

## COUNTRY STATEMENT

**By Dr. MOK Mareth  
Senior Minister and Minister**

Ministry of Environment of the Kingdom of Cambodia  
at the Second Greater Mekong Subregion (GMS) Environment Ministers' Meeting  
29 January 2008  
Vientiane, Lao People's Democratic Republic



*Her Excellency Mme. Khempheng Pholsena, Minister to the Prime Minister's Office,  
Head of Water Resource and Environment Administration of Lao PDR;*

*His Excellency Mr. Lawrence Greenwood, Vice President of the Asian Development  
Bank;*

*Mr. Surendra Shrestha, Regional Director and Representative of the UNEP for Asia  
and the Pacific;*

*Excellencies, Honored Guests, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen:*

I am very much honored to make this statement on behalf of the Ministry of Environment (MOE) of the Kingdom of Cambodia on the occasion of the Second Greater Mekong Subregion Environment Minister's Meeting in Vientiane of Lao People's Democratic Republic.

I wish to express my sincere thanks to the Water Resource and Environment Administration and the Government of Lao People's Democratic Republic for hosting this very important event, and I appreciate the excellent arrangement and very warm welcome and hospitality extended to us. I also would like to take this occasion to sincerely thank the Asian Development Bank for extending the invitation to us to gather over here.

The Greater Mekong Subregion is abundant in natural resources, a hydrological and healthy ecological system, wherein Cambodia is predominantly dependent on natural resources for socio-economic development such as forests, fertile soils, fisheries, water and mineral resources as well as biological diversity. However, the population growth and increasing demands have exerted pressure on these resources. In this regard, the country has been facing some developmental and environmental challenges. Amongst the national challenges to be dealt with, the significance and value of Tonle Sap Great Lake as a major source of livelihood/protein for millions of Cambodian, as a biosphere reserve and as a model for basin wide management approach for replication elsewhere need to be highlighted. The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) has been very supportive of the Royal Government of Cambodia's efforts in building human skills and capacities in our operating departments and we are also grateful to them for this support.

So far, the Royal Government of Cambodia has developed relevant laws, policies, strategies and plans to cope with the protection and management of natural resources for development of the socio-economy in a more sustainable way to meet people's needs and demands. This follows the economic policy agenda of the Political Platform and the "Rectangular Strategy for Growth, Employment, Equity and Efficiency in Cambodia". The Strategy led by **Samdech Akkeak Mahasenabadey**

***Decho HUN SEN, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Cambodia,*** also clearly recognizes the importance of international and regional cooperation and integration.

Cambodia recognizes the importance and significant progress of the GMS Economic Cooperation Program, which started in 1992. At the First GMS Environment Minister's Meeting organized in Shanghai, People's Republic of China in 2005, we endorsed the launching of the GMS Core Environment Program and Biodiversity Conservation Corridors Initiative (BCI) and the establishment of the Environment Operations Center (EOC). Since then, the Ministry of Environment has implemented the GMS CEP Components and achieved significant progress.

As a result, the Ministry of Environment has conducted in close collaboration with the Ministry of Tourism the rapid strategic environmental assessment in tourism sector in Cambodia following Component 1 of the CEP. Under the Component 2, two BCI pilot projects in "Cardamom Mountains and Eastern Plains of Cambodia" have been conducted with technical assistance for the first phase implementation. The Ministry of Environment and Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries are the two key ministries managing the biodiversity conservation and forestry activities along with other implementing partners and both have participated in the implementation of these initiatives. At present, we are carrying out the environmental performance assessment project under Component 3 with the support of UNEP, and a national inception workshop is being organized next month. National capacities and human resources development work have been carried out at various levels through the CEP. On this occasion, I would like to extend my deep appreciation to the GMS Working Group on Environment and Environment Operations Center for their excellent works under the Core Environmental Program and Biodiversity Conservation Corridors Initiative.

The GMS Core Environment Program continues to be recognized as a systematic and integrated approach to shaping the development direction of the region. This program has become a key building block for attaining the shared vision of an integrated, harmonious and prosperous sub-region.

***Excellencies, Honored Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen!***

While we have taken all of our efforts to follow the GMS Core Environment Program and Biodiversity Conservation Corridors Initiative, we wish to recommend the Working Group of Environment (WGE) to be proactive in relevant GMS sectoral working groups. We continue our support of the GMS Environment Operations Center's role in coordination and building on existing harmonized mechanism of subregional cooperation within the context of the ADB supported GMS Economic Cooperation Program. We enhance our proposed national mitigation and adaptation measures to follow the principles of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

We re-affirm our commitment to the core environment program and Biodiversity Conservation Corridors Initiative implementation. I hope that your presence and active participation today results in making this event lively, helpful, constructive and successful. Finally, I would like to thank once again the Water Resource and Environment Administration of Lao PDR and the ADB for successful organization of the event.

**Thank you for your attention.**