



Remarks

By

Samdech Techo HUN SEN

Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Cambodia

At 4th Mekong River Commission (MRC) Summit

Vientiane, Lao PDR, 5th April 2023



- *Excellency Sonexay Siphandone, Prime Minister of the Lao PDR and the Chair of the 4th MRC Summit;*
- *Excellencies Leaders of the MRC Member Countries;*
- *Excellencies Representatives of Dialogue and Development Partners;*
- *Excellencies, Ladies, Gentlemen!*

Today, I am pleased to attend the 4th Mekong River Commission (MRC) Summit under the theme: **“Innovation and Cooperation for a Water Secure and Sustainable Mekong”**. I would like to take this opportunity to commend the Government of the Lao PDR, for hosting such a well-organized Summit and related Meetings, and for the warm hospitality to the Cambodian delegation.

At the same time, I am proud of the great progress of our Mekong cooperation, in which our countries have been effectively working together, and with other cooperation partners—including dialogue partners such as China and Myanmar, and other frameworks of Mekong-related cooperation mechanisms such as the Mekong-Lancang, Mekong-Japan and Mekong-Korea Cooperation, the Mekong-US and Mekong-India Partnership, as well as many other relevant partners—to continue promoting sustainable development and common prosperity within the Mekong region.

I would also like to take this opportunity to commend MRC’s excellent working progress, and the update of the new Basin Development Strategy 2021-2030 to respond more effectively to the growing needs for development and recent challenges, in order to promote sustainable development, and maintain the sustainability of the Mekong River Basin for the benefits of our economies, social environments and climate resilience.

- *Excellency Chair, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen!*

Achieving sustainable water, food and energy security is our top-priority agenda and goal to promote sustainable development within the Mekong region, and for each country along the river. Particularly, the sustainability of the Mekong River is at the heart of our attentions and concerns. Due to rapid economic developments, demand of water from the Mekong has surged, and this trend will continue in the future. All these factors,

combined with climate change and its emerging risks and impacts, beg for our greater attention to working together in a more effective, cooperative and timely manner.

Meanwhile, we also recognize that the Mekong and the resources within the basin are natural assets of great value. They are vital to the economic growth and well-being of countries and people in the basin, both in the past and present, and will continue to be so in the future. Since the Mekong River has faced with various ever-changing challenges, it is imperative for the Mekong countries to increase joint efforts and responsibilities more effectively. We must avoid overusing the basin's resources, which could lead to their permanent loss. We must further strengthen regional cooperation and partnerships, and make every effort together to ensure that the Mekong is a river with a brighter and more prosperous common future, benefiting all countries along the river and all the people living in the entire basin.

At the same time, I would like to encourage the MRC to increase its efforts to develop a comprehensive and inclusive development plan for the Mekong River Basin that should be effectively and proactively implemented and managed. We should also promote innovation in technique and technology through collaboration as a single driving force to achieve the development goals, and the resilient and sustainable management of the Mekong River Basin.

In addition to overall development work, the MRC must continue to promote better cooperation with MRC Member Countries and all cooperation partners. This will enhance the effectiveness of implementing the existing Mekong Agreement, the Basin Development Strategy 2021-2030, the Strategic Plan 2021-2025, as well as the Vientiane Joint Declaration of the 4th MRC Summit, that will be adopted shortly. These efforts will promote socio-economic development and ensure the balance of development and sustainability of the Mekong River Basin, while avoiding the loss of the Mekong River resources. In addition to the overall development work, we have another important task that we should pay attention to, namely the underwater unexploded ordnance (UXO) left over in the Mekong River from wars. We need to search and destroy all those ordnances for the safety of our people.

Cambodia highly appreciates the continued cooperation and support of Mekong Partners, including dialogue and development partners, who have contributed to the MRC in realizing many great achievements and successes so far. I sincerely hope and believe that the Mekong Partners will continue to support and work with the Mekong Countries through continued cooperation, joint efforts and partnerships, so that the MRC as well as the Mekong Countries can realize the above objectives.

Cambodia is highly committed to advancing our cooperation fully and effectively to bring about greater successes to all member countries and relevant stakeholders, so that we can turn challenges into opportunities for accelerating socio-economic development, and ensuring the sustainability of the Mekong River for the common future.

Finally, I would like to wish **Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen** good health and successes in all your endeavors, and wish the 4th Mekong River Commission Summit a success.

Thank You!