

PLENERY REMARKS

By H.E. General Prayut Chan-o-cha

Prime Minister of Thailand

At the 3rd Mekong River Commission Summit

5 April 2018

Siem Reap, Cambodia

Your Excellencies the Prime Ministers of MRC Member States

Your Excellency the Minister of Water Resources of the People's Republic of China

Your Excellency the Minister of Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar,

Distinguished Participants and Observers,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

1. First of all, I wish to sincerely thank the Government of Cambodia for the warm welcome and for hosting the meeting today. I am highly pleased to be attending this Summit Meeting alongside fellow leaders of Lower Mekong Basin countries.

2. In the past two summit meetings, leaders of member states affirmed our intention to implement the Agreement on the Cooperation for the Sustainable Development of the Mekong Basin signed in 1995 and today we gather here to reaffirm this commitment for the future.

3. I would like to commend the progress and the success of the tasks undertaken by the MRC through our joint efforts, including the reform of the organization and its financial system. Thailand hopes that the organization will further develop its effectiveness to more fully meet the demands of maintaining a balanced ecosystem in the Mekong River and to tackle the challenges of development in various spheres.

4. Therefore, I wish to propose the direction for our future cooperation under the MRC to handle challenges in the 3 following areas:

5. **First**, our policy for cooperation in developing the Mekong Region.

6. Thailand emphasizes the importance of cooperation in the management of water resources for the sustainable development of the Mekong Basin, especially the handling of natural

disasters that cause the consistent damage and destruction of lives and property in the region as well as preparing ourselves for the adaptation to climate change.

7. Thailand is implementing a principle and philosophy for the sustainable water resources management in line with the theory espoused by His Majesty the Late King Bhumibol Adulyadej. This theory serves as the framework and strategy for the long-term management of the country's water resources to comprehensively solve water resources issues in accordance with the 20 years National Strategy, the National Reform Plan and the UN 2030 Agenda. Such an approach systematically integrates our solutions to the problems of drought, floods and waste water by taking into account all stakeholders, including responsibility for the vulnerable people, in order to handle issues directly affecting the public.

8. Under this direction for development, Thailand is ready to provide its support to the MRC's Member Countries in managing water resources and related resources for a Mekong Basin that is prosperous and sustainable.

9. **Second**, advancing our efforts to moving forward the Mekong River into a river of prosperity, connectivity and sustainability.

10. Thailand is well aware that, though development projects in the Mekong Basin can bring about benefits in many areas, they can lead to unintended effects on our natural resources, the environment and the ecosystem. Therefore, the development of water resources and related resources must uphold the principles of sustainable development in tandem with maintaining the balance between the ecosystem and local way of life. In Thailand's own case, we have a clear goal of elevating the development level of the Northeast through the effective management of water resources.

11. Thailand wishes to see greater linkages between the MRC and the MLC, GMS as well as other related frameworks through close coordination and integrated action through the exchange of information, data and our knowledge base in a systematic manner. This will be of direct benefit to the people in our region and lead to genuine sustainable development in the Mekong Basin.

12. **Third**, developing the MRC's roles.

13. Thailand focuses on the importance of the MRC's role in supporting the management of water and related resources in the region and in handling the effects of climate change. We therefore encourage the MRC to transform its studies and knowledge base into a tangible plan of action and to persist in its efforts to become "the Knowledge and Information Hub of the Sub-region".

Thank you