Welcome Address

By

H.E. General Surasak Karnjanarat
Minister of Natural Resources and Environment
Chairperson of Thai National Mekong Committee
Member of the MRC Council for Thailand
Chairperson of the MRC Council for 2017

Excellency Mr. Bun Hean (ฯพณฯ นายบุน เฮียน)
Secretary of State of Ministry of Water Resources and Meteorology, Cambodia

Excellency Madame Bounkham Vorachit (ฯพณฯ มาดามบุณค้า วรวรจิต)
Deputy Minister of Natural Resources and Environment, Lao PDR

Mr. Suphot Tovichackchaikul (นายสุพจน์ โตวิจักษณ์ชัยกุล)
Deputy Permanent Secretary
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Excellency Dr. Nguyen Linh Ngoc (ฯพณฯ ดร.เหนี่ยน ลิน จิอัค)
Deputy Minister of Natural Resources and Environment, Viet Nam

Distinguished Representatives of Development Partners,
Distinguished Representatives of Dialogue Partners,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

/On behalf ...
On behalf of the Chairperson of the MRC Council for 2017 and on behalf of the Thai National Mekong Committee, I am delighted to warmly welcome you all to this Joint Meeting with the Twenty-Second Development Partner Consultative Group in this beautiful Pattaya city. We hope that this natural surrounding will help soothe our feeling and facilitate our discussions on enhancing our partnership for the future of the Mekong.

This year, it is delighted to learn that, we have brought partnership with our Dialogue Partners, Development Partners, and other partners to a new level. Our Dialogue Partners are vital for the whole management of the Mekong Basin. Our Development Partners provide essential financial and technical support we need in order to implement our work. Other partners are critical for the additional support in targeted areas to ensure the achievements of the MRC Strategic Plan.

For all MRC partners, I am really appreciated that you spend your valuable time with us here today to provide essential advice and guidance on a number of important matters for our organization.

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Following the two Declarations, namely the Hua Hin Declaration and the Ho Chi Minh City Declaration, We have been informed about the milestones achieved in its implementation since the last MRC Council Meeting.

At the end of this year, it is encouraging to see that the Study on the Sustainable Management and Development of the Mekong River including Impacts by Mainstream Hydropower Projects, commonly known as the Council Study,
will be completed. I recalled that this Study was commissioned by our Prime Ministers when they met at the Mekong-Japan Summit in 2011. Six years on and with more than a couple of million dollars spent, we all have a high expectation that this Study will provide useful and balanced recommendations to the Council on transboundary impacts on people living along the Mekong River. I hope that the results of the Study will be used by countries for deliberation and will lead to further joint activities aiming to balance water, food and energy security in our region. The process may take times, however, as spirit of Mekong cooperation, I am certain that the countries of project development will take all concerns into consideration and adjust their national plans and projects accordingly in order to increase the benefits for our region and to meet sustainable development corresponding to the SDGs. With this, I would like to encourage all partners and stakeholders to consider the results of the Council Study carefully and provide your views and feedback in the future application. I also call for your support to integrate useful recommendations to strengthen the cooperation among countries.

Another core issue of MRC is on decentralized activity. This activity requires a high level of support for implementation at national level. According to the report, since 2016, enormous efforts have been made by both the MRC Secretariat and Member Countries to smoothly decentralize the core river basin management functions especially on the hydrological data, where improvement of both manual and real time transmission to MRC Secretariat is needed to ensure its stability and punctuality to support flood forecasting. I would like to ask the Council Members to support and commit to the decentralized activity for the MRC in order to be an efficient and sustainable organization.
Additionally, we are all aware that the MRC budget is limited, so I would like to request the MRC Secretariat to implement the Annual Work Plan 2018 within the budget limit and leave unnecessary spending to ensure a more resilient organization in 2030.

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Next year the MRC will be hosting our highest event: the 3rd MRC Summit 2018. The First Summit in 2010 was historic, launching the reforms of the MRC to strengthen ownership and achieve financial self-sufficiency by 2030, including the decentralization and riparianization processes. The Second Summit in 2014 established a four-year interval for the Summits. Like the previous two Summits, the 3rd MRC Summit aims to achieve the commitment from Member Countries on our cooperation. Therefore, the 3rd Summit preparation will have the underlined theme around enhancing cooperation and partnerships to achieve the SDGs in the Mekong. I invite all partners and stakeholders to contribute to the Summit by participating in the International Conference which will take place two days prior to the Summit.

It is my pleasure to see that the MRC has continued to receive generous support from our Development Partners. As I mentioned earlier, MRC has established a number of thriving and fruitful working relationships with our Dialogue Partners and other international and regional organizations. I have no doubt that you will continue your generous support and work with the MRC, to contribute to the implementation of the Strategic Plan. I would like to ask you to also contribute to the work of the National Indicative Plans, including joint projects, national projects with basin-wide significance and decentralized activities.

/ Therefore ...
Therefore, it is my strong conviction that the achievements and the success of the MRC for over twenty years would not be materialized without the Member Countries’, Development Partners’, Dialogue Partners’ and other stakeholders’ solid and constant support and good cooperation.

Once again, let me also express my appreciation to the MRC Secretariat and the Thai National Mekong Committee Secretariat for preparing and administering a smooth and effective meeting.

I wish the meeting every success and hope that you all have an enjoyable and pleasant stay in Pattaya, Thailand.

With that, I would like to declare the Joint Meeting with the Twenty-Second Development Partner Consultative Group open.

Thank you.
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