

**Forum on “Inclusive Green Growth: Investing in a Sustainable Future”**

**30 January 2018, Chiang Mai, Thailand**

**Welcome Remarks by Mr. Pongboon Pongtong  
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Environment, Thailand**

Your Excellencies,  
Members of the Working Group on Environment,  
Other Greater Mekong Subregion Development Sectors,  
Development Partner Representatives,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,.

I would like to welcome all of you to this Forum on Inclusive Green Growth: Investing for a Sustainable Future taking place on the 5th GMS Environment Ministers' Meeting being held here in the ancient city of Chiang Mai, Thailand's 'Rose of the North'

It is a great honor for Thailand to host this event at such an important time as all six GMS countries embark on achieving their Sustainable Development Goals. All member countries are committed to delivering on nationally determined contributions as articulated in the 2016 Paris Agreement under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. Those commitments will guide future environmental management efforts in the region when preparing to implement the third phase of the GMS Core Environment Program, to balance social and economic demands with environmental conservation needs.

Thailand remains firmly committed to the sustainable development agenda. Guided by the sufficiency economy philosophy, environmentally-friendly growth – or Green Growth – for sustainable development is a key strategy underpinning the Twelfth National Socio-economic Development Plan of Thailand. Over the next five years from 2017 to 2021, Thailand will undertake several programs and projects to (i) conserve and restore the stock of natural resources; (ii) build water security, (iii) manage environmental quality – reducing pollution and minimizing impacts on

public health and ecosystems; (iv) reduce greenhouse gas emissions; and (v) build climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction capacity.

All GMS countries have now developed green growth frameworks to better harness their natural resources, reduce their vulnerability to environmental and climate risks, and promote socially inclusive and equitable sustainable development. The green growth is also a core theme of the program Strategic Framework and Action Plan (2018–2022), which we trust will be endorsed by the GMS Environment Ministers in two days' time.

This three day meeting aims to generate high-level consensus among GMS countries, development partners and key stakeholders in charting the future direction for strengthened responses to the environmental challenges and opportunities currently facing the region. Specifically our objectives over the next three days are to:

- i. Showcase the achievements of GMS cooperation in pursuing green growth, investing in natural capital, enhancing climate resilience and responding to emerging environmental challenges;
- ii. Facilitate high-level multi-stakeholder dialogue to further strengthen regional cooperation on green growth and sustainable the environment; and
- iii. Endorse the CEP Strategic Framework and Action Plan (2018–2022), and call for ADB and development partners to provide technical assistance and co-financing to guide, develop and support the next phase of the program.

On Day 1, the forum will consist of an overview of CEP achievements and aspirations, a green growth exhibition, two seminars on green technology and knowledge management including dialogue session over two days which will deliberate of the topics of: (i) investing in natural resources for inclusive and sustainable growth, (ii) green energy, (iii) sustainable infrastructure, and (iv) climate resilience.

On Day 2 there will be a GMS Senior Officials' Meeting which will be combined with the fourth meeting of the Working Group on Environment Task Force. This will be followed by a Development Partners' Roundtable later that day. Additionally, two seminars on green technology and knowledge management will be given. Finally, on Day 3 the Environmental Ministers' Meeting will take place, followed by a field trip in the afternoon.

In conclusion, I would like to reiterate that Thailand is committed to cooperating with other GMS countries in all areas related to environmental management, biodiversity conservation and climate resilience. Where appropriate, we stand ready to support South-South cooperation in areas where we have expertise, and we are also keen to learn from other GMS countries in areas where they have more experience than us.

I sincerely hope that this meeting will benefit from the exchange of ideas and lessons learned by the Core Environment Program over the past twelve years and provide guidance and direction for a next phase of the program.

I would like to thank you all for your participation in this important meeting and also to thank the Asian Development Bank and development partners for their continuing support and encouragement. Finally, I wish you all a pleasant stay in Chiang Mai over the next three days and look forward to a successful and productive meeting.

Thank you.