

Mekong-Han River Declaration for Establishing Partnership for People, Prosperity and Peace

We, the Heads of State/Government of the Republic of Korea (ROK), the Lao People's Democratic Republic, the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, the Kingdom of Thailand and the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam and Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of the Kingdom of Cambodia gathered on 27 November 2019 in Busan, the ROK, for the 1st Mekong-ROK Summit;

Noting with satisfaction the achievements of the Mekong-ROK cooperation in various areas that we have been witnessing since its inception in 2011 and the steadfast bilateral and multilateral efforts made by the participating countries to advance the Mekong-ROK partnership;

Welcoming the elevation of the Mekong-ROK cooperation to the summit level and commitment of the Mekong countries and the ROK to placing a higher priority on deepening the Mekong-ROK relations;

Recognizing the enormous potential for the economic growth and development of the Mekong region underpinned by its abundant natural and human resources, that will bring about mutual benefits and co-prosperity in the Mekong countries and the ROK;

Recalling the efforts of the ASEAN member countries such as the Initiative for ASEAN Integration (IAI) and the contribution of the ROK to narrow the development gap of the region and enhance regional connectivity to accelerate the realization of the ASEAN Community;

Welcoming the ROK's commitment to expand its Official Development Assistance (ODA) to the Mekong countries and the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the ROK and four Mekong development cooperation partner countries to strengthen cooperation for sustainable development in the region;

Noting with appreciation the increase on the Mekong-ROK Cooperation Fund (MKCF) and reaffirming commitment to promote and utilize the Fund to advance practical cooperation in a way that accommodates the needs of the Mekong countries;

Understanding that economic complementarity and cultural similarities between the Mekong countries and the ROK will promote the advancement of the cooperation between the two sides;

Welcoming the 30th anniversary of ASEAN-ROK Dialogue Relations, the cooperation that has been expanded and deepened in various areas while promoting peace and stability and facilitating economic development in the region, thus mutually reinforcing the Mekong-ROK cooperation;

Acknowledging the ROK's New Southern Policy and its commitment to strengthening and deepening the partnership with the Mekong countries, which can be developed in synergy with other existing regional cooperation initiatives and mechanisms based on the principles of openness, inclusiveness, transparency and respect for international law and norms;

Do hereby agree to establish a **Partnership for People, Prosperity and Peace between the Mekong countries and the Republic of Korea** and also agree to:

I. Review on the Mekong-ROK Cooperation

1. Recognize the positive outcomes of the implementation of the Han-River Declaration of Establishing the Mekong-ROK Comprehensive Partnership for Mutual Prosperity in 2011, as reflected in the Mekong-ROK Plan of Action 2014-2017 and 2017-2020.
2. Note with appreciation the contribution the Mekong-ROK cooperation has made for the peace and prosperity in the region through ODA and the MKCF, which have been implemented in close coordination with the participating countries based on their needs.
3. Underscore the importance of the role of the private sector for regional economic development and recognize that the Mekong-ROK Business Forum, since its inception in 2013, has provided a valuable platform to promote interaction and cooperation among Mekong-ROK business sectors by enhancing understandings of the business environment of respective countries and note with appreciation the outcome of the 7th Mekong-ROK Business Forum co-hosted by the ROK and Thailand in Bangkok in 2019.

II. Future Direction of the Mekong-ROK Cooperation

4. Reaffirm that the Mekong-ROK cooperation, based on the six priority areas of the Han-River Declaration of Establishing the Mekong-ROK Comprehensive Partnership for Mutual Prosperity in 2011, has brought about mutual benefits and prosperity in the region, and reorganize the priority areas of the Mekong-ROK cooperation to enhance synergy with the ROK's New Southern Policy, the

ACMECS Master Plan (2019-2023), ASEAN 2025: Forging Ahead Together and the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and to better respond to the rapidly changing regional and global environment.

5. Continue the Mekong-ROK cooperation based on the three pillars of People, Prosperity and Peace, which are also the key pillars of the New Southern Policy and seven new priority areas: (i) Culture and Tourism, (ii) Human Resources Development, (iii) Agriculture and Rural Development, (iv) Infrastructure, (v) Information and Communication Technology (ICT), (vi) Environment, (vii) Non-traditional Security Challenges.

(1) People for Inclusive Society

6. Reaffirm that ASEAN's commitment for the ASEAN Community and the ROK's New Southern Policy pursue a shared vision of achieving a people-centered and people-oriented community that leaves no one behind and that the Mekong-ROK partnership will move forward on the basis of people-centered cooperation that ensures economic, financial and social inclusiveness.
7. Enhance cooperation through collaborative projects between the two sides such as preservation and restoration of cultural heritage toward sustainable and smart development of culture and tourism in the Mekong region, which will serve as an impetus for an increase in people-to-people exchanges and enhancement of mutual understanding.
8. Welcome the designation of the *Mekong-ROK Exchange Year 2021* to commemorate the 10th anniversary of the Mekong-ROK cooperation, which will be an opportunity to promote culture and tourism cooperation among the participating countries.
9. Enhance cooperation to advance human resources development for sustainable development and prosperity in the region by promoting vocational education and training and education cooperation including through capacity-building in higher education, improvement of e-learning resources and Korean language education.
10. Strengthen healthcare cooperation to achieve Universal Health Coverage (UHC), which ensures the access to quality essential medical services and safe and effective medicine for people in the Mekong countries.

(2) Prosperity by Sharing Experience

11. Work together to bring about economic development and prosperity in the Mekong region, akin to the Miracle of the Han River, the rapid economic development that the ROK has experienced.
12. Welcome the ROK's commitment to sharing its development experiences as we can witness through the cooperation between various agencies of the ROK and the Mekong countries including between the Korea Development Institute (KDI) - the Myanmar Development Institute (MDI), the Korea Trade-Investment Promotion Agency (KOTRA) - the Myanmar Trade Promotion Organization (MYANTRADE), the Korea Institute of Science and Technology (KIST) - the Vietnam-Korea Institute of Science and Technology (V-KIST), and further enhance cooperation between Thailand International Cooperation Agency (TICA) and Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA) for co-prosperity in the region.
13. Strengthen cooperation in agriculture and rural development to improve productivity of the rural areas and increase the income of the Mekong peoples, based on the shared understanding that the focus on agriculture and rural development served as a foundation for the development of our countries.
14. Welcome the ROK's commitment to the development of the rural areas in the Mekong region through various cooperative projects such as the Integrated Rural Development Projects, Saemaul Undong and Energy Independent Energy Town Projects.
15. Promote regional connectivity through cooperative projects in constructing roads, bridges, railroads and ports and strengthen cooperation through the ROK's Economic Development Cooperation Fund (EDCF), which has contributed to the advancement of the infrastructure in the Mekong region.
16. Develop ICT-driven projects including e-Government and Smart Cities that will promote digital economy toward the 4th Industrial Revolution and technological advancement in the region based on the shared vision that ICT is a driving force for innovation, sustainable economic development and prosperity in the region.
17. Encourage the private sector of the Mekong countries and the ROK, especially micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) and start-up companies to seek for business and investment opportunities across the region and stimulate deeper interaction and cooperation among business sectors.

18. Welcome the establishment of the Mekong-ROK Business Council and the signing of an MOU among business organizations of the respective countries, which will lay a solid foundation for expansion of trade and investment opportunities for the business communities.
19. Express high expectation for the enhancement of intra- and inter-regional value chains among the participating countries, which is aimed to reduce production costs and support the industrial development in the Mekong region, which is known as one of the potential production bases for the ROK's business community.
20. Welcome the signing of the Double Taxation Avoidance Agreement between the Kingdom of Cambodia and the ROK, through which the ROK completes the signing of the Agreements with all five Mekong countries.

(3) Peace for Sustainable Development

21. Strengthen our efforts to protect and preserve the environment in the Mekong sub-region through cooperation in water resources management, biodiversity, forest management and environmental infrastructure, and to work towards economic cooperation for green growth and sustainable development in the region.
22. Establish the Mekong-ROK Biodiversity Center to contribute to biodiversity conservation in the Mekong sub-region and sustainable utilization of biological resources in a fair and equitable way for mutual cooperation and green growth development.
23. Establish the Mekong-ROK Water Resources Joint Research Center in the ROK and continue cooperative projects to promote and improve the Mekong-ROK cooperation on sustainable and integrated water resources management to ensure the sustainability of the Mekong river basin development and to address common challenges in the region.
24. Welcome the joint efforts to enhance the cooperation in water resources management by signing an MOU on water resources joint research among the ROK, the Mekong River Commission (MRC) and the related organizations in the Mekong countries.
25. Support the Peace Forest Initiative (PFI), proposed by the ROK to enhance peace and confidence-building through cooperation on the rehabilitation and restoration of degraded land and forest and strengthen forest cooperation to promote sustainable development in the region and to cope with challenges

caused by natural disasters in forest, under the framework of the Korea-Mekong Forest Cooperation Center (KMFCC) and the Asian Forest Cooperation Organization (AFoCO).

26. Foster cooperation to address non-traditional security challenges, including climate change, natural disasters such as floods, droughts, forest fires and transnational crimes such as illicit drugs and drug trafficking, human trafficking, money laundering, international economic crimes and cyber-crimes so as to reinforce disaster resilience of the Mekong countries.
27. Welcome the ROK's initiative to support the Mekong sub-region to be a place of peace and safety through the Korea-Mekong Future Peace Community Program, which is the comprehensive development cooperation program that encompasses the clearance of explosive remnants of war (ERW), support for victims, rural development and the protection of the environment.

III. Cooperation with Existing Mechanisms

28. Seek synergies between the Mekong-ROK Cooperation mechanism and other Mekong-related initiatives and mechanisms, such as the Ayeyawady-Chao Phraya-Mekong Economic Cooperation Strategy (ACMECS), Cambodia - Lao PDR - Viet Nam Development Triangle Area (CLV-DTA), Cambodia - Lao PDR - Myanmar - Viet Nam Cooperation (CLMV), Mekong River Commission (MRC), Greater Mekong Sub-region Economic Cooperation (GMS), Lower Mekong Initiative (LMI), Friends of Lower Mekong (FLM), Mekong-Japan Cooperation, Mekong-Lancang Cooperation (MLC) and Mekong-Ganga Cooperation (MGC).
29. Appreciate the ROK's engagement as a Development Partner of ACMECS and its plan to implement the ACMECS prioritized projects to drive forward the ACMECS Master Plan (2019-2023) and enhance complementarities between the Mekong-ROK cooperation and the ACMECS-ROK cooperation by taking into account the seven priority areas of the Mekong-ROK cooperation in implementing the projects.

IV. Regional and Global Issues

30. Welcome the commitment of the Mekong countries and the ROK to the peace and stability on the Korean Peninsula and pledge to work closely together towards the realization of complete denuclearization and lasting peace on the Korean Peninsula, based on the firm belief that peaceful and stable regional environment is instrumental to the mutual prosperity of the Mekong countries and the ROK.

31. Enhance maritime security and safety, freedom of navigation in and over-flight above the region and other lawful uses of the seas and unimpeded lawful maritime commerce, and promote peaceful resolutions of disputes, in accordance with universally recognized principles of international law, including the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS).
32. Reaffirm that free trade and investment served as a sound basis for the development and prosperity of the regions and reiterate the commitment to uphold the transparent, free, open, inclusive and rules-based multilateral trading system led by the WTO, while resisting any forms of protectionism.

V. Mekong-ROK Cooperation Mechanism

33. Establish a sustainable consultation mechanism at the highest level and deepen the Mekong-ROK cooperation by holding the Mekong-ROK Summit every year on the sidelines of the ASEAN-related summits, under the co-chairmanship of the ROK and one of the Mekong countries, who will take turns in alphabetical order, provided that the Mekong-ROK Summit in the ROK will be held on the basis of consensus of the participating countries.
34. Hold the Mekong-ROK Foreign Ministers' Meeting (FMM) and the Senior Officials' Meeting (SOM) every year to prepare and follow up the Summit.

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