



***The First MRC Summit
3-5 April 2010
Hua Hin, Prachuapkhirikhan Province, Thailand***

**Statement by H.E.Mr Bouasone Bouphavanh
Prime Minister of the Lao PDR
at the First MRC Summit, Hua Hin, Thailand, 05 April 2010**

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- Mr. Chairman,
- Dear Leaders,
- Distinguished Guests,

At the outset, I would like to express my high appreciation to the Chair as well as the Government and the people of the Kingdom of Thailand for hosting the first MRC Summit in this beautiful city of Hua Hin. I would also like to thank the Royal Thai Government for the warm hospitality extended to me and my delegation during our participation in this Summit meeting. In this connection, I stand ready to offer my cooperation to ensure the brilliant success of the Summit meeting.

- Mr. Chairman,

Over the past 15 years, the Mekong River Commission has gained remarkable achievements in contributing to fostering development, strengthening relations, deepening mutual understanding, bolstering mutual cooperation and adopting a common approach towards sharing the wealth of the River among the Mekong Basin countries.

In parallel to the dynamic and outstanding development of the Mekong River Basin countries, the MRC has engaged developed nations namely Japan, India, China, USA and perhaps in the future, the involvement of Russia and other international organizations into the Mekong River Basin development scheme in accordance with the existing agreed cooperation frameworks such as: Mekong-Ganga Cooperation, Mekong-Japan, Lower Mekong-USA, GMS-China, and ASEAN Mekong River Basin Development Cooperation (AMBDC).

Therefore, the Mekong River Basin has become a strategic area, both in economic and security terms because apart from ensuring the well-being of the peoples living along the Basin region, it also provides a new alternative for land communication across the Mekong River Basin countries linking the Andaman Sea and the South China Sea without passing through the Malacca Straits.

- Distinguished Guests,

This Summit constitutes a historic landmark meeting as it is taking place amid our world facing crisis and numerous challenges on socio-economic and environmental fronts. Over the past years, many regions across the planet have been hit by devastating natural calamities such as: earthquake, typhoon, heavy snowfall, flooding, drought and others causing property and human life casualties to the detriment of millions of peoples worldwide. In this respect, our Mekong region has also not been spared from the scourge of global climate change. Variable weather conditions like irregular rainfall, abnormal low or high temperature, drought and others facing by us are all subject to extreme ecosystem.

For this reason, apart from commemorating the 15th Anniversary of the Mekong Cooperation Agreement, our Summit Meeting should also take stock of past achievements made in our multi-faceted cooperation including environment protection, promotion of best practices and settlement of negative phenomena while dealing with challenges that could lead to environmental degradation in the Mekong River Basin.

- Mr. Chairman,

The Mekong River Basin as part of the global river basin is endowed with rich ecosystem, diverse geography and natural beauty, being the birthplace of biodiversity and a wide range of water animals as well as a source of living for millions of peoples having rich, unique and interesting civilization and culture. Given such a wealth, the Mekong River Basin has thus become a major tourist destination attracting worldwide attention and significant number of tourist arrivals annually. Therefore, it is imperative for us to preserve and protect the healthy ecosystem of the Mekong River Basin aimed at ensuring the benefit of the people in the region from the utilization and sustainable development of the Mekong River Basin.

- Distinguished Guests,

Apart from the cooperation among the MRC Member Countries, our Mekong River Commission has also expanded cooperation with dialogue partners and other development partners with a view to ensuring sustainable and highly efficient water resource utilization and management. In this regard, I wish to commend our dialogue partners namely the People's Republic of China and the Union of Myanmar for their cooperation and their willingness to further intensify their collaboration with the MRC, in particular in meteorological and hydrological information sharing and cooperation in water navigation in the upper reaches of the Mekong River Basin as well as their contribution to the MRC's multi-dimensional activities and meetings. In addition, I would also like to thank our development partners for their highly efficient cooperation and assistance, especially in the implementation of various MRC's programs such as: capacity-building for the National Mekong Committee Secretariat staff in terms of technical expertise, legislation formulation and others in order to enhance their efficiency on water resource management. These cooperation and assistance have elevated the capacity of the State Parties in running the MRC on their own and fostering the Organization's capability to become financially-independent by 2030.

- Mr. Chairman,

In light of the current environmental crisis that we are now facing, the MRC should have a more important role to play in dealing with and mitigating the impact of the crisis. The MRC should remain an efficient international organization in doing its work and having the technical expertise that could meet the needs of the member countries in different fields related to water resource utilization and sustainable development of the Mekong River Basin. The MRC should have a far-sighted vision and clear-cut strategy aimed at bringing about tangible benefit to the member countries and contributing to the international endeavor in environmental protection and sustainable development. Furthermore, the Organization should also ensure sustained sources of financing to satisfy the needs for the fulfillment of its mandate.

To achieve the said target, member countries shall further step up joint cooperation based on the agreed principles outlined in the Mekong Agreement focusing on sustainable Mekong Basin development and attaining the MRC vision of “ an economically prosperous, socially just and environmentally sound Mekong River Basin”. Furthermore, the collaboration of the dialogue partners and other development partners including international and regional organizations are deemed essential for regional water resource utilization and management, and for the implementation of different measures as stipulated in the Hua Hin Declaration. In this regard, I strongly hope that the MRC will be able to enjoy your continued cooperation and assistance so that we can altogether achieve our common goal which is global environment protection and sustainable development.

I am confident that in the spirit of sincere mutual cooperation of all stakeholders, we will succeed in everything. In conclusion, I wish the Summit Meeting a brilliant success.

I thank you.