

**Greater Mekong Subregion Economic Cooperation Program  
14<sup>th</sup> Ministerial Conference  
19-21 June 2007  
ADB Headquarters, Manila, Philippines**

**Report on the GMS Plan of Action to the Ministerial Meeting**

**Daw Myo Nwe  
Chairperson, Senior Officials' Meeting**

Mr. Chairman, Co-Chairman, Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates,  
Ladies and Gentlemen:

I have the honor to present the report on the status of implementation of the GMS Plan of Action that was adopted at the last Ministerial Meeting in Lao PDR in 2004. This report has been reviewed and discussed at the Senior Officials' Meeting held yesterday, 19 June 2007.

I had the privilege of chairing that meeting together with Mr. Arjun Thapan, Director General, Southeast Asia Department of the Asian Development Bank.

We are pleased to report that considerable progress has been made in implementing the Plan of Action. Major undertakings are being fast tracked. Most of the initiatives have been completed and some are well advanced.

Connectivity in the subregion has been build substantially in the development of the GMS corridors, such as the completion of the Second Mekong International Bridge between Mukdahan, Thailand and Savannakhet, Lao People's Democratic Republic.

This virtually completes the East-West Corridor. Similarly, the conclusion of the financing and implementation arrangements for the Third Mekong International Bridge between Chiang Khong, Thailand and Houayxay, Lao PDR is an important step in the completion of the North-South Corridor. The three major economic corridors are well advanced, however much remains to be done.

The finalization and signing of all the annexes and protocols of the GMS Cross Border Transport Agreement and its pilot implementation in selected border crossing points complement these key transport infrastructure investments.

Other achievements in connectivity enhancement include the progress toward forging agreements for regional power trade and the completion of the first phase of the Information Superhighway Network. Moving forward, the new GMS Transport Sector Strategy will guide the development of a network of inter-connecting multi-modal transport corridors that effectively links the GMS countries with neighboring regions.

A new GMS Energy Strategy Study is being prepared that will also help in integrating our economies. The Energy Strategy will address critical energy efficiency and security issues and identify alternative and renewable energy sources.

We have also accomplished much toward improving our competitiveness, individually and as a subregion. In this regard, in addition to enhancing physical infrastructure, we have been working towards the advancement of policy and regulatory environment.

The GMS Agriculture Ministers Meeting was held in April 2007 and the ministers had endorsed the Strategic Framework for GMS Cooperation in Agriculture and the Core Agriculture Support Program. Under this Program, new directions for subregional cooperation covering cross-border

agricultural trade and investment, sharing of agricultural information, enhancing capacity in agricultural science and technology could be further implemented.

Likewise, the Strategic Framework for Action on Trade Facilitation and Investment has offered a strong foundation for future action in customs procedures, inspection and quarantine measures, trade logistics, and the mobility of business people. The GMS Business Forum has also strengthened and generated substantial private sector's interest to capture many opportunities emerging from increased subregional cooperation.

### **Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen:**

Developments in the last two years also show how we can work to encourage a sense of community in our countries. These include activities to protect our increasingly threatened environment, deal more effectively with transboundary health threats, and enhance human resource development.

The Core Environment Program and its flagship initiative, the GMS Biodiversity Conservation Corridors Initiative, are gradually making an impact on the subregion's major environmental challenges, coordinated by the Environment Operations Center established in April 2006. Surveillance and coordination systems as well as overall institutional capacity are being strengthened to effectively control the trans-border spread of communicable diseases.

The Phnom Penh Plan for Development Management continues to produce a growing core group of highly competent administrators / officials in the GMS member countries. Under the PPP Development management,

an institutional network of research and learning has also been established aiming to build capacity in the region.

Coordination among development partners involved in the GMS Program has also further strengthened and intensified. His Excellency, Sok Chenda, who chaired the Development Partners' Meeting yesterday, will report to the outcome of their meeting today.

On behalf of the SOM, I wish to express our appreciation to our development partners, who have been providing financial and technical assistance as well as valuable knowledge transfer to the GMS region.

**Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen:**

Much has indeed been achieved in the period since the last Ministerial Meeting in Vientiane in December 2004. The Plan of Action (2006-2008) being adopted by the GMS Ministers, had guided us well and virtually all that we set out to achieve in that Plan have come to fruition.

In this regard, Your Excellencies may wish to consider directing the preparation of a new action plan for the year 2008-2012 that may be submitted for endorsement at the Third GMS Leaders' Summit early next year.

Based on the record of achievements and lessons learned from that Plan of Action as well as with further guidance from the results of the Midterm Review of the GMS Strategic Framework that has just been completed, I am confident that we will be able to create an appropriate, results-oriented, and realistic action plan.

On behalf of SOM, I have an honour to submit the Senior Officials Report for your Excellencies' kind adoption.

Allow me to conclude my report by expressing on behalf of the GMS countries our sincere appreciation to the Asian Development Bank for its continuing strong partnership and support for the GMS Program.

Thank you.