

Joint Media Statement of the 8<sup>th</sup> Mekong-Japan Economic Ministers Meeting  
Vientiane, Lao PDR, 6<sup>th</sup> August, 2016

1. The 8<sup>th</sup> Mekong-Japan Economic Ministers Meeting was held in Vientiane, Lao PDR on 6<sup>th</sup> August 2016. The meeting was co-chaired by H.E. Khemmani Pholsena, Minister of Industry and Commerce, Lao PDR, and H.E. Hirofumi Katase Vice-Minister for International Affairs, Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry, Japan. It was also attended by Economic Ministers and Representatives from Cambodia, Myanmar, Thailand, and Viet Nam, as well as the Secretary-General of ASEAN, business representatives from Mekong countries and Japan, and President of Economic Research Institute for ASEAN and East Asia (ERIA).
2. ERIA raised recommendation from its report on the “Lao PDR at the Crossroads: Industrial Development Strategies 2016-2030” that Lao PDR can achieve further economic development with industrial policy measures turning the weakness of Lao PDR (i.e. 'land-locked' location) into its strength (i.e. 'land-linked' location), and expressed its intention to focus on supporting Lao government in implementing the industrial development strategies. The Ministers highly appreciated the continuous contribution to Mekong countries from ERIA, acknowledging the recommendation and the intention.
3. Business representatives reported the discussion in the 9<sup>th</sup> Mekong-Japan Industry and Government Dialogue. The Ministers appreciated the inputs, especially the suggestions that public and private sector should cooperate to;
  - a) Strengthen the regional competitiveness through partnering with neighboring countries,
  - b) Upgrade industrial structure through promoting research and development (R&D) by improving intellectual-property environment, strengthening small and medium enterprises (SMEs) etc., and
  - c) Improve regional connectivity through addressing human resource development, enhancing cross border flow of goods and persons, and the development of hard and soft infrastructure including railway and port development.
4. The Ministers adopted the Work Programme for steady implementation of the Mekong Industrial Development Vision (MIDV), which comprehensively compiles concrete cooperation projects of Mekong countries, Japan, and relevant organizations on various fields, such as supporting SMEs, human resource development, and soft and hard infrastructure development.
5. Towards the 9<sup>th</sup> Mekong-Japan Economic Ministers Meeting, the Ministers mandated AEM-METI Economic and Industrial Cooperation Committee's West-East Corridor Development Working Group (AMEICC WEC-WG) to ;
  - a) Update the progress of the Work Programme,
  - b) Monitor the progress of the MIDV and make necessary policy recommendations through implementation of the “Plan, Do, Check, and Action (PDCA)” mechanism.
6. The Ministers reaffirmed that the implementation of the Work Programme, proactive efforts of each member country, and collaboration with other Mekong wide cooperation such as CLMVT forum under the spirit of “Specialization and Collaboration” would help to realize GDP increase of USD 20 billion in Mekong sub-region by 2020, which is a proposed expected outcome of the MIDV. The Ministers agreed that these efforts to achieve the MIDV are to be reported to the 8<sup>th</sup> Mekong-Japan Summit.
7. The Ministers confirmed that the 9<sup>th</sup> Mekong-Japan Economic Ministers Meeting will be held back-to-back with the 49<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Economic Ministers Meeting in 2017 in the Philippines.

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### List of Ministers ( Tentative )

H.E. Pan Sorasak, Minister of Commerce, Cambodia

H.E. Khemmani Pholsena, Minister of Industry and Commerce, Lao PDR

H.E. Kyaw Win, Union Minister of Planning and Finance, Myanmar

Dr. Porametee Vimolsiri, Secretary-General of National Economic and Social Development Board, Thailand (representing Minister of Transport, Thailand)

H.E. Nguyen Cam Tu, Deputy Minister of Industry and Trade, Vietnam

H.E. Hirofumi Katase, Vice-Minister for International Affairs, Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry, Japan (representing Minister of Economy, Trade and Industry, Japan)

H.E. Le Luong Minh, Secretary-General of ASEAN