



# Mekong River Commission

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## SUMMARY

OF

### MINUTES OF THE FORTY-NINTH MEETING OF THE MRC JOINT COMMITTEE MEKONG RIVER COMMISSION 04 SEPTEMBER 2019, VIENTIANE, LAO PDR

#### GENERAL

1. The Joint Committee of the MRC (the Joint Committee/JC) held its Forty-Ninth Meeting (hereinafter referred to as "The Meeting"), on 04 September 2019 in Vientiane, Lao PDR (back-to-back with the Twenty-Third Dialogue Meeting on 05 September 2019). The proposed Agenda items include the following (**Appendix No.1: Provisional Agenda**):

- Endorsement of the updated Preliminary Design Guidance (PDG) 2019 for the Mainstream Dams of the Lower Mekong Basin
- Endorsement of Drought Management Strategy 2020-2025
- Road map for MRC to become a regional accredited entity to climate funds (Adaptation Fund and Green Climate Fund)
- Progress on MRC cooperation with partners
- Progress on the implementation of the updated Basin Development Strategy for 2016-2020 including Joint Projects under NIPs 2016-2020 and preparation of updated Basin Development Strategy for 2021-2030
- Progress on the implementation of all the MRC Procedures and Joint Action Plans
- Progress on the MRC Joint Environmental Monitoring
- Progress on the updated Sustainable Hydropower Development Strategy (SHDS) 2019 for the Lower Mekong Basin
- Progress on the re-invigoration of the MRC data and information systems
- Report on the implementation of Siem Reap Declaration

#### Statement by the Chairperson of the MRC Joint Committee for 2019

2. Welcoming all the participants to the Forty-Ninth Meeting of the MRC Joint Committee and expressing appreciation for the Secretariat for their excellent preparation, the Chairperson highlighted a few significant achievements and developments the MRC has made over the past year, especially his pleasure to see the commitment regarding financial contributions by the MCs and his emphasis on the joint effort and responsibilities by both the MCs and the Secretariat to ensure a smooth and timely transfer of the funding by the DPs. The Chair then moved on to emphasize the importance of the deliberation of a few items for endorsement by the JC and meaningful discussion on other subsequent agenda items put forward for the Meeting. Before closing, the Chairperson encouraged all the delegates to provide their constructive and insightful comments for the best possible outcomes.

#### A. Matters for Consideration

## **A.1 Endorsement of the updated Preliminary Design Guidance (PDG) 2019 for the Mainstream Dams of the Lower Mekong Basin**

3. The Secretariat reported on the updating of Preliminary Design Guidance (PDG) for Proposed Mainstream Dams including its objectives, review process and step for finalization. This PDG 2018 has been updated in its version 2.0 called PDG 2019, but the word "Preliminary" of the title was still maintained. Once the PDG2019 is endorsed by the JC, it is proposed that a transition process between PDG2009 and PDG2019 be implemented to ensure MCs are able to build capacity within their line agencies. All subsequent Prior Consultation process should then follow the PDG2019. The Secretariat sought endorsement of the PDG2019 for Proposed Mainstream Dams in the LMB and further guidance by the Joint Committee.

4. The Meeting took note of the progress report by the Secretariat and the MRCS will work closely with Lao PDR to address the remaining issues.

## **A.2 Endorsement of Drought Management Strategy (DMS) 2020-2025**

5. Covering five priority areas, the DMS and its guideline and detailed Implementation Plan are being drafted and will be finished for consultations with MCs in September 2019. Its concept note and budget proposal for the amount of USD 1.9 million for 2020-2023 will be submitted to Japan as part of the support for its implementation. The Secretariat sought endorsement of the DMS and provision of further guidance by the Joint Committee.

6. The Meeting took note of the report on the drought management strategy and urged the Secretariat to work with Lao PDR to address the pending issues, so that the Strategy could be endorsed in a timely manner.

## **A.3 Road map for MRC to become a regional accredited entity to climate funds (Adaptation Fund and Green Climate Fund)**

7. The MRCS reported on its initiative to become a regional accredited entity to access Adaptation Fund and Green Climate Fund based on a proposed roadmap. The proposed road map consists of two stages: 1) preparation, and 2) submission of accreditation application and following up. The second stage would be carried out from 2020 to 2022. The MRCS sought support by the JC for its need to modify a number of rules and regulations, approach of fund raising and other measures and support for its roadmap on the preparation and submission of the application and implementation modalities.

8. The Meeting took note of the report on the initiative by the Secretariat and requested the Secretariat to take into consideration the guidance by the Joint Committee.

## **B. Matters for Information**

### **B.3 Progress on MRC cooperation with partners**

9. Informing the Meeting of its discussion with both existing and emerging Development Partners regarding funding for its future SP 2021-2025, the Secretariat also provided a snapshot on cooperation with other partners including China, highlighting the few most significant progresses such as the renewal of the MOU on the provision of hydrological information of the Mekong-Lancang river in the flood season, the observer status of the MRCS to the annual meeting of the Lancang-Mekong Joint Working Group on Water Resources. Good cooperation efforts were also made with MDBA, Mississippi River Commission, ASEAN and the holding of the 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting of Expert Group on Strategy and Partnership, resulting in important agreements by the MRC and Mekong related regional frameworks to further work together. Briefing note B.3 provides more details.

10. The Meeting took note of the progress reported by the Secretariat.

### **B.4 Progress on the implementation of the updated Basin Development Strategy for 2016-2020 including Joint Projects under NIPs 2016-2020 and preparation of updated Basin Development Strategy for 2021-2030**

11. Providing background of the BDS and the NIPs implementation including its 3 joint projects, the Secretariat highlighted some ground work for the updated BDS 2021-2030 such as preparation of concept note, recruitment of international consultants and national advisors, the implementation roadmap and a nice draft of the MRC Strategic Plan to implement the updated BDS and raise fund. more details are provided in briefing note B.4.

12. The Meeting took note of the progress reported by the Secretariat.

### **B.5 Progress on the implementation of all the MRC Procedures and Joint Action Plans (JAPs)**

13. Reporting on the implementation progress on the MRC Procedures and highlighting the PNPCHA process of the PLHPP, the Secretariat brought the Meeting's attention to the implementation of the JAPs for both PBHPP and PLHPP, a snapshot on Joint Platform work and the recent Luang Prabang Hydropower Project for the Prior Consultation process submitted by LNMC and a proposed roadmap by the Secretariat. The 7<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Joint Platform was proposed to be convened on Oct. 9, 2019 back-to-back with the 1<sup>st</sup> PNPCHA JCWG on LPHPP. Briefing note B.5 provides more details.

14. The Meeting took note of the progress reported by the Secretariat.

### **B.6 Progress on the MRC Joint Environmental Monitoring (JEM)**

15. For this agenda, the Secretariat informed the Meeting of the JEM background and purposes, its development, subsequent updating process, snapshot of the JEM Programme and its two pilot proposals and roles of the JEM for Xayaburi and Don Sahong Hydropower Development Projects including new added parameters, monitoring locations and HYCOS stations. The Secretariat also provided a snapshot of the JEM fish passage monitoring at Don Sahong Hydropower Project and its next steps. More details are provided in briefing note B.6.

16. The Meeting took note of the progress reported by the Secretariat.

### **B.7 Progress on the updated Sustainable Hydropower Development Strategy (SHDS) 2019 for the Lower Mekong Basin**

17. The Secretariat reported on the process of updating the Sustainable Hydropower Development Strategy 2019 including its objectives, concerns and next steps. Comments from the MCs have been integrated in the updated version 1.5 of the SHDS to be tabled for consultation at regional level slated for Oct. 10, 2019 to finalize the SHDS2019 before presenting to the JC and Council in November 2019 for endorsement and approval, respectively.

18. The Meeting took note of the progress reported by the Secretariat.

### **B.8 Progress on the re-invigoration of the MRC data and information systems**

19. For this, the Secretariat informed the Meeting of its background and the importance of such exercise for the MRC, establishment of the core team, review of current systems and tools, design concept being reviewed to incorporate the status of the current systems and tools, challenges and opportunities resulting from this endeavour and propose concept to enhance the current systems and tools. The design concep will soon be circulated to MCs for input. Details are provided in note B.8.

20. The Meeting took note of the progress and requested the Secretariat to provide more rationales in further proceeding with this exercise.

### **B.9 Report on the implementation of Siem Reap Declaration**

21. For this last item of the day, the Secretariat presented to the Meeting a table matrix highlighting updates regarding progress on the implementation of each of the 12 priority areas of actions since the 47<sup>th</sup> JC Meeting. More details are provided in briefing note B.9.

22. The Meeting took note with appreciation of the progress on the implementation of the Siem Reap Declaration reported by the Secretariat. The MRCS is requested to show indicators measuring the progress of SDR implementation.

### **Other business**

23. The 50<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the MRC Joint Committee would be tentatively held in March 2020 in Thailand.