

**Joint Media Statement of the 9th Mekong-Japan Economic Ministers Meeting
Manila, Republic of the Philippines, 10th September, 2017**

1. The 9th Mekong - Japan Economic Ministers Meeting was held on 10th September 2017 in Manila, the Philippines (hereinafter, the Meeting). The Meeting was co-chaired by H.E. Dang Huy Dong, Deputy Minister of Planning and Investment, Viet Nam, and H.E. Hiroshige Seko, Minister of Economy, Trade and Industry, Japan. It was also attended by Economic Ministers and Representatives from Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, and Thailand as well as the Secretary-General of ASEAN, business representatives from Mekong countries and Japan.

2. The Ministers appreciated major achievements under each pillar of the Work Programme, namely the comprehensive list of cooperation projects by Mekong countries, Japan, and relevant organizations for steady implementation of the Mekong Industrial Development Vision (MIDV). Those achievements include company-led courses on food value chain development at major universities in Mekong countries, business delegations from Japan to Mekong countries, and the introduction of the Myanmar Automated Cargo Clearance System (MACCS) in Myanmar, etc. The Ministers showed their appreciation to relevant organizations and Japan for their support.

3. Business representatives reported the outcomes of the discussion at the 10th Mekong-Japan Industry and Government Dialogue held on 1st August 2017 in Bangkok, Thailand. The Ministers appreciated the inputs, especially the suggestions that public and private sector should cooperate to:

- a) Further upgrade the industrial structures and attract cutting-edge industries in the Mekong region;
- b) Strengthen competitiveness of provincial areas, contributing to market expansion and securing of ample labor forces in manufacturing industry;
- c) Further enhance cross-border trade including the implementation of smoother customs procedures at border check points, and improve logistics infrastructure; and,
- d) Advance human resources especially in the field of research and development (R&D) and small and medium enterprises (SMEs).

4. The Ministers noted the implementation progress of the MIDV through the "Plan, Do, Check, and Action (PDCA)" mechanism, including the progress, challenges, and necessary policy recommendations towards 2020. The Ministers also appreciated the "Connected Mekong Industrial Development" concept, comprising three components, namely, "Connected Industry," "Connected Logistics," and "Connected Human Resources" as a future direction for Mekong - Japan to be achieved through government - industry collaboration. The direction will help advance the four sub-pillars of the MIDV currently showing delay in progress, namely, a) Trade Structure, b) Regional Connectivity, c) R&D, and d) Competitive SMEs. In this context, the

Ministers reaffirmed that proactive efforts of member countries and support from Japan are crucial to promote government - private collaboration to realize the GDP increase of USD 20 billion in Mekong sub-region by 2020, a goal set forth in the MIDV.

5. The Ministers appreciated the concrete support from Japan in following themes to realize the “Connected Mekong Industrial Development” concept:

- a) Industrial structure upgrade(e.g. Internet of Things (IoT)), new industry nurturing, and economic competitiveness enhancement in provincial areas;
- b) Promoting quality infrastructure investment, and enhancing infrastructure connectivity; and,
- c) Industry-academia-government collaboration in HRD and IT capabilities of SMEs.

6. The Ministers confirmed that the 10th Mekong-Japan Economic Ministers Meeting will be held back-to-back with the 50th ASEAN Economic Ministers Meeting in 2018 in Singapore.



List of Ministers

- 1. H.E. Sok Sopheak, Under Secretary of State, Ministry of Commerce, Cambodia (representing H.E. Pan Sorasak, Minister of Commerce, Cambodia)
- 2. H.E. Hiroshige Seko, Minister of Economy, Trade and Industry, Japan.
- 3. H.E. Mrs. Khemmani Pholsena, Minister of Industry and Commerce, Lao PDR
- 4. H.E. U Kyaw Win, Union Minister for Planning and Finance, Myanmar
- 5. H.E. Arkhom Termittayapaisith, Minister of Transport, Thailand
- 6. H.E. Dang Huy Dong, Deputy Minister of Planning and Investment, Viet Nam
- 7. H.E. Le Luong Minh, Secretary-General of ASEAN
