

Tokyo Declaration of the First Meeting between the Heads of the Governments
of Japan and the Mekong region countries
—Establishment of a New Partnership for the Common Flourishing Future—

We, the Heads of the Governments of Japan, the Kingdom of Cambodia, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, the Union of Myanmar, the Kingdom of Thailand and the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam, met in Tokyo, Japan on 6 and 7 November 2009, for the first-ever Summit Meeting between Japan and the Mekong region countries.

We noted with deep satisfaction that the relationship and cooperation between Japan and the Mekong region countries have made considerable progress in various fields such as political and economic areas for the past several years, and welcomed the smooth implementation of initiatives such as the "Japan-Mekong Partnership Program" launched in 2007, and the "Mekong-Japan Exchange Year 2009," decided at the First Mekong-Japan Foreign Ministers' Meeting in January, 2008. We appreciated the consultations and cooperative efforts of relevant ministries, as shown in the Second Mekong-Japan Foreign Ministers' Meeting in Siem Reap, Cambodia, on 3 October, 2009 and the Mekong-Japan Economic Ministers' Inaugural Meeting in Hua Hin, Thailand, on 24 October, 2009.

The leaders of the Mekong region countries highly appreciated Japan's important role in the region, in particular development cooperation which placed Japan as a long-standing, reliable and indispensable partner for the Mekong region.

We shared the views that there is significant potential in the Mekong region to be realized through cooperative efforts between Japan and the Mekong region countries, which would bring further mutual benefits for both Japan and the Mekong region. The Prime Minister of Japan reaffirmed that Japan will continue its commitment to cooperate with the Mekong region for its development, and highly appreciated the self-help efforts made by the Mekong region countries, particularly Thailand, one of the contributors to development of the Mekong region through bilateral and regional frameworks. The leaders of the Mekong region countries welcomed Japan's continuing strong interests in the region, as well as Thailand's strong commitment as a donor to the development in the region, which will be guided by the spirit of genuine friendship and sincere cooperation between Thailand and the Mekong region

countries. We also recognized that the Mekong region still confronts regional and global challenges including climate change, natural disasters and infectious diseases, which are threats to human security.

In this regard, we strongly recognized the need for further strengthening the Mekong-Japan relationship and cooperation in order to maximize the potential of the Mekong region to cope effectively with various challenges.

Today, we decide to establish "A New Partnership for the Common Flourishing Future" between Japan and the Mekong region countries for further development of the Mekong region and further expansion of cooperation between Japan and the Mekong region.

We hereby acknowledge the following:

I. Shared Vision

We shared the following visions of the Mekong region and the Mekong-Japan relationship in order to make clear the future direction of our cooperation:

Bearing in mind the development achieved to date in the Mekong region, the integration of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) scheduled for 2015 and the importance of narrowing the development gaps among ASEAN member countries, the Mekong region should aim for

- an open region that enjoys permanent peace and stability based upon universal values as stated in the ASEAN Charter;
- a region that realizes further economic development and actively contributes to the further integration of ASEAN and to the building of an East Asian community based on the principles of openness, transparency, inclusiveness and functional cooperation in the long run; and
- a region that pursues sustainable development compatible with conservation of the environment and is resilient to various threats endangering human being and human dignity.

In order to realize the above-mentioned visions of the Mekong region, Japan reaffirms its intention to cooperate with the Mekong region countries. Therefore, the Mekong-Japan relations should seek

- to build a mutually beneficial relationship based on the spirit of *yu-ai*, or

“fraternity,” which is a way of thinking that respects one’s own freedom and individual dignity while also respecting the freedom and individual dignity of others;

- to contribute to peace and prosperity of the ASEAN and East Asia as well as building of an East Asian community based on the principles of openness, transparency, inclusiveness and functional cooperation in the long run;
- to be mutually important partners in political, economic and social terms; and
- to cooperate with various regional frameworks and to promote multi-layered cooperation.

II. Priority Areas

In order to achieve the visions indicated above, we are determined to give priority to the following areas. We shared the recognition to specify action plans in the Mekong-Japan Action Plan 63, as annexed to this declaration. Regarding the Mekong region as a prioritized area, Japan will continue the policy to expand its Official Development Assistance (ODA) to Cambodia, Laos and Viet Nam (CLV countries) respectively as well as to the Mekong region as a whole. Japan commits more than 500 billion JPY of ODA in the next 3 years for the Mekong region to flourish further more.

1. Comprehensive Development in the Mekong Region

We recognized that development in the Mekong region should be a model for development that reinforces regional integration, achieves sustainable development compatible with conservation of the environment and is beneficial for both the Mekong region countries and third countries. We also reiterated that the existing development gaps among ASEAN member countries have to be narrowed substantially as early as possible in order for the Mekong region countries to actively participate in the integration of ASEAN, which is essential to the building of the ASEAN Community as well as of an East Asian community based on the principles of openness, transparency, inclusiveness and functional cooperation in the long run.

In this regard, we placed priority on the following tasks, which should be implemented intensively for the comprehensive development of the Mekong region:

(i) Further Development of both Hard and Soft Infrastructure

In order to create a more integrated region, Japan and the Mekong region countries will continue to use their resources for the development of both hard and soft infrastructure in the Mekong region. Regarding hard infrastructure, they will work to the utmost to implement projects for the development of the economy in the Mekong region, including the infrastructure of the Development Triangle and the remaining part along the East-West and Southern Economic Corridors. As for soft infrastructure, Japan will cooperate with the Mekong region countries in implementing various programs for human resources development in the economic area, such as customs clearance training programs in order to transform these important roads into "Economic Corridors," which will be more easily and effectively used by private business.

(ii) Promotion of Public-Private Cooperation

Japan and the Mekong region countries will promote cooperation between public and private sectors that contributes to the effective implementation of cooperation projects in various areas, such as infrastructure improvement, natural resources development and the improvement of logistics networks. They will provide more opportunities for coordination between the public and private sectors.

They will continue to make efforts for the smooth implementation of existing economic agreements such as Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs) and bilateral investment agreements. They will utilize existing public and private sector dialogues between Japan and Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar and Viet Nam (CLMV countries) respectively.

They recognize that there are distinguished training and academic institutions in the Mekong region countries that can serve as training venues for the people in the Mekong region countries and will cooperate with these institutions.

(iii) Support of the Development of Cross-regional Economic Rules and Systems

The Mekong region countries will make efforts to harmonize the regional rules in trade and investment in order to promote integrity and boost economic activities in the region as a whole, such as the acceleration of implementation of the Greater Mekong Subregion Cooperation (GMS) Cross Border Transport Agreement (CBTA) and the strengthening of the protection of intellectual property rights. Japan appreciates such efforts made by the Mekong region countries, and will support them through technical assistance, including dispatching experts, by Japan External Trade Organization (JETRO).

2. Construction of a Society that values Human Dignity

We recognized that the Mekong region, despite its recent development, still confronts challenges such as poverty, environmental devastation and climate change, some of which are the results of development itself. These challenges need to be overcome as early as possible.

We are determined to tackle these challenges, especially in the following areas, in order to establish a society where each person can fully preserve one's human dignity from the viewpoint of "human security" through protection and empowerment of individuals and communities:

(i) Environment and Climate Change – "A Decade toward the Green Mekong" Initiative

Japan and the Mekong region countries emphasized that issues regarding the environment and climate change need to be tackled urgently while the region develops, and welcomed the initiative to start "a Decade toward the Green Mekong" in the year 2010. They will enhance cooperation on environment conservation so that the Mekong region can achieve a "Green Mekong" with lush greenery, rich biodiversity and resilience to natural disasters through measures including reforestation. They will promote cooperation on Mekong water resource management. They expressed their commitment to continue to contribute in bringing about a successful outcome of the Copenhagen Conference and will also work together to further reduce greenhouse gas emissions under the principle of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), including "common but differentiated responsibilities." In this regard, the Mekong region countries reaffirm their support for Japan's initiatives in global environmental protection, and express their appreciation for Japan's new proposal, "Hatoyama Initiative," announced by Prime Minister Yukio Hatoyama at the United Nations Summit on Climate Change on 22 September, 2009 which includes providing more financial and technical assistance than in the past in accordance with the progress in international negotiations.

(ii) Overcoming Vulnerability

Japan and the Mekong region countries will cooperate actively in reducing poverty, narrowing economic disparities, enhancing food security and improving public health, to achieve well-balanced development in the Mekong region. In this regard, Japan puts emphasis on assistance in such areas as primary education and clearance of landmines and unexploded ordnances (UXOs), including cluster munitions, which promotes the improvement of the daily lives of people and contributes to the development of the region. Japan and the Mekong region countries will also focus on cross-border issues such as disaster

risk reduction, influenza pandemic, infectious diseases and counter human trafficking by strengthening cooperation with one another in various regional and multinational fora. Japan will provide support for the people easily affected by the economic slowdown.

3. Expanding Cooperation and Exchanges

We recognized that people-to-people contacts between Japan and the Mekong region provide a basis for stronger ties in various fields. In this regard, Japan and the Mekong region countries intend to further expand cooperation, exchanges and dialogues from the grass-roots to the most senior levels in broad areas such as politics, security, economy, culture, tourism and youth exchange.

We focused on the following measures, which are the keys to the expansion of cooperation and exchanges:

(i) Enhancing Human Exchanges

Japan and the Mekong region countries intend to conduct high-level visits more frequently. They will also further promote people-to-people exchanges, especially youth exchanges, at the grass-roots level. In this regard, Japan will invite a total of around 30,000 people, including the youths, from the Mekong region countries in three years from 2010 through various mechanisms such as training and exchange programs. Japan and the Mekong region countries will activate exchange among parliamentarians and political parties.

(ii) Promotion of Tourism

Based on the common view that promotion of tourism between Japan and the Mekong region is an extremely effective way of expanding human exchanges, Japan and the Mekong region countries will continue to strengthen exchange and cooperation among tourism authorities and industries. The Mekong region countries will continue to make efforts ensuring tourist safety to establish an image of a "safe and secure Mekong region," which will contribute to the increase of domestic and foreign tourists including Japanese tourists. Japan will provide relevant assistance to these efforts.

(iii) Protection of Cultural Heritages

Protection of cultural heritage is fundamental to present important parts of tradition and pride in each country and leads to mutual respect of national sovereignty. Taking this into account, Japan and the Mekong region countries will strengthen cooperation on the protection of cultural heritage in the Mekong region. In this regard, they will promote exchanges and cooperation between experts on the protection of cultural properties for sharing knowledge and

experiences.

4. Enhancing Cooperation with Other Frameworks in the Asia-Pacific Region

Japan and the Mekong region countries acknowledge the existing multi-sectoral cooperation mechanisms, such as the Mekong River Commission (MRC), the ASEAN-Mekong Basin Development Cooperation (AMBDC), the GMS, the Ayeyawady - Chao Phraya - Mekong Economic Cooperation Strategy (ACMECS), the Mekong - Ganga Cooperation with India (MGC) and the recently launched U.S. - Lower Mekong Ministerial Meeting, and seek a more optimized way of effective functioning among these mechanisms for promoting development and prosperity in the Mekong region.

Japan and the Mekong region countries intend to closely cooperate on regional and global issues of common concern in political, economic, social and security areas, and to deepen and broaden the existing Mekong-Japan cooperation and cooperation under other frameworks, such as the ASEAN - Japan Dialogue Relations, the ASEAN+3 process, the East Asia Summit (EAS), the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) as well as Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC), to ensure peace, stability and prosperity in the region.

5. Mekong-Japan Related Meetings

We determined to regularize Mekong-Japan related meetings in order to move the Mekong-Japan cooperation forward. The Mekong-Japan Summit Meeting is to be held in Japan every three year, and on the occasion of multilateral meetings in other years. The Mekong-Japan Foreign Ministers' Meeting is to be held regularly, hosted by a Mekong region country if it is the ASEAN Chair, and by Japan in other cases; the Mekong-Japan Economic Ministers' Meeting will be held regularly to promote cooperation based on the Mekong-Japan Economic and Industrial Cooperation Initiative (MJ-CI); and the Mekong-Japan Senior Officials' Meeting is to be held annually to follow-up and prepare for the Summit Meeting and the Foreign Ministers' Meeting.