



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

18 September 2024, Vientiane, Lao PDR

CHAIR'S SUMMARY STATEMENT

1. The 2nd ASEAN-MRC Water Security Dialogue was held in Vientiane Capital, Lao PDR, on 18 September 2024. The Dialogue was welcomed by His Excellency Saleumxay Kommasith, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Lao PDR, on behalf of the ASEAN Chair 2024. It was opened and chaired by Her Excellency Dr Bounkham Vorachit, Minister of Natural Resources and Environment of Lao PDR, Chairperson of the Lao National Mekong Committee, and Chairperson of the Mekong River Commission (MRC) Council for 2024. Ministers, Vice Ministers, and high-level delegates from all the ASEAN Member States participated in this significant gathering. Participation and contribution from Dialogue Partners and Development Partners and other experts were appreciated.
2. Under the theme "*Sustainable Investment for a Connected, Resilient, and Water-secure Southeast Asia,*" the Dialogue reflected our shared commitment to addressing critical water security challenges across the Mekong and ASEAN region. Co-convened by the MRC and ASEAN Secretariats, this Dialogue has evolved into an important mechanism that connects the ASEAN and MRC cooperation frameworks together in advancing Mekong and Southeast Asia's sustainable development by fostering knowledge exchange, best practices, and stronger interconnections between the ASEAN Member States for the benefit, not only of our governments but also for the peoples.
3. The Dialogue recognised the various pressing challenges that ASEAN and the Mekong region face, including the impacts of climate change; disaster-related events such as severe floods, landslides and droughts; human-

induced changes, water pressure, and food security concerns. The ongoing impacts of these challenges demand urgent action. The need for increased investment in water infrastructure, technologies, climate adaptation, capacity building, and sustainable management and conservation of natural resources was emphasised, along with the importance of enhanced cooperation among ASEAN Member States, their regional institutions, partners and the private sector to address these interconnected issues effectively. It was acknowledged that only through a concerted and unified regional and transboundary effort can we ensure resilience and water security for the people and ecosystems of Southeast Asia.

4. ASEAN and the MRC were commended for their leadership roles in addressing water security and promoting regional cooperation. ASEAN has been instrumental in fostering political dialogue and connectivity, while the MRC continues to serve as a trusted “regional knowledge hub”, a mature “water diplomacy platform” and a successful model of transboundary water cooperation in the Mekong region. Both organisations were acknowledged for their critical contributions to ensuring sustainable water management and peace across Southeast Asia. All ASEAN Member States reiterated our collective commitment to support ASEAN and MRC cooperation, as reflected in our national statements.
5. Looking ahead, ASEAN Member States are committed to deepening our partnerships and to sustaining our efforts towards a more connected and resilient Mekong and ASEAN region. This entails not only increasing investments in sustainable water management and infrastructure but also continuing to strengthen policies, share knowledge, and build human and institutional capacity. The Dialogue reinforced a forward-looking and optimistic vision where regional cooperation, mutual understanding, and shared investments and joint projects will drive progress toward water security and sustainable development for all. We look forwards to convening the 3rd ASEAN-MRC Water Security Dialogue in the near future.

This Chair’s Summary Statement was issued at the 2nd ASEAN-MRC Water Security Dialogue, on 18 September 2024, in Vientiane Capital, Lao PDR.
