

# THE SECOND MEKONG RIVER COMMISSION SUMMIT

*Ho Chi Minh, April 2014*

**2<sup>nd</sup> MRC Summit (Plenary)**

**5<sup>th</sup> April 2014, Ho Chi Minh city, Viet Nam**

*Excellencies Heads of Government of Mekong River Commission Countries,*

*Excellency Union Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar,*

*Excellency Minister of Water Resources of the People's Republic of China,  
Distinguished Representatives of Development Partners and Observers,  
Distinguished Delegates,*

It is indeed my great honour to represent the Prime Minister of Thailand in this Second MRC Summit in Ho Chi Minh City.

I wish to thank the Government of Vietnam for the kind hospitality. I also thank the MRC CEO and his team for their hard work.

Four years ago, Leaders from the four MRC countries met for the first time at the Summit level in Hua Hin, Thailand, to affirm, at the highest level, their common political will to promote sustainable development, utilization, conservation and management of the Mekong River and its related resources.

Today, four years later and almost 20 years after the establishment of the MRC in 1995, we should seize the opportunity of this Second Summit not only to reaffirm but also to reinvigorate our political commitment. We should also be forward-looking in providing strategic vision and guidance to the future development of the MRC.

I wish to welcome the participation of the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Myanmar and the Minister of Water Resources of China. The participation by Myanmar and China at the full ministerial level in this Summit goes a long way to underline the importance that both countries have attached to partnership with the MRC countries.

The Summit today is both timely and significant - not only for our Mekong Sub-region, but also for the wider region as a whole.

With our efforts over the year through closer integration and connectivity, the Mekong Sub-region is now becoming a new growth center of the emerging ASEAN Community and the fast integrating East Asian economies.

Indeed, as we look ahead, there are enormous potentials for this Sub-region. And yet we also face many challenges that are trans-boundary in nature, in particular our increased vulnerability to the effects of climate change.

In dealing with these common challenges, we need to forge a sense of unity and common purpose among all riparian states of the Mekong River.

And this should be the spirit that guides the MRC work into its third decade.

Looking ahead, permit me to share with the meeting four points that, in Thailand's view, would be key challenges for the MRC countries.

First, we need to redouble our joint effort to achieve sustainable development and green growth for the Mekong Sub-region.

This effort is more urgent than ever, as we seek to address the impacts of climate change and seek ways to achieve sustainable, green and inclusive growth.

The vulnerability of Asia, including the Lower Mekong Basin, to impacts of climate change is also underlined in the recently released UN report a few days ago.

This UN report highlights a crucial point that, although national climate change adaptation plans have been formulated in all four Lower Mekong Basin countries, trans-boundary adaptation planning across these countries does not exist to date. We should therefore do more to enhance our joint preparedness, mitigation and adaptation capacity.

We need more investment in green technology and environmentally-friendly development, while making sure that the drive for more economic growth would not put too much pressure on the fragile environment.

Our efforts should also be in line with the ongoing discussion in the UN about the Post-2015 Development Agenda, in particular the Sustainable Development Goals.

Second, we need to ensure a better balance between water, food and energy security, as the demand keeps rising and the pressure increases on the limited resources.

We must be mindful of the fact that certain major development projects, especially infrastructure projects, within our borders can have implications beyond our borders. Therefore, we need to work together through the spirit of consultation and community to address possible negative trans-boundary impacts, especially on the environment and the societies that depend on the Mekong River for their livelihoods.

We should expedite the completion of the study on sustainable management and development of the Mekong River Basin, including the impacts of mainstream hydropower projects or the Council Study.

The Council Study will further enhance the ability of the MRC member countries' decision making in process by providing the technical and scientific-based factors of water resources development, including trans-boundary impacts.

Third, we need to do more to enhance coherence among various frameworks dealing with development of the Mekong Sub-region and to close the capacity gap among the MRC countries through multi-stakeholder partnership.

We should work closer with our development partner and find ways to better synergize the MRC works with those being done under other frameworks, such as the Greater Mekong Sub-region or GMS, the Mekong-Japan, the Mekong-Republic of Korea, and the Lower Mekong Initiative, to increase capacity building of the MRC countries.

We should further strengthen coordination and sharing of best practices between the MRC and ASEAN as well as other international river commissions, while stepping up our engagements

with the civil society and the private sector.

Last but not least, we should push ahead with reforming of the MRC, taking into account the changing Mekong landscape.

As part of the reform, every effort should be made to make the MRC more efficient and cost-effective in its integrated water resources management to ensure sustainable use of water, food and energy resources.

And for this reform to be successful, all MRC countries need to work together in common purpose and concerted action.

Guided by the greater sense of ownership, I am sure that we would be able to realize our goal of the MRC being fully self-financed and to further increase the pool of personnel from the MRC countries in the Secretariat

The MRC must look ahead and set a clear direction, identify new opportunities and address challenges in coming up with the next strategic plan to engage more meaningfully not only with development partners but also all other stakeholders, especially the civil society.

Thank you.