

Seventeenth Meeting of the MRC Council
Session 2: Joint Meeting with the MRC Donor Consultative Group
Mekong River Commission
26 January 2011
Ho Chi Minh City, Viet Nam

STATEMENT

by

H.E. Dr. Nguyen Thai Lai

Deputy Minister of Natural Resources and Environment of Viet Nam
Vice-Chairman of the Viet Nam National Mekong Committee
Alternate Member of the MRC Council for Viet Nam
Head of the Viet Nam Delegation

Excellency Dr. Pham Khoi Nguyen,

*Minister of Natural Resources and Environment of Viet Nam,
Chairman of the Viet Nam National Mekong Committee,
Chairman of the MRC Council for 2010/2011*

Excellency Mr. Lim Kean Hor,

*Minister of Water Resources and Meteorology of Cambodia,
Chairman of the Cambodia National Mekong Committee,*

Excellency Madame Khempeng Pholsena,

*Minister of Prime Minister's Office,
Chairperson of the Lao National Mekong Committee,*

Excellency Mr. Suwit Khunkitti

*Minister of Natural Resources and Environment of Thailand,
Chairman of the Thai National Mekong Committee,*

Excellencies, Ambassadors

Distinguished Delegates and Representatives

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It gives me great honour and privilege to be here with you all today gathering for the Joint Meeting of the 17th Meeting of the Mekong River Commission Council and the 15th Meeting of the Donor Consultative Group held in Ho Chi Minh City of Viet Nam, the first ministerial meeting after the 1st MRC Summit. It was therefore fortunate that our Meeting have been able to welcome His Excellency Mr. Hoang Trung Hai, Deputy Prime Minister of the Government of Viet Nam. His gracious presence and Welcome Statement delivered at the outset of this Meeting have once again confirmed the strongest commitment of the Government of Viet Nam to the Mekong Agreement 1995 in particular and to our endeavour toward contributing to the peace, sustainability and prosperity of the region, in general.

Allow me, on behalf of the Delegation of Viet Nam and of my own, to express our warmest welcome to the Ministerial Members of the Council from other Member States, and all distinguished participants and representatives present in this room to this Joint Meeting. I would also like to express our high appreciation to His Excellency Mr. Suwit Khunkitti, Minister of Natural Resources and Environment of Thailand and Chairman of the MRC Council for 2009/2010, and thank him for his excellent contribution in guiding the Mekong River Commission to score outstanding achievements during the last one year of his chairmanship, especially the success of the historical 1st MRC Summit in Hua Hin, Thai Lan.

I would also wish to take this opportunity to congratulate His Excellency Dr. Pham Khoi Nguyen, Minister of Natural Resources and Environment of Viet Nam, Chairman of the Viet Nam National Mekong Committee, and Member of the MRC Council for Viet Nam, for having assumed Chairmanship of the MRC Council for 2010/2011. It is our strong belief that the Mekong River Commission under your leadership would further achieve great accomplishments in implementation of the Hua Hin Declaration during his tenure.

***Mr. Chairman,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,***

Noting the instruction of His Excellency Mr. Deputy Prime Minister on our joint efforts in bringing the sustainable development to the Mekong Basin, I would like to join other Council Members who took floor previously to express our praise and gladness on promising progress as reported in this Meeting about initial achievements in this direction under the light of the Declaration. I would like to make special mention to the two submitted documents for our approval, namely the Integrated Water Resources Management Based Basin Development Strategy and the MRC Strategic Plan for next five years (2011-2015). Apart from mapping out the key activities toward the successful implementation of the Summit guidance, the unprecedented and fully participatory process has been regarded as the direct response to the key task set forth in the Mekong Agreement and the initial preparation for the needed transition to the full ownership status by 2030. Another high note of this Meeting is the official signing of the much awaited Procedures for Water Quality that would set a milestone on our endeavour to maintaining and protecting water quality in the Mekong Basin.

With this regard, my appreciation also goes to the MRC Joint Committee and the Secretariat for their effective implementation of our decision during last Meeting in Hua Hin on the co-hosted location of the MRC Headquarters that would definitely set an excellent platform for our actions in the coming 5-year plan. To my delight, one of the key concerns of the MRC Leaders in Hua Hin, strengthening cooperation with the MRC Dialogue and Development Partners, was also reported of having achieved remarkable breakthroughs.

***Mr. Chairman,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,***

Looking ahead in the year to come, it is required that the Council should immediately demonstrate their strongest commitments in showing the world and people in the Basin that we would be able to sustain natural assets for the next generations but not at the expense of the regional growth. Information during the last one year, especially the period after the 1st MRC Summit about new proposed uses including those on the Mekong mainstream and the increasingly clear signals of climate change have drawn much attentions and serious concerns in and out of the basin. I believe that you all, Council Members and other Delegates, have been aware of the high expectations of the concerned stakeholders on our exclusive role in this matter. Needless to say, our unanimity on those issues and relevant guidance in this direction in this Meeting would be of the vital importance not only to the need to strengthen the MRC role in the regional efforts toward the Summit theme "Meeting the Need, Keeping the Balance: Towards Sustainable Development of the Mekong River Basin", but also to the future of our children. Apparently, our efforts alone would not make our pursuance to the above-mentioned achievable without the constant and generous assistance from the MRC Development Partners. May I take this forum to join other Council colleagues in expressing our sincerest gratitude and thanking them for their valuable and unflinching support. Though we are on the way to achieve fully self-sufficient status by 2030, you would be assured that your assistance in the years to come and beyond is still much

appreciated and highly welcomed, and as instructed by the Council these days that would be managed properly and efficiently.

***Mr. Chairman,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,***

In concluding, I would like to extend my appreciation to the Meeting organizers and the MRCS Staff whose support and assistance are making this Meeting possible. As the Lunar New Year is coming in few days, my best wishes go to all distinguished Delegates, representatives and participants for a New Year full of happiness, prosperity and success. I would also wish you all a pleasant stay in Ho Chi Minh City and an interesting field trip to Ben Tre province tomorrow.

Thank you for your kind attention.