



Statements by

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2nd ASEAN-MRC Water Security Dialogue:

*Sustainable Investment for a Connected, Resilient, and Water-secure
Southeast Asia*

18 September 2024, Vientiane, Lao PDR

- ***Her Excellency Madam Bounkham Vorachit, Minister of Natural Resources and Environment of Lao PDR, Chairperson of MRC Council Member for 2024.***
- ***Your Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies, and Gentlemen,***

It is my great honour to address this esteemed assembly at the 2nd ASEAN-MRC Water Security Dialogue. As we gather at this critical juncture, our region faces mounting challenges related to water security, climate change, and sustainable development. The theme, "Sustainable Investment for a Connected, Resilient, and Water-Secure Southeast Asia," underscores the urgency of our shared responsibility.

***Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates
Ladies and Gentlemen,***

Lao PDR reaffirms our unwavering commitment to fostering regional cooperation, sustainable investment, and innovative solutions that uphold the well-being of our people and the health of our shared water resources. We firmly believe that sustainable development is attainable through enhanced regional connectivity. Situated at the heart of the Mekong River Basin, we recognize the vital role of transboundary cooperation in addressing shared water challenges. We are dedicated to promoting modern infrastructure development that not only facilitates the movement of people and goods but also advances water management and sustainability, ultimately contributing to regional integration. Furthermore, enhanced digital connectivity, particularly in water resource management, will empower us to make well-informed decisions and bolster cross-border collaboration. Harmonized policies and regulatory frameworks will further ensure the sustainable and equitable use of the Mekong River Basin for the benefit of all ASEAN member states.

Lao PDR is increasingly vulnerable to climate risks, such as floods, droughts, and extreme weather events, and we are steadfast in our commitment to building resilience. Climate change adaptation, focusing on the development of climate-resilient infrastructure, is a top priority. Strengthening early warning systems and disaster preparedness will better safeguard our communities. Moreover, sustainable land use policies that preserve our natural resources while promoting climate-resilient agricultural and forestry practices are integral to our strategy. We will continue to support initiatives that foster regional cooperation in improving disaster risk reduction and responding to climate-related challenges.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Water security is of paramount concern for Lao PDR, and we are resolute in addressing this challenge through sustainable investments and innovative practices. We pledge to expand water infrastructure to ensure access to clean and safe drinking water, improve sanitation, and enhance wastewater management systems, recognizing their significance to public health and community development. Additionally, we will promote sustainable water resource management by implementing best practices such as rainwater harvesting, water recycling, and efficient water use, essential to balancing development needs with environmental sustainability.

Lao PDR remains dedicated to enhancing regional cooperation, particularly within the Mekong River Commission, as we move forward. Collaborative efforts are integral to ensuring the equitable and sustainable management of our shared water resources, benefitting all member states. Addressing transboundary water issues through strengthened cooperation will guarantee that all members benefit from the resources of the Mekong River. We are committed to contributing to broader regional efforts to achieve sustainable development by fostering collaboration and strengthening governance frameworks.

Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Lao PDR stands ready to contribute to the success of this dialogue and work diligently toward a more connected, resilient, and water-secure future for Southeast Asia. We are steadfast in our belief that investing in infrastructure, promoting regional cooperation, and sharing knowledge will safeguard the future of our shared water resources, ensuring the prosperity and sustainability of our region for generations to come. Together, let us continue our collaborative efforts, investing in solutions that will render our region more resilient and water-secure.

Thank you.