sub-region. We value the experience and expertise of MRC on trans-boundary water regulation. We are willing to continue and consolidate the partnership with MRC by more closer dialogue, communication and joint action. We welcome the MRC secretariat to build partnership with the Lancang-Mekong cooperation mechanism in an appropriate way. Joint study, scientific symposium, people to people exchange and the field visit on water resources utilization and management facilities have been proved to be very effective means of trust and common understanding building. We should continue the current cooperation and enrich the topics and contents.

Building the Lancang-Mekong a river of peace, cooperation and prosperity is our common aspiration. China will continue to demonstrate our good will for such perspective by deeds and actions.

Thank you all for your attention. I wish the 3rd summit of MRC a great success.