



**Greater Mekong Sub-region
The 5th GMS Environment Ministerial Meeting (EMM5)
Shangri-La Hotel, Chiang Mai, Thailand
February 1, 2018**

9:20 AM – 10:30 AM: Statements by GMS Environment Ministers/Head of Delegation

**Statement by H.E. Bounkham Vorachit, Vice Minister of Natural Resources and Environment
of the Lao People's Democratic Republic**

- **Your Excellency General Surasak Karnjanarat, Minister of Natural Resources and Environment of Thailand**
- **Your Excellency, Supachai Panichpakdi, former Deputy Prime Minister, Thailand and former Secretary-General, World Trade Organization,**
- **Your Excellencies GMS Environment Ministers,**
- **Mr. Ramesh Subramaniam, Director-General of Southeast Asia Department, Asian Development Bank (Bank),**
- **Distinguished Delegates,**
- **Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Today, I feel very much honored and delighted to be in this significant event. On behalf of Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment and the Government of the Lao PDR, May I convey my best regards and acknowledgements to the Royal Thai Government through the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment of Thailand for its warm hospitality and related arrangements, particularly, this meeting is organized in the very beautiful city, Chiang Mai. I would also like to express my sincere appreciation to the Asian Development Bank for its continued support, especially the Environment Operations Center for handling detailed arrangements.

- **Your Excellencies,**
- **Ladies and Gentlemen,**

For over 10 years of GMS Core Environment Program implementation, Laos has significantly contributed its efforts to work with all GMS countries in order to progress our region toward environmentally sustainable economic growth. The Core Environment Program has facilitated the policy dialogues and strengthened regional collaboration on investment in sustainable management of natural resources and ecosystem services, and climate-resilient and low carbon development among GMS countries resulting in many positive changes and a lot of remarkable achievements.

In Laos, some of the beneficial projects have been conducted and some of them are in process, such as, the development of national pollution control strategy 2025 and SEA initiative under the Letter of Agreement (LOA), Green Freight Initiative, Biodiversity Conservation Initiative (BCI) and Biodiversity Conservation Corridors (BCC). I would like to express my profound acknowledgements to ADB for its valuable support and



congratulations to expert teams, public officials, and relevant sectors for their excellent collaborations and dedications.

- **Your Excellencies,**
- **Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Besides the outstanding achievements aforementioned, Lao PDR has experienced environmental degradations due to the rapid economic growth rate, resulting in the loss of biodiversity and ecological equilibrium, adverse impacts on the local people's health and living conditions.

In an attempt to ensure the sustainable economic growth, the Government of Lao PDR is mainstreaming sustainable management of natural resources and environmental safeguard in the Socio-economic Development Strategy 2025 and the 8th Five-Year National Socio-economic Development Plan 2016-2020 in order to keep the country progress toward the environmental vision 2030 of "Green, Clean, and Beautiful Laos". During these country's strategy and five-year plan, natural resources and environment are taken as one of the 3 pillars of country development path.

I would like to bring up some examples that the decree on implementation of national socio-economic development plan and national budget allocation for the year 2017 was issued, emphasizing on mandating environmental sector to work and cooperate actively with the key sectors within the country to tackle environmental issues together with identifying the way forward to integrating the integrated spatial planning (ISP) into the implementation of socio-economic development plans at all levels and applying the strategic environmental assessment (SEA) to policy and strategy making processes. Similarly, in 2018, the decree continues to instruct that SEA is to proceed. In addition, more aspects of environmental matters including efficient measures to control and reduce wastes; application of national environmental standards; water and river management planning has been put into our core annual agenda.

In this regard, Ministry of National Resources and Environment is the core agency to guide, assist, and work closely with the relevant sectors to achieve the anticipated outcomes. With these new approaches, we consider ourselves as young implementer and therefore we are open for advises and technical assistance from our GMS member countries, in particular our development partners.

- **Distinguished delegates,**
- **Ladies and Gentlemen,**

The operationalization afore-mentioned does fully reflect our international and regional interests on direction to move toward the sustainable development and the green growth pathway. However, I would like to sincerely express that the implementation is substantially constrained by inadequate institutional capacity, limitations of strategic planning resources



and financial support. The investment gaps in natural resource and environmental sector still exist. The climate-induced disasters are still threatening our people and obstructing the development. With the continued collaboration and strong efforts among us, I do believe that all of those limitations will be lessened and environmentally sustainable development will be certainly secured. I am also reported and very much convinced that the 3rd GMS Core Environment Program Strategic Framework and Action Plan 2018-2022 has been prepared in line with our global agendas likes SDGs, Green Growth and Low Carbon, and the 2010 Aichi Biodiversity Targets and that the Framework and Action Plan 2018-2022 is aligned to GMS countries' priorities.

- **Your Excellencies,**
- **Ladies and Gentlemen,**

On behalf of the Government of Laos, I strongly support the 3rd GMS Core Environment Program Strategic Framework and Action Plan 2018-2022, and reaffirm Laos' commitment to a green, inclusive, and sustainable economic growth. I would like to take this opportunity to urge our development partners, international organizations, in particular ADB for their continued supports in order to secure Green Growth and Sustainable Development for a sustainable future in our region.

Finally, I wish the 5th GMS Environment Ministerial Meeting a great success and fruitful outcomes.

Thank you very much!