

**Greater Mekong Subregion
FIFTH ENVIRONMENT MINISTERS' MEETING
Chiang Mai, Thailand
1 February 2018**

JOINT MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

GMS Environmental Cooperation Towards Inclusive and Sustainable Growth

1. We, the Environment Ministers from the six Greater Mekong Subregion (GMS) countries, namely the Kingdom of Cambodia, the People's Republic of China, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, the Kingdom of Thailand, and the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam, met in Chiang Mai, Thailand on the 1st of February 2018 for the 5th GMS Environment Ministers' Meeting (EMM-5).
2. We recognize recent important global commitments and the opportunities they present for further collective efforts and enhanced cooperation among our member countries. These include: (i) the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, (ii) the entry into force of the Paris Agreement on climate change, and (iii) the adoption of the ASEAN Community Vision 2025 to promote regional cooperation.
3. We reaffirm our shared commitment to build green, inclusive, and sustainable economies and reconfirm the Core Environment Program's (CEP) alignment with the *GMS Economic Cooperation Program Strategic Framework (2012–2022)*. CEP aims to mainstream environmental considerations in sector investments by strengthening enabling policies, improving strategic planning processes, and providing investment readiness support.
4. We deeply appreciate the achievements of CEP to date, including its significant contributions toward improving environmental quality, climate resilience, and human capacity development in the GMS. The program has effectively delivered as a regional environmental platform by stimulating dialogues, promoting cross-sectoral linkages, supporting policy and regulatory frameworks, and leveraging green investments.
5. We recognize CEP for its active role as a knowledge hub for sharing environmental best practices. The program has continuously generated knowledge products, such as those launched today, that make an important contribution to regional capacity to respond to emerging environmental challenges. We encourage CEP to further strengthen its position as a regional knowledge hub and assist in the development of subregional centers of learning for specific environmental services.
6. We commend CEP for convening the high-level regional forum on "Inclusive Green Growth: Investing for a Sustainable Future" that preceded this EMM-5. The forum has been instrumental in convening several policy dialogues to catalyze investments in clean energy, sustainable transport and logistics infrastructure, natural resources, climate resilience, and disaster risk management.
7. We encourage CEP to leverage its core competencies to develop viable projects that promote innovative resource efficient technologies and practices, management of ecosystem services, and climate resilient and disaster risk management interventions. In this regard, the CEP Project Pipeline signifies the GMS countries' commitment to increasing investments in green and inclusive growth. The potential projects have been

submitted for inclusion in the GMS Regional Investment Framework (RIF) 2022 and Ha Noi Action Plan 2018–2022, which will be presented at the forthcoming 6th GMS Leaders' Summit in March 2018 in Ha Noi, Viet Nam.

8. We endorse the *CEP Strategic Framework and Action Plan (2018–2022)*. We fully support the refocused strategic intent of CEP as an environment service facility that supports policy and regulatory frameworks, prepares investment projects, provides financing advisory services, and generates and disseminates knowledge and information. We also support the realignment of CEP's geographic focus with the GMS economic corridors and the RIF pipeline projects. We direct the GMS Environment Operations Center (EOC) to continue to serve as the regional secretariat to the GMS Working Group on Environment (WGE) to facilitate regional collaboration and mobilize financial and technical resources to deliver the CEP strategic framework and action plan.
9. We are pleased to inform that several new initiatives in pursuit of the CEP strategy and action plan will be developed. These include: (i) an Asian Development Bank (ADB) \$10 million technical assistance program to support the implementation of the CEP strategic framework and action plan, (ii) the strengthening of EOC and CEP National Support Units as a project preparatory facility to develop a pipeline of six priority projects, (iii) setting up a Regional Help Desk Support on Policy, and (iv), further strengthening the GMS Knowledge Hub with new platforms on green technology, natural resources and ecosystem services, and climate resilience.
10. We request the 6th GMS Summit of Leaders to support the *CEP Strategic Framework and Action Plan (2018–2022)* and the inclusion of the CEP project pipeline in the RIF 2022. In this regard, we will continue to strengthen partnerships among the GMS member countries, development partners, the private sector, and other stakeholders.
11. We take this opportunity to acknowledge and express our appreciation for the continued commitment from CEP co-financing partners: ADB, the Government of Sweden, the Nordic Development Fund, and the Global Environment Facility. Also special thanks to other development and implementing partners, the GMS Secretariat, and GMS sector working groups. We look forward to their further support to successfully implement the CEP strategic framework and action plan to assist the GMS countries to achieve their environmental commitments.
12. Finally, we wish to express our sincerest gratitude to the Government of the Kingdom of Thailand as a generous and excellent host of EMM-5 and for the warm hospitality extended to ourselves and to all participants. We also express our appreciation to the WGE, ADB, and EOC for organizing the event.

Endorsed in Chiang Mai, Thailand on 1 February 2018.
