



**Greater Mekong Subregion  
FOURTH ENVIRONMENT MINISTERS' MEETING  
Nay Pyi Taw, Republic of the Union of Myanmar  
29 January 2015**

**JOINT MINISTERIAL STATEMENT**

1. We, Environment Ministers from the six Greater Mekong Subregion (GMS) countries, namely the Kingdom of Cambodia, the People's Republic of China, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Republic of the Union of Myanmar, Kingdom of Thailand, and the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam, hereby join forces to pledge our support to increase investments in natural capital/resources in order to promote inclusive and sustainable development in the GMS.
2. We also wish to reaffirm commitments expressed in previous Joint Ministerial Statements, notably to:
  - intensify our cooperation to sustainably manage and conserve our individual and shared natural resources the (1<sup>st</sup> Environment Ministers' Meeting (EMM), 2005);
  - support the vision of a *poverty-free and ecologically rich GMS* and its realization through the efficient and effective implementation of the GMS Core Environment Program (2<sup>nd</sup> EMM, 2008); and
  - develop a green, inclusive, and balanced economy through effective mainstreaming of the environment into the GMS Strategic Framework 2012–2022. (3<sup>rd</sup> EMM, 2011).
3. We recognize that our collective efforts through the GMS Economic Cooperation Program to date have significantly boosted prosperity, reduced poverty, and contributed significantly towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals. Looking to the future, developments such as Myanmar's full integration into the regional economy, the realization of an ASEAN Economic Community, and maturing trade and investment frameworks between ASEAN and the People's Republic of China present enormous opportunities to further enhance prosperity for all people in the GMS.
4. The 5<sup>th</sup> GMS Summit held in Bangkok in December 2014 provided clear and pragmatic guidance on the way forward under the GMS Economic Cooperation Program. Our leaders stated that it is imperative to align the GMS vision of greater connectivity, competitiveness and community with national development strategies and build an open economy featuring integrated, innovative and interconnected development in order to attain mutual benefits, and to ensure that future development is inclusive and sustainable. In this connection they recognized that the Regional Investment Framework (RIF) Implementation Plan (IP, 2014 - 2018) provides a strategic and results-based action plan



to help address many of the challenges and to seize new opportunities for sustaining GMS cooperation and development.

5. They also noted, however, that rapid economic and population growth have increased the demand for energy, land, water and other resources and that the region and its people are highly vulnerable to climate change and increased risk of natural disasters. Concerted efforts are needed, including through regional cooperation, to mitigate these impacts and to promote sustainable development.
6. The leaders further stated that the success of all efforts, particularly the realization of the priority projects in the RIF IP (2014 - 2018), crucially depends on the support of development partners, the business sector, and many other stakeholders. Our leaders agreed to endeavor to find ways to strengthen partnerships and ensure that financial and other resources are sufficient to realize the collective commitment to inclusive and sustainable development in the GMS.
7. Guided by the Declaration of the 5<sup>th</sup> GMS Summit, we pledge our support to ensuring the effective implementation of the RIF IP (2014 – 2018) with the view to achieving inclusive and sustainable development for all people in the GMS. The RIF IP (2014 – 2018) represents an investment pipeline of over \$30 billion that will further enhance the subregion’s physical capital, by supporting infrastructure development; its human capital, by supporting institutional and capacity development; and its social capital, by supporting a greater shared sense of a community. In this context we recognize the importance of also investing in the subregion’s natural capital/resources in order to harness the full potential of the RIF IP (2014 – 2018).
8. We recognize that the natural capital/resources lie at the heart of economic development, underpins inclusive and sustainable development and sustains the livelihoods and wellbeing of all people in the GMS, especially the rural poor. Future prosperity of the GMS will depend on timely and effective investments made to protect and enhance natural capital/resources. In supporting the RIF IP (2014 – 2018), we consider it important to work across all sectors to ensure that the sound management of natural capital/resources is addressed at all levels of development planning and investment decision-making. To do so, we need to better understand the status and trends of natural capital/resources and the ecosystem services they generate, determine their value in both economic and non-economic terms, and reflect these values in public and private investment decisions. We also need to apply strategic planning and risk assessment tools, along with approaches such as climate vulnerability assessments, strategic environmental assessments, and multi-criteria analyses for multi-sectoral planning.



9. We reiterate the declaration by our Leaders that this requires the collective efforts of our governments working closely together, as well as with other GMS stakeholders. In this regard, guided by the Declaration of the 5<sup>th</sup> GMS Summit, we will aspire to strengthen partnerships between our countries, development partners, the business sector, and other stakeholders to ensure that we secure the necessary technical and financial resources to effectively support the inclusive and sustainable implementation of the RIF IP (2014 – 2018).
10. We welcome initiatives under the GMS Core Environment Program (CEP) to promote increased knowledge and financial investments to protect, maintain, and enhance our natural capital/resources. The Natural Capital Dialogue, and related events that preceded this 4<sup>th</sup> EMM, reflect this effort. Building on this momentum, we will endeavor to strengthen collaboration and cooperation to increase investments in support of inclusive and sustainable development of the GMS.
11. We encourage the Working Group on Environment and the Environment Operations Center, with the support of the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and development partners, to mobilize support and implement actions in the following areas over the period of the RIF IP (2014 – 2018):
  - raise awareness and understanding of the value of natural capital/resources in the subregion for inclusive and sustainable development;
  - coordinate initiatives and share knowledge on best practices in managing natural capital/resources;
  - develop tools and approaches to integrate sound environmental and natural resource management considerations in the RIF IP (2014-2018), and support their application in relevant policy, regulatory, investment, and safeguard systems; and
  - identify and leverage financing to support the above initiatives.
12. In line with priorities stipulated in the GMS Strategic Framework 2012 – 2022, we encourage the Working Group on Environment and the Environment Operations Center to effectively implement the four components of the Core Environment Program (CEP) Phase II with a focus on the following two priorities:
  - align ongoing and planned CEP initiatives with efforts to ensure inclusiveness and sustainability. in the design and implementation of projects under the RIF IP (2014 – 2018), by safeguarding the subregion’s natural capital/resources and associated ecosystem services; and
  - work more efficiently and effectively with other GMS working groups, development partners and stakeholders to operationalize the RIF IP.
13. We expect that the above measures will help protect and efficiently develop our subregion’s natural capital/resources and ensure that the GMS Economic Cooperation



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Program achieves the intended vision of inclusive and sustainable development for all people in the GMS.

14. Finally, we express our sincere appreciation to the Republic of the Union of Myanmar and its Ministry of Environmental Conservation and Forestry for hosting our meeting with such warm hospitality. We also express our gratitude to ADB and the GMS Environment Operations Center for their support in planning and organizing this meeting. We appreciate the ongoing support from the CEP co-financing partners: ADB, the governments of Finland and Sweden, the Nordic Development Fund, the *People's Republic of China Regional Cooperation and Poverty Reduction Fund*, and the Global Environment Facility.

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