

Statement by the Head of Delegation of Myanmar  
H.E. U Nyunt Hlaing

At the GMS Environment Ministers Meeting

29 January 2008

Vientiane, Lao PDR

Mr. Chairman

Excellencies

Ladies and Gentlemen

On behalf of the Union of Myanmar, I would like to thank the Government of the Lao PDR for inviting us to Vientiane and generously hosting this GMS Environment Ministers Meeting. I also wish to express our deep appreciation to the Asian Development Bank and Environment Operations Center for its initiative and significant efforts in organizing this important meeting.

Mr. Chairman

Myanmar fully supports the GMS Core Environment programme and its objectives and highly appreciates the various initiatives being developed and implemented under this program. We are also glad to note that the various GMS projects under the GMS Economic Cooperation Program have been successful in facilitating the efforts of the GMS countries in their pursuit for economic, social and environmental progress. The projects being implemented under the Core Environment Programme (CEP), have indeed been very useful in enhancing the technical and human resource capacity for effective environmental management in the GMS countries.

Economic development of the Greater Mekong Subregion (GMS) is mainly dependent upon its rich natural resources. Thus, conservation and sustainable development of these natural resources are most crucial for the sustainable development of the region. There is a need for enhanced cooperation and

collaboration among the GMS countries to effectively protect and conserve their physical and biological resources such as wetlands, water resources, forests and biodiversity. The Biodiversity Conservation Corridor Initiative (BCCI) is an important component under Core Environment Programme (CEP) towards protecting the biodiversity and the natural areas along the GMS economic corridors.

Myanmar has been making all out efforts to protect and conserve its valuable natural resources. The Forest Law (1992), the Protection of Wildlife, Wild Plants and Conservation of Natural Areas Law (1994) and the Forest Policy (1995) provide an essential framework for the sustainable management of the country's forest and biodiversity. The Ministry of Forestry, in particular, has been implementing plans and programmes for the sustainable use of forest and biological resources.

In order to effectively and systematically carry out environmental conservation activities throughout the country, the Environmental Conservation Committee was formed on the 26<sup>th</sup> of March 2004 chaired by H.E. the Minister for the Ministry of Forestry with the Minister for the Ministry of Mines as Vice-Chairman. The Deputy Ministers of the line Ministries are members of the Committee. The Committee in cooperation with the ministries and departments concerned sees to the effective implementation of the activities and enforcement of existing laws, rules and regulations and to take effective actions on law offenders. The seven task force under the central committee are responsible for the implementation of environmental programmes and activities in the States & Divisions. Environmental Conservation Committee reviews the progress of works at quarterly meetings and decides future activities.

In this respect, Myanmar is ready to cooperate with the other members of the GMS region in implementing of the Biodiversity Conservation Corridor Initiative (BCI).

Mr. Chairman,

The six GMS countries have many similarities in terms of culture and natural resource endowment which in many ways help us to forge closer economic, social and environmental ties in our region. There are also many common environmental concerns that can be addressed through collaboration and partnership among the six countries. The environmental concerns as identified by the previous project which is called National Environmental Performance Assessment and Strategic Environment Framework in the GMS (SEF-II Project) include land degradation, deforestation, threat to biodiversity, air pollution from mobile source, solid waste management and climate change among others. These concerns can be taken into account in future EPA project under component 3 of Core Environment Programm (CEP) in collaboration with UNEP so that necessary support can be provided for addressing these issues at the national and local level EPA activities in Myanmar.

Mr. Chairman,

Myanmar attaches great importance to the forthcoming GMS Summit and we are making necessary preparations for the Summit. We have a great hope that the GMS Summit will again lay down guidance to achieve fruitful outcomes in our future environmental endeavors.

In conclusion, let me express once again our grateful thanks to our host for the very warm and generous hospitality and to the Asian Development Bank and GMS Environment Operations Center for its continued support to the GMS countries.

Thank you.