

Welcome and Opening Remarks
by
Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment,
Thailand
21st Annual Meeting of GMS Working Group on
Environment
Tuesday, 23 June 2015
Bangkok, Thailand

Members of GMS Working Group on Environment,
Colleagues from Asian Development Bank and
Development Partners,
Honorable Guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of Thailand's Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment, I would like to welcome you all to our lovely capital city of Bangkok. We sincerely thank all of you for traveling far and wide to attend this important meeting today. Our sincere gratitude is cordially extended to Asian Development Bank, Environment Operations Center, as

well as development partners and donors for their continuous support that made this meeting possible.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Every year we meet, as members of this crucial Working Group, to look back at achievements and progress of Core Environment Program (CEP), as well as to discuss how to build on past success and together face new challenges.

As we all know, CEP Phase II accelerated implementation in 2014. This resulted in an impressive number of key achievements relating to safeguards, climate change, and management of biodiversity landscape both at the national and regional level. For Thailand, arrangements have been finalized in 2014 to commence in-country activities on green freight and biodiversity conservation corridor in Eastern Forest Complex bordering Cambodia. National/Provincial Support Units were also significantly strengthened in the year 2014.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Since CEP Phase II reached halfway of its implementation at the end of 2014, a midterm review (MTR) has been carried out earlier this year with your valuable contributions. One of the important discussions that we will be having today concerns the result of this review, how can we best learn from it, and how should CEP framework be modified to be more effective.

We will also need to look into how to better engage key sectors under Regional Investment Framework (RIF) in order to ensure that they contribute toward inclusive and sustainable development within the GMS. This means not only advancing RIF environment projects without delay, but also being involved in formulation, implementation, and monitoring of projects under RIF of other key sectors, such energy and transport and soon. Finally, the organizing principle of “Natural Capital” should be key for this crucial engagement.

By promoting protection of and investment in the subregion's natural capital, we would fulfill the mandates of the Joint Ministerial Statement adopted at the 4th GMS Environment Ministers' Meeting (EMM4) in Nay Pyi Taw earlier this year. We need to consider potential initiatives that would raise awareness of the value of natural capital as well as integrate sound environmental and natural resource management in order to support inclusive and sustainable implementation of the RIF in the year to come.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

With your full participation, I believe that today's discussion would arrive at a clear reflection of the past and concrete steps toward effective reprioritization and consolidation of CEP.

Thank you once again for your kind participation
and I wish you have a nice memory during your stay in
Thailand.

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