

SUMMARY OF
MINUTES OF THE FORTY-FOURTH MEETING
OF THE MRC JOINT COMMITTEE
MEKONG RIVER COMMISSION
27-28 JULY 2016, PHNOM PENH, CAMBODIA

GENERAL

1. The Joint Committee of the MRC (the Joint Committee/JC) held its Forty-fourth Meeting, Plenary Session (hereinafter referred to as “The Meeting”), on 27-28 July 2016 in Phnom Penh, Cambodia. The proposed Agenda includes the following items.

- Progress Report on the implementation of the MRC Ho Chi Minh City Declaration and progress since the 43rd Meeting of the MRC Joint Committee by the Chief Executive Officer of the MRC Secretariat
- Report on Cooperation with Dialogue Partners, Development Partners and Regional Initiatives
- Report on the Joint Observation and Evaluation of the Emergency Water Supplement by China to Mekong River
- Report on the implementation of the IWRM-based Basin Development Strategy 2016-2020
- Progress on activity’s implementation under the Planning Division
- Progress on activity’s implementation under the Environment Management Division
- Progress on activity’s implementation under the Operations Division
- Progress on activity’s implementation under the Technical Support Division
- Discussion on activity’s implementation under new structure
- Discussion on the proposal on Joint monitoring of Don Sahong and Xayaburi Hydropower Projects
- Discussion on Lesson learned of PNPCA process
- Finalisation of the revised Master Plan for Regional Waterborne Transport in the Lower Mekong Basin
- Discussion on Preparation and Improvement of MRC Design Guidance for Proposed Mainstream Dams and Guidelines for Hydropower Environmental Impact Mitigation and Risk Management
- Information on the Date and Venue of the Twenty-third Meeting of the MRC Council

2. On 26 July 2016, the JC held a Private Meeting and a Preparatory Meeting to discuss issues of mutual concern and benefits prior to the Meeting.

A. Statement by the Chairperson of the Joint Committee for 2015

3. The Chairperson of the MRC Joint Committee (JC) for 2015 welcomed all Delegates to the 44th Meeting of the MRC Joint Committee in Phnom Penh, Cambodia. He was pleased to have witnessed a great deal of efforts and investments in increasing the sustainable development of the Mekong’s precious resources through further cooperation and reforms, as well as the continued commitment from the four Member Countries and other stakeholders to support the MRC in securing the organisation’s sustainability in the long run, especially as the Member Countries would have to take on more responsibilities in order to implement more of the core river basin management functions. He also stressed the challenges faced by the MRC as well as the opportunities that come with the establishment of the Mekong-Lancang Cooperation. He thanked the distinguished Members of the Joint Committee for the valuable support and assistance extended to him and to Viet Nam throughout his Chairmanship and congratulated the Thai Chairperson of the MRC Joint Committee for 2016.

B. Opening Address by the Chairperson of the Joint Committee for 2016

4. The incoming Chairperson of the MRC Joint Committee (JC) for 2016 welcomed all delegates to the 44th Meeting of the MRC JC and extended his appreciation to the outgoing JC Chairperson for 2015 for his tremendous efforts and dedication during his Chairmanship. He acknowledged the immense challenges ahead, especially during the traditional period, and stressed that JC needs to ensure coherence among the four Divisions to carry out the Core Functions, as well as the need for the Basket Fund Committee to meet in an efficient, effective and timely manner. The Chairpersons highlighted three points: (1) the Annual Work Plan which needs to be realistic and in line with the priorities under the Core Functions and the current financial situation of the MRC; (2) full commitment and accountability by MCs with regard to the decentralization of the Core Functions; and (3) enhanced engagement with non-MRC members. Before declaring the meeting open, the Chairperson expressed his optimism that, with the continued spirit of Mekong cooperation, the deliberations on the important issues during this meeting will be fruitful and will serve for a better and stronger MRC.

C. Matters for Information

C.1 Progress Report on the implementation of the MRC Ho Chi Minh City Declaration and progress since the 43rd Meeting of the MRC Joint Committee by the Chief Executive Officer of the MRC Secretariat

5. The CEO of the Secretariat presented his report on the implementation of the Ho Chi Minh City Declaration, followed by a report on the progress since the 43rd JC Meeting. For the 1st report, the CEO reported on progress in 6 key areas: (1) the MRC Council's Study; (2) the Basin Development Strategy and Strategic Plan; (3) mitigating risks to river ecology, food security, livelihoods and water quality; (4) the implementation of the MRC Procedures to support the implementation of the 1995 Mekong Agreement; (5) disaster risk reduction for floods, droughts and water quality; and (6) cooperation with MRC Dialogue Partners and Development Partners. Progress at the organizational level has been made since the last JC meeting. For decentralisation, Batch 2 implementation is ongoing with only two technical issues – sediment and fisheries monitoring being delayed. Transitional implementation has seen some delay. On restructuring, the new structure and staffing plan approved have been supported by a systematic administrative preparation and appropriate staffing. As for the topic of having one-office location, as of now, the issue is still under the consideration of the MRC Council Chairperson. For the financial reform, the Operational Guideline of the MRC Basket Fund was approved by the JC at the 22nd Council Prep Meeting on 13 January 2016, and new accounting software (MS Dynamics NAV 2015) was completed, including improvement of the system on reporting features. On the financial health of the MRC, a decision on the formula of MCs' contribution has been made, with MCs' contribution being processed. On funding, the Secretariat has finalised funding agreements with the Government of France, Germany, USA and Switzerland for a number of projects. The Secretariat requested the JC to take note of the progress on both reports and guidance for its further action.

6. The Meeting took note with appreciation of the progress made in both the Ho Chi Minh City Declaration Report and the report on progress since the 43rd Joint Committee Meeting.

C.2 Report on Cooperation with Dialogue Partners, Development Partners and Regional Initiatives

7. Cooperation with China is progressing well including the recent cooperation on the emergency water supplement and the CEO's visit to China. Cooperation with Myanmar is seen in the navigation area, while a Strategic Paper on cooperation with Myanmar is under preparation. Since the 22nd MRC Council in January 2016, five new funding agreements have been concluded with Germany, Belgium, Luxembourg and Swiss Confederation amounting to US\$10.5 million. Other pledges amount to approximately US\$18.9 million. Out of US\$65 million for the implementation of the SP 2016-2020, the MRC has managed to secure ~60 million with US\$12.5 million from MCs' contribution, US\$12.9 million from Earmarked Fund, 16.5 million of new signed agreements and the rest are pledges. The

funding gap for the SP 2016-2020 is around US\$5 million. While relationships with the Mississippi River Commission and Murray Darling Basin Authority have been maintained, the Secretariat has recently worked to strengthen partnership with ASEAN in terms of renewing the expired MoU.

8. The Meeting took note of the progress on the cooperation with DiPs, DPs and regional initiatives.

C.3 Report on the Joint Observation and Evaluation of the Emergency Water Supplement by China to Mekong River

9. The recent drought condition over the Mekong Basin has led to China's arrangements of its Emergency Water Supplement to Mekong River. A three-phase plan concerning the arrangements has been implemented: 1) from 9 March to 10 April 2016, with an average daily discharge of no less than 2,000 m³/s; 2) from 11 April to 20 April 2016 with discharge of no less than 1,200 m³/s; and 3) from 21 April to 31 May 2016 with discharge of no less than 1,500 m³/s. In its letter No. MKR.001/2016-013 sent to the Secretariat concerning the Emergency Water Supplement to Mekong River, China also proposed a Joint Observation and Evaluation of such arrangement, whose output is an expected Joint Report. Work plan of the Joint Observation and Evaluation was jointly prepared and revised following meeting between both parties in May 2016 at OSP. With facilitation of the MRCS, LNMC and VNMC, Chinese Team made their visits to reservoir in Vientiane, Lao PDR and drought affected areas of the Delta, Viet Nam. The Secretariat was invited to visit two dams (Xiaowan and Jinghong) in China and to have further discussions with the Chinese Expert Team. Currently, technical contents of the Joint Report are being finalised. The Joint Report has now been submitted to the Member Countries for comments and will soon be released to the public.

10. The Meeting took note of the report by the Secretariat on the joint activity with China on the Joint Observation and Evaluation.

C.4 Report on the implementation of the IWRM-based Basin Development Strategy 2016-2020

11. Under the MRC framework, the BDS is being implemented through the MRC Strategic Plan and the National Indicative Plans. The new NIPs for Thailand and Viet Nam have been finalised and the Lao and Cambodia and NIPs are being finalised. Importantly, the NIPs for 2016-2020 collectively identified 5 joint projects in which Member Countries agreed to work together: Lao-Thailand on navigation, Cambodia-Thailand on water resources management in the border area, Cambodian-Lao on water resources development and management, including joint monitoring in the border area, Cambodia-Lao-Viet Nam on sustainable water resources management in the 3S, and Cambodia-Viet Nam on the floodplain development and management. While the work on preparing NIPs has been largely completed, three tasks remain: 1) elaboration of the national NIP M&E in line with the MRC system, 2) discussion and agreement on the key activities of the joint projects, and 3) dissemination and fund mobilisation.

12. The Meeting took note of the implementation of the BDS and NIPs and suggested the Secretariat conduct its dissemination to DPs, seeking funding support for the Member Countries.

C.5 Progress on activity's implementation under the Planning Division

Basin Development Plan Team

13. Key achievements include: (1) Implementation of the BAP 2011-2015 (RAP and NIPs) has been completed with 90% of the RAP activities and over 70% of the NIP activities addressed; (2) The Basin Development Strategy (BDS) has been published and released to the public following its approval by the MRC Council in January 2016; (3) Report on Scoping of Regional Benefit Sharing in the Mekong Basin has been completed and distributed to MCs; (4) Revision of the PMFM Implementation Report 2011-2015 and the updated PMFM Technical Guidelines have been completed; (5) A four-volume report on the Approach and Methodology for the Cumulative Impact Assessment for the Council Study has been drafted;

(6) The MRC Socio-Economic Database has been established and operational; (7) The MRC Indicator Framework Report has been completed and distributed; (8) Preparatory State of Basin Report has been drafted and under review; (9) BDP 2011-2015 Completion Report has been drafted and disseminated; (10) All four NIPs (Cambodia, Lao PDR, Thailand and Viet Nam) have been prepared and finalized; and (11) While BDP Programme has ended, the BDP related work has been fully integrated into the MRC SP 2016-2020.

Initiative on Sustainable Hydropower Team

14. Key achievements of ISH Team include the following: ISH continued to increase awareness for sustainable hydropower considerations through the implementation of ISH Studies and ISH Hydropower Forum including the “2nd Technical Symposium on Environmental Protection in Lancang and Mekong River Basin from large infrastructure projects” organized on 1st-2nd July 2015 with the participation of Chinese Experts. ISH01 and ISH02 have been completed, and ready for upscaling from sub basin (pilot) to LMB scale. The Council Study scenarios and sub-scenarios for hydropower thematic have been formulated and submitted to the MCs for consideration. The Trans-Boundary RSAT will be presented and discussed in Quarter 3 of 2016. The ISH0306 is progressing well and its Interim Report 2 will be discussed with the MCs in Q3 2016.

Mekong-Integrated Water Resource Management Project Team

15. The following outputs of M-IWRMT include: (1) Joint enabling, infrastructure and non-infrastructure projects and mechanisms between two or more MCs initiated, further developed and carried out ; (2) Transboundary Environmental Impact Assessment (TbEIA) guidelines established, approved and promoted; (3) MRC Procedures and associated technical guidelines reviewed and updated; (4) MRC Joint Platform and working groups for MRC Procedures implementation supported; (5) Common understanding of the Procedures implementation by MCs promoted; (6) A World Bank mid-term review conducted for IWRMP Project Phase 1 with satisfactory result; (7) Support work for BDP to finalise the NIPs completed; (8) Completion of the Government of Australia (DFAT) Activity Report; (9) activities implementation under the World Bank project worth of US\$2,928,426.00. Some challenges include delay in project implementation of two projects including i) MRC financial constraint and financial policy and ii) late delivery of replenishment on the transboundary project imprest account.

16. The Meeting took note of the activities’ implementation under the Planning Division.

C.6 Progress on activity’s implementation under the Environment Division

Climate Change and Adaptation Initiative Team

17. Key achievements of CCAI Team include the following: (1) Databases and tools for extracting historical and future projected climate data built and ready for posting into the updated MRC data portal and transferring to MCs; (2) An MRC climate change atlas built and being finalised for publication; (3) The CCAI’s set of non-modelling methods and tools for adaptation planning built and manual prepared for further dissemination; (4) Five projects of the 2nd Batch CCAI local demonstration projects in the MCs almost completed; (5) Good progress made regarding implementation of the CCAI Capacity Building Plan 2013-2015 and CCAI Stakeholder Engagement Framework; (6) Nine basin-wide climate change scenarios defined and adopted by the MCs; (7) CCAI basin-wide assessments of climate change impacts on water and water related resources and sectors in the LMB completed; (8) Good progress made on MASAP and first draft of the MASAP prepared for consultation. Some challenges include delay in CCAI’s work plan completion by end of June 2016 due to funding shortage. A 2nd no-cost extension of EU funding to CCAI made to provide enough time for remaining activities of CCAI.

Environment Team

18. Key achievements of Environment Team are as follows: (1) The implementation of the Procedures for Water Quality (PWQ promoted); (2) Implementation of approved regional and national implementation plans for the routine water quality monitoring and the national

implementation of the PWQ; (3) Completion of the field survey on SIMVA, and the regional report focusing on shocks and trends affecting peoples' livelihoods along the Mekong mainstream prepared; (4) On wetlands component, the financial agreement on KfW supported project signed and first payment to the MRCS made in mid-June 2016 with the implementation commenced in second half of 2016; (5) The kick start of WB's TbEIA project in March 2016 with a regional working session to discuss the Sesan case study. Some activities have been postponed during Jan-June 2016 due to shortage of funding, affecting progress on TbEIA and finalisation of TGWQ and Preparatory State of Basin Report.

19. The Meeting took note of the progress on activities' implementation under the Environment Division and requested the Secretariat to address requests of MCs to speed up their mentioned main activities above.

C.7 Progress on activity's implementation under the Operations Division

Agriculture and Irrigation Team

20. Key progresses include: 1) Completion of Basin-wide assessment on climate change impacts on food security and adaptation options in the Lower Mekong Basin; 2) Completion of assessment of formulated and agreed development scenarios under Council Study (CS) and finalization of the interim report and Thematic Working Paper of two themes; 3) Completion of a study on groundwater sustainable yield management for crop production; 4) Endorsement and approval of Draft, test and refine guidelines of fish-friendly irrigation schemes; 5) Development of two transboundary project proposals; 6) Annual consultation with Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries. Challenges include delay in the implementation of activities due to late arrival of the fund from Japan-MAFF, slow implementation at country level leading to the incompleteness of activities, and inadequate fund causing implementation delay in some activities with MCs. AIT planned to work closely with modelling team for some assessments, national and regional consultation for two transboundary projects, and provision of technical support to National Working Group.

Drought Management Team

21. Progress of DMT includes: (1) establishment of a National Drought Working Group for Thailand; (2) National Consultations on new hydro-met stations with Cambodia, Vietnam and Lao PDR; (3) National Discussion Meetings with relevant line agencies carried out in all the MCs regarding the development of a regional drought monitoring and forecasting system for the LMB; (4) Organisation of a Regional Consultation Meeting on DMT activity progress and Project Implementation Plan (PIP) and organization of a Regional Consultation Meeting between NASA JPL team with NMCs and Line Agencies; (5) A joint training workshop with SERVIR Mekong with technical support from the NASA Jet Propulsion Laboratory (JPL) team on Mekong Regional Hydrological Extreme Assessment System (RHEAS) project; and (6) Completion of an annual report 2015 of DMT submitted to JAIF for new funding for 2016 implementation. Due to a late arrival of fund from JAIF, to avoid delayed implementation, DMT has coordinated with ICCS to request MoFA of Japan to transfer fund for DM-related activity implementation for 2016. The new funding is expected to be transferred by mid-June.

Fisheries Team

22. These are key progresses: (i) Finalisation of three key studies implemented between 2011 and 2015 including Fisheries-hydrology modelling study, Regional Study on the survey of fisheries yields at landscape scale in LMB conducted in the four MCs, and Regional Study on impact assessment of climate change on fisheries in LMB; (ii) Completion of Standard Sampling Procedures for Fish Abundance and Diversity Monitoring (FADM) in LMB and Update Mekong Fish Photo Book; (iii) Completion of the Catch and Culture Newsletter – Volume 22 Issue 1 (2016); and (iv) Drafting Agreements between the MRCS and the Countries related to Plan to Transfer Fisheries Monitoring Activities. Challenges include delay in the implementation of the fishery-related key activities proposed in the approved MRC Annual Work Plan 2016 due to fund shortage. Upcoming activities include: Preparing FT's mid-year report for MRCS, Preparing Agreements between MRCS and

NMCS concerning Plan to transfer fisheries monitoring; and Conducting regional stakeholder consultation workshop and 22nd TAB meeting to seek agreement on version 4 of Basin-wide Fisheries Management and Development Strategy (BFMS) and seek endorsement and approval by the MRC JC and Council.

Navigation Team

23. Some of the progress made under NAT include the following: (1) Finalisation and updating of the navigation Master Plan in line with the MRC's core functions; (2) Preparation and promotion of a set of guidelines and frameworks on waterborne transport management, including a set of guidelines to enable MCs to standardize and regulate ports and fleet for safe navigation and establishment of the Mekong Navigation Facilitation Committee in Cambodia and Viet Nam as part of the Agreement on Waterway Transport between the two; (3) Participation of NAT in the Seminar for Logistics Situation and Challenge in Cambodia; (4) Transfer of the Navigation boats under Navigation Programme to the MCs; (5) Organisation of the Technical Workshop on Inland Waterway Transportation Development cooperation between MRC and Korea. The following are upcoming work including finalization of the Master Plan according to this 44th JC instructions and support for the implementation of the Agreement on Waterway Transport between Cambodia and Viet Nam according to the request of MCs.

24. The Meeting took note of the progress on activities' implementation under the Operations Division.

C.8 Progress on activity's implementation under the Technical Support Division

Information and Knowledge Management Team

25. Key progresses include 1) Successful completion and closure of the IKMP programme without outstanding negative balance, 2) First draft of completion and final review reports of IKMP, 3) Successful completion of the first batch of decentralization plan for Mekong HYCOS and sediment monitoring, and 4) Provision of significant technical support to the Council Study (CS). Under the river monitoring component: data collection on discharge and sediment for 2014-2015 and transfer of dataset to MRCS completed, Agreement of the MCs on the national roadmap on the decentralization plan of the sediment batch 2 reached. For MRC-IS component: Establishment and improvement of the National Information System (NIS) in each MC finalised. On modelling work, most of the effort has centered on the support for the CS. For DSF (SWAT and ISIS): WUP-Fin and water sources models setup and calibration on flow, sediment and nutrient completed. After the first batch decentralization, it was observed many HYCOS stations were not well operated due to insufficient financial support at the national level to maintain the system. As the HYCOS system has already been transferred to the MCs, they will need to consider allocating sufficient financial support for the system maintenance.

Flood Management and Mitigation Team

26. The overall progress of FMMT includes provision of the weekly dry season monitoring from 1 November 2015 until 31 May 2016 and daily river flood forecasting for 22 stations along the Mekong mainstream from 1 June 2016 to present. Besides some reports produced, FMMT has signed the MOUs with national line agencies of Cambodia and Lao PDR for rainfall network improvement and hydro-meteorological data collection and transfer from the line agencies to the RFMMC during transition period until June 2017. Agreement on Decentralization for batch 1 has been reached with Thailand and Viet Nam. Handover Agreement has been signed with Viet Nam while discussion on detailed arrangement with Thailand is ongoing. FMMT has conducted a technical study to explore possibility in applying long term flood forecast with technical support from GIZ. The Initial Studies Stage 1 has been completed. Possibilities of obtaining additional funding for Stage 2 have been found out. As flood forecasting is critical during the flood season and was started since 1 June 2016, the recruitment of new staff needs to be finalized soon and a sufficient overlapped period between the current staff and newly recruited staff is needed to ensure a smooth operation of the flood forecasting activities.

27. The Meeting took note of the progress reported by the Secretariat and requested the Secretariat to address the concern raised by the MCs.

D. Matters for Consideration

D.1 Discussion on activity's implementation under new structure

28. The functions of the new structure, starting 1 July 2016, are summarised and appropriate outputs of the MRC Strategic Plan are identified and allocated accordingly for divisions and office (and key staff) based on their main core functions and tasks. While the main work of the new Planning Division (PD), Environmental Management Division (ED) and Technical Support Division (TD) are relatively clear, some of the main work of the new Administration Division (AD) and OCEO, including the preparation of governance meetings, and preparation of the Annual Work Plans, are elaborated. For preparation of governance meetings, it is led by the AD with support from the OCEO. For the AWP, it is led by the OCEO under the technical coordination of the Strategic Plan team working with all divisions.

29. The Meeting took note of the progress on activity's implementation under the new structure including functions, tasks and key responsibility and of the suggestions and proposals from the JC.

D.2 Discussion on the proposal on Joint monitoring of Don Sahong and Xayaburi Hydropower Projects

30. The Secretariat reported on this agenda with some background leading up to the follow-up on the "Joint Monitoring" initiative including a meeting to discuss the Proposed Don Sahong Joint Fisheries Monitoring Programme by SSM on 12 May 2016 with the suggestions that both Don Sahong and Xayaburi Hydropower Projects should be included in the Joint Monitoring and that the issue of fisheries, hydrology, sediment, and water quality be covered. The main objective of this proposed "Joint Monitoring" initiative is to generate reliable and scientific data and information through established Joint Monitoring Programmes on site-specific (trans-boundary) issues related to fisheries, hydrology and hydraulics, sediment and water quality. A number of key tasks have also been proposed to meeting the above main objective. Further details will be worked out by the MRCS in consultation with the MCs. The Secretariat sought JC's consideration and decision for its further action.

31. The Meeting took note of the proposed joint monitoring project by the Secretariat.

D.3 Discussion on Lesson learned of PNPCA process

32. The process and progress on draft working paper "Lessons Learnt from implementation of the Procedures for Notification, Prior Consultation and Agreement (PNPCA)" together with a result from the Dialogue Workshop on the PNPCA held on 25 February 2016 was presented. The MRC Secretariat proposed that the development of a "Commentary" on the PNPCA be conducted through the MRC Joint Platform with assistance from the Member Countries and from an international water law expert.

33. The Meeting took note of the proposal and the concerns and suggestions provided.

D.5 Finalisation of the revised Master Plan for Regional Waterborne Transport in the Lower Mekong Basin

34. The Secretariat reported to the Meeting on the above agenda with some background information including the rationale for establishing the Master Plan for Regional Waterborne Transport in the Lower Mekong Basin. The members of Navigation Advisory Committee, representatives from NMCs and LAs reviewed and technically agreed on the Master Plan in the final regional workshop in November 2015. The Final Draft Master Plan was presented at the 43rd JC in March 2016. Thereafter, the Secretariat has finalized and updated the Final Report according to the comments and suggestions by the JC. Chapter 11 in Volume II has been revised focusing on the MRCS structure as a leaner organization. The Short term (2016 – 2020) and Long Term (2021 – 2040) Port Development Actions have been revised to be in line with budget and timeframe of the Development Plan on

International Navigation on the Lancang-Mekong River (2015 - 2025). The Secretariat sought approval of the JC for its revised Master Plan.

35. Three Member Countries approved the Master Plan with pending final written approval by Lao PDR.

D.6 Discussion on Preparation and Improvement of MRC Design Guidance (DG) for Proposed Mainstream Dams and Guidelines for Hydropower Environmental Impact Mitigation and Risk Management

36. The MRC DG is a very useful document to provide guidance to the dam developers to ensure a consistent approach to the design of individual dams, as well as the proposed mitigation and management measures. The improvement will be done in the future by use of the knowledge yield from ISH studies and particularly after the on-going study “Guidelines for Hydropower Environmental Impact Mitigation and Risk Management” has been completed. The final Guidelines and Manual will add significant practical details to the implementation and improvement of the MRC DG including recommendations on mitigation measures. The Secretariat sought JC’s consideration of the matter and further guidance for its further actions.

37. The Meeting took note of the summary report.

E. Other business

E.1 Information on the Date and Venue of the Twenty-third Meeting of the MRC Council

38. As the Council Chairpersonship for 2016 was handed over to Lao PDR, the Secretariat informed the Meeting that the next 23rd MRC Council Meeting and the Twenty-first Development Partner Consultative Group Meeting will take place in Lao PDR. Based on the information provided to the Secretariat, LNMC suggested the week from 22 to 25 November 2016 in Pakse, Champasack Province. The Secretariat sought JC’s advice on the next steps.

39. The Meeting instructed the Secretariat to inform the Member Countries and Development Partners officially on the dates and venue suggested by Lao PDR.