

Statement by the Head of Thai Delegation

The 4th MRC Summit

5th April 2023, Vientiane, Lao PDR

(10 minutes)

His Excellency Mr. Sonexay SIPHANDONE,
Prime Minister of the Lao People's Democratic Republic,

His Excellency Samdech Akka Moha Sena Padei Techo HUN SEN,
Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Cambodia,

His Excellency Mr. Pham Minh Chinh,
Prime Minister of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam,

Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

1. It is indeed my great honour to attend the Forth MRC Summit in Vientiane, Lao PDR as Thailand's representative. On behalf of the Government of the Kingdom of Thailand, I would like to extend my appreciation to the Government of Lao PDR for a very warm welcome.

2. Thailand acknowledges “water” as necessary resource for living as well as supporting food and energy production to enhance economic growth. River is then compared as main blood vessel that nurtures people’ lives. For the Mekong Sub-region, Mekong River accommodates outstanding biodiversity that serves as invaluable asset for every member country. As such, Mekong River is crucial for economic growth, cultural and ecological preservation of the Mekong River Basin.

3. In recent times, Mekong Sub-region has faced with social, economic, and environmental challenges, for example, the COVID-19 pandemic, climate change that affects hydrological situation of the Mekong River Basin, declined environmental assets and fishery resources, and economic recession. However, to overcome these challenges Thailand believes that cooperation from all stakeholders, including Member Countries, Dialogue Partners, Development Partners, and local communities together with empathy among Member Countries, will be the key to facilitate joint water management considering negotiation principle and basin-wide perspective on conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity.

4. For the past success of the Mekong River Commission on challenge management starting from developing and sharing knowledge to providing regional guidelines on management of water and other resources, these create more systematic and responsive management approaches.

5. However, the remaining challenges get more complicated. Therefore, we all have missions to seek innovative development and management approaches, to thoroughly extend benefits from development to communities, and to mutually identify strategy on water and conflict management at locality in order to sustain water and other resources in the Mekong River Basin.

Excellencies,

Ladies and gentlemen,

6. Thailand promotes proactive and integrated development and management planning by synergizing cooperation across sector at all levels which leads to the optimal solution for every Member Country.

7. The needs to strengthen the Mekong River Commission by applying advance work procedures in order to serve as knowledge and information hub of Mekong sub-region that can share operational information at project level to support Mekong riparian community adaptation. Further, we need to enhance our capacity to support self-financing by the year 2030.

8. Innovation and technology must be utilized to find alternative development options in order to ensure sustainable development and management planning of water and related resources in the Mekong River Basin especially fishery resources and environment. For institutional

administration, MRC should consider establishing financial mechanism to help mitigate transboundary adverse impacts on riparian residents along the Mekong River and also adaptive management by taking into consideration development principle based on social and environmental responsibility for mutual benefits. These, if being adopted, can lead to sustainable water-food-energy security of the Mekong River Basin.

9. These above-mentioned approaches can only be achieved by cooperation from all stakeholders, including Member Countries, Dialogue Partners, Development Partners, civil society, private sector and other associates, to coordinate co-function with holistic view and to exchange knowledge and experiences in order to be transferred and appropriately applied based on context of each country.

10. As MRC Member Countries, Thailand stands ready to share experiences on Sufficiency Economy as well as BCG Economy Model that promotes inclusive and sustainable growth by focusing on Bioeconomy, Circular Economy, and Green Economy. The BCG Model aims for sustainable management to combat environmental challenges, climate change, and promote natural resources conservation and utilization. This Model can capitalize the strength of Mekong Sub-region countries in biological diversity and cultural richness by employing science, technology, and innovation to transform to a value-based and innovation-driven economy.

Excellencies,

Ladies and gentlemen,

11. As MRC Member Countries, Thailand would like to convey our pleasure that the 2023 Vientiane Declaration will be adopted by all MRC Member Countries. This will enhance sustainable development of the Mekong River Basin by taking people's quality of life and water-food-energy-environment security into consideration. The innovation on joint operational management will be applied under economic development with social responsibility and good governance.

related cooperation frameworks, for example, ASEAN, Mekong-Lancang Cooperation, MRC-Japan, MRC-Korea, MRC-USA, ACMECS, including relevant stakeholders. We can bring the greatest strength from different frameworks to complement each other in order to driving forward in a sustainable manner.

Thank you