



**UCAPTAMA
YANG BERHORMAT DATO SERI SETIA
AWANG HAJI MOHD JUANDA BIN HAJI ABDUL RASHID
MENTERI PEMBANGUNAN
BRUNEI DARUSSALAM**

**2nd ASEAN-MRC Water Security Dialogue:
Sustainable Investment for a Connected, Resilient, and
Water-secure
Southeast Asia**

**18 September 2024
Souphattra Hotel Vientiane, Vientiane, Lao PDR**

**"High Level Policy Dialogue: Views on how each
Mekong/ASEAN country can contribute to and work
together in increasing investments for a more
connected, resilient and water-secure Mekong and
ASEAN region"**

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

Assalamualaikum wbt and a very good morning,

Excellencies, Distinguished Colleagues, Ladies and Gentlemen,

1. On behalf of Brunei Darussalam, I extend our sincere gratitude to the Mekong River Commission and the Lao People's Democratic Republic for hosting this important dialogue. We also appreciate the warm hospitality and meticulous arrangements provided by the people of Laos. It is truly an honor to be part of this esteemed gathering, and we look forward to engaging in meaningful discussions and collaborative efforts.

2. As we come together today, it is essential to recognize the profound challenges that climate change poses to Southeast Asia's vital water resources, particularly the Mekong River. This river, a lifeline for millions across the region, faces increasing threats from severe flooding and prolonged droughts. These challenges underscore the urgent need for a cohesive and strategic regional approach to ensure a sustainable and resilient water future. The management of the Mekong River transcends national boundaries and requires our collective action.

3. Effective water management is crucial not only for adapting to climate impacts but also for mitigating them. By adopting innovative technologies and fostering positive behavioral changes, we can improve water efficiency and contribute to reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Our shared goal is to achieve a more connected, resilient, and water-secure

Mekong and ASEAN region, ensuring a sustainable legacy for future generations.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

4. Water is far more than a mere resource, it is the cornerstone of our economic development and the very essence of our quality of life. A dependable and clean water supply is crucial for both businesses and communities, and its absence can lead to significant challenges. To address future water demands and sustain our economies, it is imperative that we invest in resilient infrastructure, including dams, reservoirs, and advanced smart systems. These investments are essential for securing a stable and prosperous future.

5. We must embrace cutting-edge technologies, establish robust data-sharing platforms, and pursue innovative solutions. These measures will optimize our water usage and enhance our capacity to respond effectively to disasters. Additionally, reinforcing formal mechanisms for regional cooperation will be instrumental in aligning policies and ensuring a cohesive approach to water management.

6. Capacity building and knowledge sharing are fundamental to enhancing our collective ability to manage water resources effectively. By facilitating the exchange of expertise, encouraging joint research, and providing training opportunities, we can deepen our understanding and improve our strategies for water management. Such collaborative efforts are vital in

addressing the complex challenges we face and in developing robust solutions for sustainable water resource management.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

7. To bolster our regional response, it is crucial that we embed climate resilience into our development strategies. Water is a fundamental component of our economies, agriculture, industries, and daily lives. Securing water means not only ensuring reliable access to safe, sufficient, and affordable water but also effectively managing the risks associated with water-related disasters and pollution. By integrating climate resilience into our planning, we can better safeguard our communities and infrastructure against future challenges.

8. On a national level, Brunei Darussalam has made notable strides in tackling river pollution. In 2018, we launched the Sungai Brunei Cleanup Project, a comprehensive initiative designed to improve waste management and water quality. This project includes house-to-house waste collection, the management of floating waste and debris, and the implementation of a vacuum sewerage system with secondary treatment plants in three Kampong Ayer villages. Additionally, we have introduced measures to collect waste from beneath houses, all aimed at enhancing the cleanliness and sustainability of the Brunei River.

9. Furthermore, in response to the significant environmental impact of plastic waste, we initiated the Nationwide Beach Clean-up Campaign, known as 'Coastal Marvel,' in July 2021. This whole of national effort has

received widespread support and involvement, leading to the removal of 18.7 metric tons of waste, with plastics representing 40% of the total. This campaign reflects our commitment to addressing plastic pollution and preserving our natural environments.

10. Brunei Darussalam has long enjoyed consistent access to clean water, a testament to our ongoing commitment to securing our water future. Our dedication is embodied in the 'Brunei Darussalam Towards Water Security 2021-2035' initiative, a strategic framework aimed at ensuring the long-term sustainability and resilience of our water resources. This framework focuses on balancing water demand and supply, improving water use efficiency, safeguarding water quality, and enhancing governance structures. These key pillars are essential for navigating the complexities of water security in an era of climate change, where every drop of water becomes increasingly precious.

11. In conclusion, achieving long-term water security is a goal that demands both proactive and collaborative efforts. As we aim to strengthen connectivity, build resilience, and ensure water security across the Mekong and ASEAN regions, it is crucial that we adopt comprehensive strategies. These strategies should focus on preparedness, technological advancement, and enhanced regional cooperation.

12. Our collective experiences and insights offer valuable perspectives as we navigate the complex challenges facing our water systems. By sharing knowledge, leveraging advanced technologies, and fostering effective partnerships, we can address these challenges with greater effectiveness.

This collaborative approach not only supports the capacities of our individual nations but also contributes to greater regional cohesion, setting the stage for a more sustainable and resilient water future.

13. With the esteemed leadership of our Chair, H.E. Dr. Bounkhan Vorachit, Minister of Natural Resources and Environment of Lao PDR, Chairperson of the Lao National Mekong Committee, and Chairperson of the MRC Council for 2024, we are optimistic about the continued progress toward our common objectives. Together, we are presented with an important opportunity to advance towards a Mekong and ASEAN region that is increasingly interconnected, resilient, and secure in its water management, fostering benefits for both present and future generations.

Thank you for your attention.