

Opening Remarks
Samdech Hun Sen
Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Cambodia
At the 3rd Mekong River Commission Summit
Topic: "Enhancing Joint Efforts and Partnerships Towards the
Achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals in the Mekong River
Basin"
Siem Reap, 05th April 2018
ប្រជុំប្រតិភូក្រុមប្រឹក្សាមេគង្គ ០៥ មេសា ២០១៨

- *Excellencies Heads of Government from the MRC Member Countries,*
- *Excellencies Representatives of the MRC Dialogue and Development Partners,*
- *Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen!*

First of all, I would like to warmly welcome **Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen** to the 3rd Mekong River Commission Summit in Siem Reap, the land endowed with ancient temples and wonder of Cambodia, under the theme **"Enhancing Joint Efforts and Partnerships towards the Achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals in the Mekong River Basin"**.

Once again, today's summit is a historic event and important meeting for us to review the progress as well as to set and put forward future strategic direction so as to ensure that MRC could better and more effectively perform its mandate and mission towards the sustainable development of the Mekong River Basin.

- *Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,*

Overall, I am of the view that our cooperation under the MRC framework has made dynamic progress in promoting socio-economic development and improving the sustainable water resource management, especially protecting the ecological balance of the Mekong River Basin. In fact, for the last 4 years we have made significant progress and achievements that we could be proud of. In the planning and strategic framework, we adopted the **Basin Development Strategy** based on the **Integrated Water Resource Management (IWRM) Principle 2016-2020** and **MRC Strategic Plan 2016-2020**. At the same time, we also approved many other sectoral strategies such as **Mekong Adaption Strategy and Action Plan for Climate Change and Basin-wide Fisheries Management and Development Strategy**.

On the implementation, I would like to commend and greatly appreciate the MRC's institutional reform; especially the approval and implementation of new structure of the MRC's Secretariat which creates a useful platform for continuing cooperation including the agreement on the national contribution formula towards MRC's self-

sustainability by year 2030. I also would like to express my congratulations for the enhanced cooperation and relations with Dialogue Partners and Development Partners as well as international and regional organizations in sharing information and technical assistance that is providing many essential benefits for the public.

The achievements mentioned above would not be made if there were no active contribution, productive participation and full and effective support from the MRC Member Countries, MRC Governance Bodies, MRC Secretariat, Dialogue Partners, and Development Partners, International and Regional Organizations as well as other cooperative partners. I would like to take this opportunity, on behalf of MRC and the MRC Member Countries, to express our sincere thanks and special appreciation to all of these MRC Partners, for having joined and financially and technically supported our shared responsibility for the common interest of sustainable development and effective management of the Mekong River Basin.

- *Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen!*

Mekong River is the source of sustainable life and development of the riparian countries. However, at the same time we also acknowledge that the Basin continues facing some challenges such as population growth, rapid development and the increasing need for water, food and energy security in the riparian countries. In addition, the impact of climate change becomes more obvious from year-to year. This tendency will pose further threats on the Mekong River system, particularly on its resources and sustainability; thus our common mandate and goal are to ensure that the benefits provided by the Mekong for the riparian countries would be sustained for the future generations.

In this context, as future direction in addressing all of these challenges and related risks in a comprehensive and effective way, I am of the view that the MRC member countries should focus our efforts on the following tasks:

1. Continue promoting and strengthening mechanisms for coordination and development of sustainable water and related-resources for the interest of the member countries and peoples' well-beings;
2. Continue giving priority to addressing key challenges related with the sustainability of the Mekong Basin such as waste and environmental management, environmental impact arising from climate change, river water contamination and utilization, and other project management related to the sustainability of Mekong Basin and biodiversity;
3. Continue formulating practical measures and action plan in respond to floods and drought and encourage the harmonization of regional infrastructure development;

4. Continue strengthening human resource and institutional capacity on cross-border cooperation among the member countries; especially for effective and efficient implementation of the laid-out plans and strategies;
5. Continue promoting greater spirit of Mekong cooperation in partnership as well as to enhancing closer cooperation with regional and international mechanisms towards the achievement of the sustainable development goals in the Mekong River Basin.

- ***Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,***

As one of the MRC Member Countries, I would like to reiterate Cambodia's commitment in working together with all Mekong riparian countries and other Mekong Partners in strengthening regional cooperation and partnership for the sustainable development and growth in the Mekong River Basin.

I firmly believe that with stronger spirit of cooperation, friendship and solidarity with greater mutual trust and shared responsibility for the joint prosperous future, as well as on the principles of mutually beneficial relations among the member countries together with the continuity of full support and effective cooperation and contribution from our Mekong Partners, we will be able to make further significant progress with more dynamic paces for the sustainable social progress and economic prosperity of the Mekong River Basin for both the present and the future.

In the spirit of cooperation and responsibility for our prosperous and sustainable future in the Mekong River Basin under the slogan **"One Mekong, One Spirit"**, I would like now to declare the opening of the 3rd MRC Summit under the theme **"Enhancing Joint Efforts and Partnership towards the Achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals in the Mekong River Basin"**.

Thank you.