

MOU Signing Ceremony with Singapore Ministry of Foreign Affairs

29 April 2026, MRCS Headquarters, Vientiane, Lao PDR

Remarks

CEO Busadee Santipitaks

Mekong River Commission Secretariat

His Excellency Ong Siew Gay, Ambassador of Singapore to Lao PDR,

Directors, Chiefs and Colleagues,

Ladies and gentlemen,

Good afternoon and welcome to the Mekong River Commission Secretariat.

On behalf of the Mekong River Commission, it is my great honour to warmly welcome Your Excellency and all of you today to the signing ceremony of the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the Mekong River Commission and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Singapore.

At the outset, I wish to express my sincere appreciation to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Singapore and especially to the Embassy of Singapore to Lao PDR for the continued cooperation and constructive engagement, which have brought this MOU to fruition. While Singapore is geographically distant from the Mekong River, your strong spirit of cooperation and genuine care for the Mekong and its people, as demonstrated through this partnership, reflect a shared sense of regional responsibility and prosperity in Southeast Asia.

Today marks a special occasion as we commit to further strengthening regional cooperation in the Mekong through the engagement of Singapore as an important cooperating partner. This partnership comes at a timely moment, as the Mekong region continues to navigate increasingly complex and interconnected challenges driven by climate change, extreme weather events, infrastructure developments, and growing pressure on water resources - all of which are affecting our river systems and communities.

The MRC warmly welcomes the MoU with Singapore as it recognises the immense value and importance of building shared prosperity through regional cooperation with non-riparian Member States. The challenges that we face today in the Mekong River are transboundary and require multi-faceted approaches and solutions to sustainable water resources management in the Mekong River Basin.

This partnership reflects a broader and shared understanding that the future of the Mekong is not shaped by riparian countries alone. Singapore's experience

and technical strength will bring fresh perspectives and innovation that can help us tackle shared challenges and build more resilient water systems in the future.

More importantly, this partnership comes at a timely juncture as the MRC is beginning to implement its Strategic Plan 2026-2030. The MOU is well aligned with our key priorities, particularly in strengthening data, monitoring, and predictive capabilities for decision support, advancing coordinated river basin management, and further leveraging partnerships and knowledge exchange to respond to emerging basin challenges.

In this regard, cooperation on satellite and geospatial technologies is of particular importance. Strengthening climate monitoring, disaster risk management, and early warning systems remains a critical priority for the MRC and its Member Countries, especially in light of the increasing intensity and frequency of floods and droughts in the Mekong Basin. Singapore's capabilities in this area can help further enhance our ability to generate timely, reliable, and actionable information to support preparedness and response at the national and regional levels.

At the same time, collaboration in the area of agriculture and economic resilience will support the Mekong region's adaptation to changing climate conditions. Through knowledge exchange and applied research, including on climate-resilient and drought-tolerant crops, this partnership can contribute to improving productivity and strengthening livelihoods, particularly for communities across the Basin.

Beyond this, the partnership also provides meaningful opportunities for exchange on water governance and sustainable water management. These efforts can contribute to the MRC's ongoing work under the Strategic Plan to strengthen coordinated river basin management and promote more sustainable and resilient water use across sectors.

Additionally, this partnership formalizes ongoing cooperation with Singapore institutions, including agencies such as National Space Agency of Singapore, under a more coherent and structured framework. This will allow us to better align existing and future initiatives, and to further strengthen collaboration in a more strategic and coordinated manner.

Your Excellency, colleagues, ladies and gentlemen,

I am particularly pleased that today's signing also underscores an important dimension of regional cooperation that challenges of the Mekong River Basin require not only strong collaboration among riparian countries, but also meaningful engagement with regional partners such as Singapore, a prominent

player in ASEAN. It also strengthening cooperation between the MRC and Singapore.

We therefore look forward to working closely with the Singapore Ministry of Foreign Affairs and relevant Singapore institutions to translate this partnership into practical cooperation and concrete outcomes, in close collaboration with the MRC Member Countries. Please rest assured of the MRC's commitment to work with Singapore on this path as we look forward to building on this foundation and advancing this partnership in the years ahead.

In closing, Excellency, please accept once again our sincere appreciation to Singapore for your continued support and engagement with the Mekong sub-region through the MRC.

Thank you very much.