

Statement by H.E. Mr. Nguyen Tan Dung Prime Minister of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam

**MRC Summit, Hua Hin, Thailand,
5th April 2010**

**Excellency Prime Minister Abhisit Vejjajiva, Chair of the Summit,
Excellencies Prime Minister Hun Sen and Prime Minister Bouasone Bouphavanh,
Excellencies Minister of Foreign Affairs of Myanmar and Vice-Minister of Foreign
Affairs of China,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

I am honoured to represent the Government and people of Viet Nam to join other Leaders of the Mekong River Commission (MRC) member countries and representatives of partners, including China and Myanmar, at the First Summit of the Commission on the 15th anniversary of signing of the Agreement on the Cooperation for the Sustainable Development of the Mekong River Basin and the establishment of the Mekong River Commission. I would like to thank Prime Minister Abisit Vejjajiva and the Royal Government of the Kingdom of Thailand for the wonderful hospitality and excellent arrangement for this Summit.

Viet Nam welcomes the organisation of the International Conference on Transboundary Water Resources Management prior to the Summit that produced many important assessments and recommendations. The broad participation of representatives from Governments, business and academic circles and non-governmental organisations testified to the regional and international attention paid to the sustainable development of the Mekong river basin.

Excellencies,

The 1995 Mekong Agreement and the establishment of the Mekong River Commission opened up a new chapter in Mekong cooperation. The Agreement provides strategic visions and fundamental principles for the equitable and reasonable use of water and related resources in the Mekong Basin. It identifies key cooperation areas and rules for the common development in the basin. The past fifteen years have shown that the Mekong Agreement reflects the trend of cooperation among peoples living in the basin and has thus been strongly supported by the international community.

Viet Nam is rejoiced at the significant results we have achieved in implementing the Mekong Agreement, including the approval of a set of the Rules for water use, formulation of basin development strategies along with cooperation programmes in hydro-power, fishery, navigation and flood management. We have also strengthened the Commission's institutions and gathered valuable information which set a platform for the formulation of the Basin's long-term development strategies. These achievements have contributed considerably to socio-economic development, environmental protection and improvement of the livelihood of over 60 million habitants of the basin and helped promote friendship among riparian countries.

What we have accomplished so far is attributable to the close cooperation between MRC member states, the support and assistance of the international community and efforts of

the MRC Secretariat. I take this opportunity to express Vietnam's appreciation for the cooperation of our dialogue partners China and Myanmar as well as our international partners for their effective support.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Pleased with our achievements, we also acknowledge the daunting challenges the Mekong River Basin was and is facing. The fast and dynamic development in the basin is putting more pressure on natural resources, especially water. Moreover, the adverse and unpredictable impacts of climate change and environmental degradation are also presenting more than apparent.

Against that background, I endorse the vision and priorities set out in the draft Declaration on "Meeting the Needs, Striking the Balance: Towards Sustainable Development of the Mekong River Basin". I do, at the same time, suggest that special attention must be paid to the following:

First, accelerate the implementation of the IWRM-based Basin Development Strategy.

Second, study and formulate basin-wide climate change scenarios in order to work out a joint response plan. To that end, I propose to organise an international seminar on impacts of climate change on the Mekong River.

Third, continue improving the legal framework and establish mechanisms to coordinate the implementation of the procedures for water use that have been adopted and finalise the Procedures for Water Quality.

Fourth, strengthen the personnel and institutional capacity of the MRC and ensure that necessary facilities are provided.

In relation to China and Myanmar, our dialogue partners, we wish to upgrade our cooperation, in the immediate by conducting joint research, increasing information exchange and developing appropriate mechanisms for this collaboration, promoting our economic, trade, scientific and technological cooperation through the implementation of joint programmes and projects. Viet Nam appreciates China's recent provision of hydrological data during this dry season which enable lower-Mekong countries to better assess the current flow of the Mekong River.

Viet Nam shares the common wish of other MRC members that China and Myanmar will consider positively their early application to the MRC so as to ensure close cooperation among all Mekong riparian countries for the sustainable and responsible use of water resources for our common prosperity.

With regards to our development partners, we hope to receive further assistance, particularly in finance and technology, to help implement priority areas as defined in the Summit Declaration and the Basin Strategic Plan 2011-2015 of the MRC.

This year, Viet Nam will host the East Asia Ministers' Meeting on Climate Change and the ASEAN Environment Ministers' Meeting. At those meetings, we wish to discuss with other partners ways and means to promote Mekong's sustainable development.

Ladies and gentlemen,

The Mekong plays a vital role in the social and economic development of Viet Nam. The Mekong Delta is the rice bowl of Vietnam, also a major production base of other agricultural produce and aqua-products, contributing to food security of Viet Nam and other countries in and beyond the region. As the most downstream country, Viet Nam is

experiencing clearly the changes of the Mekong caused by natural phenomena and man-made activities. In this dry season, Viet Nam and its Mekong Delta in particular are suffering from the dual impacts of the most serious ever droughts and sea-water intrusion, badly affecting the livelihood of millions of people as well as agricultural production and fishery.

Viet Nam places on the top the importance of the Mekong cooperation and always actively and constructively engages in all MRC activities. We are strongly committed to collaborating with other countries to realise the visions of the MRC, fully implementing the Mekong Agreement, strengthening cooperation with the strategic partners and continuing to bring into full play the "Mekong spirit" to ensure the Mekong River a river of not only the cultural connectivity, solidarity, friendship but also the river of regional cooperation, development and integration.

**Excellencies,
Ladies and gentlemen,**

With a view to garner the support of other Southeast Asian countries given the significance of Mekong cooperation, Viet Nam as ASEAN Chair has the honour to cordially invite Excellency Prime Minister of Thailand to brief the 16th ASEAN Summit of the outcomes of this First MRC Summit.

I wish our meeting every success and look forward to welcoming all of you to the Second MRC Summit to be held in Viet Nam in 2014. I wish you all good health and happiness.

Thank you.