

Opening Remarks

Samdech Akka Moha Sena Padei Techo HUN SEN Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Cambodia and Co-Chair of the 2nd MLC Leaders' Meeting



- *Excellency Li Keqiang, Premier of the People's Republic of China and the Co-Chair of the Meeting,*
- *Excellency Heads of Government from Mekong Countries,*
- *Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,*

At the outset, on behalf of the Royal Government and people of Cambodia, I am pleased to warmly welcome Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen to Phnom Penh for the 2nd Mekong-Lancang Cooperation Leaders' Meeting. I remember when we last met at the 1st Leaders' Meeting in Sanya, I mentioned that the word "**Sanya**" sounds similar to the Khmer word "**Promise**". Metaphorically speaking, the "**Sanya Declaration**" is in a sense a solemn promise by all six Mekong countries to nurture and nourish the new born sub-regional mechanism into a full-fledged cooperation scheme that can bring peace, security, sustainable growth and prosperity to our region. Today, we could together agree that the "**Sanya Promise**" is very well kept.

As we meet in the capital of Phnom Penh where the Mekong River runs through, we can see and appreciate the mighty power of this river which supports the livelihood of millions of peoples along its course. Geographically, indeed this river binds our countries together but it is far more than a physical connection. This river has inspired us to forge our common destiny where friendship, good neighborliness, shared peace and prosperity are the norms. This spirit has motivated all of us to harness this energy in order to transform the "**Sanya Promise**" into a reality. Thus, Cambodia is proud and indeed privileged to host this meeting at the important juncture where we are about to move from a very humble nurturing stage to an "**Expansion Stage**" marked by an ambitious agenda of partnership and cooperation.

- *Excellency Co-Chair, Excellency, Ladies and Gentlemen,*

For Cambodia, this 2nd Leaders' Meeting is deeply significant; and it is not by coincidence that we have chosen the theme: "**Our River of Peace and Sustainable Development**". **Sustained Peace and Long-Term Sustainable Development** must exist and move forward together. We can never and should never take them for granted. Amidst fast changing regional and global uncertainties, both politically and economically, our Mekong region will be tested once again. We should not forget that not so long ago our region was marred by wars and competition of ideologies. For Cambodia, I still have bitter memories of how external

interferences have brought turmoil and chaos, destroyed our peace and stability, and hindered growth for several decades.

Our regional experience has reaffirmed that we can achieve peaceful co-existence through mutual respect for each other's territorial integrity and sovereignty and non-interference in each other's internal affairs. This is consistent with the values of the Mekong Lancang Cooperation, which adhere to the principles of consensus, equality, mutual consultation and coordination, voluntarism, common contribution and shared benefits, and respect for the United Nations Charter and international laws. These values have served very well our region in our aspiration for "**Peace and Sustainable Development**".

- ***Excellency Co-Chair, Excellency, Ladies and Gentlemen,***

I hope you like the Exhibition of the Mekong Lancang Cooperation's real achievements. I am indeed impressed with the pace and progress of development of our LMC. Also I am pleased to take note that the 3rd LMC Foreign Ministers' Meeting held last month in **Dali**, 132 projects have been approved as the First Batch of Projects of LMC Special Fund 2017 and another list of Projects of LMC Special Fund with 214 projects has been submitted for our evaluation. Clearly, this is one of the most tangible and defining characteristic of the MLC being a "**Project/Cooperation-Based Mechanism**", and not a mere "**Talk-Shop**".

So far, we have mobilized our political will, we have combined our economic strengths, we have exploited our regional complementarity to promote our respective country development and re-invigorate our sub-regional growth in the spirit of our MLC Way, which is very much along our well-known ASEAN Way. We have found great synergy in effectively mirroring the three key areas of cooperation of the LMC with the 3 pillars of the ASEAN Community. That is why we have gained much speed in making the LMC mechanism play a vital role in supporting the interests of the Mekong countries to extract maximum benefits from the ASEAN Economic Community, especially with China which is already a strong supporter of ASEAN integration and global multilateralism.

With this strong personal conviction, I would like to declare open the 2nd MLC Leaders' Meeting and I look forward to your active contribution to ensure the success of today's meeting. Thank you.
