

**2nd ASEAN-MRC Water Security Dialogue:  
Sustainable Investment for a Connected, Resilient, and Water-secure Southeast Asia  
18 September 2024  
Souphattra Hotel, Vientiane, Lao PDR**

**Closing Remarks  
by  
Mr Oudomsack Philavong,  
DG of Department of Water Resources of Lao PDR  
Chairperson of AWGWRM**

- Dr Surasri Kidtimonton, Chair of the MRC Joint Committee for 2024
- Distinguished colleagues,
- Ladies and gentlemen,

As we conclude the 2nd ASEAN-MRC Water Security Dialogue I would like to express my sincere appreciation for your active participation and valuable contributions throughout the discussions. This important dialogue has provided a vital platform for fostering collaboration, sharing knowledge, and exploring innovative solutions to the water challenges our communities face. They gave us insights which are critical in advancing our collective understanding of the ways forward for a water-secure Southeast Asia.

We have had the privilege of hearing from some of the leading voices in water resource management, regional cooperation, and sustainable investment. The dialogues highlighted several key themes—among them, the critical importance of addressing water security through sustainable investment, climate change adaptation, transboundary water management, and, most importantly, fostering regional cooperation.

Water security is at the heart of our region’s sustainable development. It an important component to everything from food and energy security to economic resilience and social stability. Ensuring that our water resources are managed sustainably is not just a national priority but of regional importance. No country, no matter how well-prepared, can address these challenges alone. It is from this background where the power of collective action and cooperation becomes vital.

We have made significant progress in identifying the key priorities for development in the sector. The discussions have emphasized the need for scaling up of sustainable investments in water-related infrastructure and nature-based solutions. The engagements have underscored the urgency of building climate resilience into all our water management strategies. Climate change is no longer a distant threat; it is here with us, and its impacts are being felt across the Mekong and beyond. Strengthening our capacity to adapt and mitigate the impacts must remain a top priority.

***Distinguished colleagues,***

It is well aware that water does not recognize borders, and our shared rivers and water bodies require us to work collaboratively across boundaries. The Mekong River Basin, in particular, represents a unique opportunity for ASEAN and MRC members to demonstrate how coordinated water governance can lead to sustainable outcomes that benefit all. Perhaps the most important message that have emerged from dialogue is the need for enhanced regional cooperation. Southeast Asia’s future will be shaped by our ability to work together, beyond the

national boundaries to address the complex challenges of water security, disaster management, and sustainable development.

As we look to the future, it is clear that the road ahead will not be easy. The challenges we face—whether they be increasing demand for water resources, the impacts of climate change, or the need for more robust governance—are daunting. But they are not insurmountable. What we have seen today is that when we come together with shared purpose and a commitment to collaboration, we can develop innovative solutions that will make a lasting difference.

In the coming months and years, it will be important to translate the outcomes of today's discussions into actions. It means using the lessons learned into national and regional policies, mobilizing resources to support sustainable water infrastructure, and continuing to promote strong partnerships between governments, private sectors, civil society, and communities.

*Ladies and gentlemen,*

On behalf of the ASEAN Working Group on Water Resources Management, I would like to extend my gratitude to all the organizers, speakers, and participants who have contributed to the success of this dialogue. I would especially like to thank the Mekong River Commission for their unwavering support in organizing this event. Thank you once again for your participation. I look forward to our continued collaboration in addressing the challenges and opportunities related to water security in the Mekong sub-region. Wish everyone good health and safe travel as you embark on the journey back home.

**Thank you very much.**  
**Khop Jai Lai Lai**