



## Second GMS Economic Corridors Forum (ECF-2)

**Governors Forum**  
**16 September 2009**  
**Phnom Penh, Cambodia**

### Summary of Proceedings

#### I. Introduction

1. The Governors Forum was chaired by H.E. Mr. Sok Chenda Sophea, Secretary General, National Coordinator and Head of the GMS Secretariat, Council for the Development of Cambodia (CDC), and co-chaired by Mr. Arjun Thapan, Director General, Southeast Asia Department, Asian Development Bank (ADB). The Forum was attended by the GMS Senior Officials of Cambodia, the People's Republic of China (PRC), Lao PDR, Myanmar, Thailand, and Viet Nam, governors and other local provincial executives from border provinces of the GMS countries, representatives of the private sector including the GMS Business Forum, ADB resource persons, and representatives of development partner organizations, e.g., bilateral and multilateral agencies, and other international development organizations (see **ANNEX 1** for the list of participants). The Governors Forum is a sub-group within the Economic Corridors Forum (ECF) and serves as a mechanism for networking and exchange of information and experience on GMS economic corridor development among governors (or their equivalent) of provinces along the GMS economic corridors. The objectives of the meeting were to (i) raise the awareness and enhance the participation of provincial authorities in GMS economic corridor development; (ii) highlight key components of the strategies and action plans for developing GMS economic corridors, including the necessary actions to resolve issues and constraints; (iii) discuss and clarify the roles of the public and private sectors in economic corridor development and opportunities for cross border cooperation along the GMS economic corridors; and (iv) facilitate cooperation among provincial authorities and between the public and private sectors along and around the GMS economic corridors. (A copy of the Agenda is in **ANNEX 2.**)

#### II. Session 1: Opening Session

2. H.E. Sok Chenda Sophea, CDC, Cambodia, and Meeting Chair, extended his warm welcome to all the participants and his sincere appreciation to the ADB for its assistance in organizing the meeting. He stated that since its inception in 1992, the GMS Program has made significant achievements in terms of building the growing trust and confidence among the GMS countries and in supporting a favorable environment for continued growth and achieving the common vision for an integrated, harmonious and prosperous subregion through the strategic pillars of the 3 Cs of connectivity, competitiveness and community. The 3<sup>rd</sup> GMS Summit has provided clear directions for future actions in transforming transport corridors to full-fledged economic corridors. He emphasized the role of the private sector as the engine of growth and continued progress in the subregion by way of intensifying efforts for vibrant cross-border trade and investments, and fostering private partnerships for increased investments and employment opportunities. At the same time, the full engagement of provincial authorities working together with private sector representatives is critical in addressing the challenges and taking advantage of opportunities to ensure the success of the

economic corridor development. He looked forward to their full participation and contribution to the discussion.

3. H. E. Cheang Am, Provincial Governor, Svay Rieng Province, Cambodia, and Vice Chair, stated that the establishment of the Governors Forum was an important milestone in the emergence of the GMS as a dynamic region and that local officials were pleased that they were now being closely involved in subregional cooperation that would ultimately benefit their communities. Local officials were in an ideal position to provide useful suggestions, given their familiarity with local conditions, particularly the problems, barriers, and opportunities for economic and social development in the border areas. He expressed his full support to current and future moves to accelerate the transformation of transport corridors into fully functioning economic corridors. Even now, Svay Rieng Province is benefiting from the ADB-funded cross-border power transmission line that runs along the province and transfers power from Viet Nam to Cambodia, and from the Phnom Penh-Ho Chi Minh City Highway that has boosted trade for the province. Increased interconnectedness in the GMS economic corridors through improved transport routes, power transmission systems, telecommunications networks, as well as trade and transport agreements will lead to increased cross-border economic exchange, employment generation, and improved living conditions in the border areas.

4. Mr. Arjun Thapan, Director General, Southeast Asia Department, ADB, stated that the first ever Governors Forum represents a major milestone in GMS economic corridor development as it provides the framework and mechanism for stronger cooperation among provincial and local officials in addressing cross-border issues. Through their active participation and sharing of insights, the participants will be able to demonstrate their strong support for the GMS economic corridor development program, their strong ownership of the ECF, and their readiness to work together to ensure the success of the corridor development endeavour. He encouraged local authorities to actively participate in the discussions, and contribute to the frank and robust debate regarding location-specific challenges and opportunities, and in defining the complex matrix of cooperation among the different players. He also looked forward to their clear expression and demonstration of support, ownership, and commitment to ensure the success of the economic corridor development approach.

5. In their statements, the Head of Governors of the other GMS countries were unanimous in expressing their strong support for the establishment of the Governors Forum and their commitment to work together in the common efforts to transform the transport corridors into full-fledged economic corridors. Their individual statements are summarized below:

**PRC:** Mr. Gu Zhaoxi, Vice Governor of Yunnan Province stated that Yunnan Province has instituted several measures to support economic corridor development, including the establishment of various working mechanisms within the framework of the GMS Program and the China-ASEAN cooperation program. He cited some positive developments including the improvement of transport infrastructure, communications system through optic fiber transmission for information hub, new wave of foreign direct investments, and increase in annual growth of trade. Other remarkable achievements include cooperation in hydropower, mining, agriculture and tourism, opening of electrical power transmission lines and power purchase agreements with neighboring countries, cooperation in agriculture, tourism, and social development – particularly in the prevention of HIV/AIDS, and addressing human and drug trafficking. He mentioned 5 proposals: (i) continue working mechanism of involving local leaders along the corridors to coordinate infrastructure construction, other economic activities, and ecological protection; (ii) set up pilot areas of regional cooperation with neighboring countries; (iii) quicken pace for tourism cooperation, implement GMS strategy and action plan for tourism; (iv) strengthen cooperation in environment, education, public health and public security; and

(v) strengthen information exchange through the GMS Information Highway and GMS Trade and Investment Facility Database.

**Lao PDR:** H.E. Mr. Souphanh Keomany, Vice Governor of Savannakhet Province, stated that the GMS Program has helped transform Lao PDR, from a land-locked to a land-linked country and improve the lives of its people. The physical base for the GMS North-South and East-West economic corridors in Lao territory is almost completed, and work is ongoing on the implementation of the Cross Border Transport Agreement (CBTA). The development of the EWEC is bringing benefits to the local people in terms of increased trade and investment, greater income generating opportunities, increased tourist arrivals, and increased foreign direct investments and cross-border trade with neighboring countries. He pointed out, however, some constraints that need to be addressed effectively, including the low level of infrastructure development and services, unskilled labor force, weak management capacity, limited number of private sector entities, low education and knowledge level, and insufficient production and consumer market. Consequently, the following are urgently required: substantial support to human resources development to improve labor skills, improvement of infrastructure facilities and services – particularly feeder roads connecting to major production areas and ecotourism sites, electricity and water supply, and legal framework regulations and procedures to implement the CBTA. He also stressed the need to effectively address social and environmental concerns along with corridors development.

**Myanmar:** Daw Myat Myat So, Deputy Director General, Foreign Economic Relations Department, Ministry of National Planning and Economic Development, noted the significant achievements of the GMS Program since its inception in 1992 and that the benefits of improved physical connectivity are expected to extend to remote and border areas along the economic corridors. She cited the Governors Forum as an important part of the ECF in promoting the development of transport corridors into full-fledged economic corridors. Myanmar has taken steps in support of this approach, including the establishment of a national office for the development of border areas. Myanmar has also formulated action plans for implementation in 18 regions in remote border areas that cover the development of facilities like schools, hospitals, rural health centers, roads, bridges, dams, TV stations and other facilities with their own national resources. She noted other national development measures to boost the country's potential for tourism and trade, and the setting up of arrangements to facilitate cross-border formalities with neighboring countries. She emphasized the role of the Governors Forum as a mechanism for facilitating cooperation and coordination among local authorities in pursuing economic corridor development.

**Thailand:** Mr. Jadul Apichatabutra, Chief Inspector General, Ministry of Interior and Head of Thai Delegation, expressed Thailand's strong support for the establishment of the Governors Forum within the GMS framework to help unify the work of the central and local governments. Thailand has adopted appropriate measures to support the Governors Forum, including the issuance of instructions and guidance to 24 governors of provinces along the economic corridors and the inclusion of the GMS Program as a regular agenda item in monthly provincial meetings. The related provinces of Thailand are ready to support the work of the economic corridors, especially in such fields as tourism, trade and investment, transport infrastructure, and social cooperation. Work at the provincial level reflects not only the actual problems and constraints but also helps mobilize cooperation from all sectors. Nevertheless, local governments face administrative and budget constraints for which support from the central government and ADB are required.

**Viet Nam:** H.E. Nguyen Trung Tin, Vice Chairman, Ho Chi Minh City People's Committee, noted the important achievements of the GMS Program that have had positive impacts on the lives of peoples in the subregion. He stated that now, more than ever and in the face of the current financial crisis, cooperation among the GMS countries is needed to facilitate subregional trade. Clear understanding of the respective roles and responsibilities, and enhanced cooperation and strong

ownership of provincial and local authorities and the private sector are important in ensuring the success of the development of the economic corridors.

### **III. Session 2: Overview of GMS Program and GMS Economic Corridor Development**

6. Mr. Arjun Goswami, Advisor and Head, Regional Cooperation and Integration Group, Southeast Asia Department, ADB, gave an overview of the GMS Program, its strategic priorities based on the 3 Cs (connectivity, competitiveness, and community), and substantial achievements in the priority sectors of cooperation. He pointed out that an important element of the GMS regional economic strategy is the development of economic corridors, namely: the North-South Economic Corridor (NSEC), East-West Economic Corridor (EWEC), and Southern Economic Corridor (SEC). These corridors are expected to link the subregion to major markets, extend the benefits of improved transport linkages to remote and landlocked locations in the GMS, open up investment opportunities from within and outside the subregion, and promote synergy and enhance the impact of subregional activities through the clustering of projects. He noted, however, that while there have been significant improvements in physical connectivity of corridor areas, these have not yet been matched by increases in private sector investment in the corridors. Thus, relevant strategies and action plans have been developed in order to fast track the transformation of the transport corridors into genuine economic corridors.

7. He cited a number of issues and challenges that need to be addressed in the economic corridor approach. These include the wide disparities in income and poverty levels within national components and among subcorridors, delays in the full implementation of the CBTA that pose a major hindrance to the efficient flow of people and goods along the corridors, the need to improve the business environment and encourage investments, and the huge amounts of financial resources required for infrastructure and soft aspects of corridor development. Finally, corridor development poses potential undesirable consequences for people residing in the influence areas, and for the environment.

8. Critical to the success of the economic corridor development approach are strong political commitment at all levels, broad-based support and participation of stakeholders, human resource development to raise awareness and the level of occupational skills, improved skills in trade and transport facilitation and in logistics development, close monitoring to ensure effective and timely response, sustained funding support, and effective institutional mechanisms and arrangements. Of highest priority is the need for effective transport and trade facilitation (TTF) in order to address impediments to the smooth flow of vehicles, goods, and people across borders in the subregion. While TTF initiatives have been put in place, such as the CBTA and the Strategic Framework for Action in Trade Facilitation and Investment (SFA-TFI), there remain serious impediments to their effective implementation and a round of consultations was held recently to address these weaknesses.

9. Mr. Goswami recalled that as directed by the GMS Leaders at their Third Summit in March 2008, a GMS Economic Corridors Forum (ECF) has been established to serve as the main advocate and promoter of GMS economic corridor development. The ECF held its inaugural meeting in Kunming, Yunnan Province of the PRC in June 2008. He explained that the Governors Forum is a body established within the ECF, and is composed of governors (or their equivalent) of the provinces along the GMS economic corridors. The principal role of the Governors Forum is to raise the awareness, increase participation and secure commitment of the local/provincial authorities to the development of the GMS economic corridors.

### III. Session 3: Strategies and Action Plans for the Development of the North-South, East-West, and Southern Economic Corridors

10. H.E. Ros Seilava, Deputy Secretary General, Ministry of Economy and Finance of Cambodia, presented the key components of the strategies and action plans for developing the GMS economic corridors. The long-term vision for the GMS economic corridors is that of a dynamic, progressive, and well-integrated economic corridor that will serve as an instrument for economic and social development. The economic corridors are expected to stimulate economic growth that reduces poverty and raises the standard of living in areas covered by these corridors, and development that is inclusive, balanced and sustainable.

11. However, before the full potential of the economic corridors could be realized, a number of impediments and constraints need to be overcome, including lack of hardware (i.e., physical infrastructure and facilities like rail, road, warehousing facilities, and equipment at border checkpoints), and the need for supporting software that address bottlenecks (e.g., policies, rules and regulations, systems and procedures at border checkpoints, and improved logistics). Human resource development constraints (low skills base in some corridor areas; lack of awareness, knowledge, and skills in transport, trade and investment facilitation by local officials) also hinder the growth of trade and investments in the corridors areas. Effective and functioning institutional mechanisms and arrangements need to be put in place to ensure sustained implementation of corridor initiatives. Coordination among central and local agencies involved in transport, trade, and investment facilitation is a major issue. Also, the involvement of local authorities in corridor development is inadequate, and mechanisms to promote and support private sector participation are lacking and not very effective. Lack of information on programs, projects, and opportunities among different agencies and the private sector further complicates the situation.

12. He noted that the strategies and action plans developed for the 3 corridors will serve as a roadmap for all the concerned players towards addressing these constraints and achieving the vision for economic corridor development. Each strategy and action plan is designed to match the characteristics of each corridor, and outlines the specific projects, measures and activities, expected results and outputs, implementing agency(ies) or body(ies), timeframe for completion, and current status. Common to the 3 strategies and action plans are the following key priorities: (i) strengthening infrastructure and connectivity in the corridor and surrounding areas; (ii) streamlining cross-border transactions and transportation costs through transport and trade facilitation initiatives; (iii) empowering and deepening the involvement of the private sector through appropriate policies, rules and regulations; (iv) addressing social and environmental concerns; and (v) strengthening coordination and collaboration between public and private sectors, between central and local officials, and among government agencies.

13. Mr. Oudet Souvannavong, Secretary General of the GMS Business Forum, presented the private sector's assessment of the issues and constraints in the development of economic corridors, and the priority actions and measures needed to address these constraints. He made the following observations from the point of view of transport and logistics and based on the experience of multinational and national transport and logistics companies operating in the transport corridors as reported during the Symposium on Transport and Logistics held in Kunming, PRC on 6-7 June 2009: (i) EWEC: has weak link to market and industrial demand areas, incomplete infrastructure and customs transit system (CTS) between Thailand and Myanmar, few transport operators registered, route has no legal links to ports and industrial zones necessitating transshipping and increased transportation costs, high risk of empty load on return, expensive transport registration and pre-payment guarantee fees, EWEC guarantee system has limited support from national customs authorities, and complex protocols for selection of transport operators and for obtaining transport permit and quota; (ii) NSEC: 2 NSEC subcorridors have links with vibrant industrial zones, transport

traffic is high although transport infrastructure is not yet completed and CBTA protocols are not yet in place, in-land transport traffic between industrial zones in Thailand, Vietnam and the Pearl River Delta in China is increasing and growing quickly because of industrial and manufacturing logistics link between the industrial production zones; and (iii) SEC: road infrastructure and harmonization of CTS and administration procedures are yet to be developed. He noted that there are issues common to the 3 corridors, including limited public information dissemination about CBTA, lack of technical expertise and management skills on the part of local transport and logistics operators, and lack of funds and access to credit for local operators. Several recommendations to address these issues that arose from the High Level Symposium on Logistics Cooperation and from the GMS-BF Transport and Trade Working Group were presented, including, among others, adoption of measures to enhance public awareness and public-private sectors dialogue about CBTA, harmonization of policies and technical standards to accelerate CBTA implementation, upgrading of information technology level and ensuring systems compatibility across the subregion, development of human resources and skills certification for logistics operations, extension of sub-transport routes to link industrial zones and ports to the economic corridors, establishment of a private sector GMS logistics association - similar to the GMS Freight Forwarders Association (FRETA), development of Business Development Services (BDS), and development of a special funding/credit program to support the standardization and modernization of transport and logistics along the economic corridors.

#### **IV. Session 4: Implementing the Strategies and Action Plans for Economic Corridor Development**

14. Dr. Porametee Vimolsiri, Senior Advisor, National Economic and Social Development Board of Thailand presented the respective roles of the public and private sectors, and provincial and local authorities in implementing the strategies and action plans for the development of the economic corridors. He stressed that the development of the corridors is essentially led by the private sector, whose main role is to drive the key economic activities that will transform the corridors into genuine economic corridors, namely: trade (particularly cross-border trade), investment, and production activities and employment creation. There are, however, impediments to increased private sector participation, concerning perceived or actual risks to investment, weaknesses in legal and regulatory frameworks, and lack of access to capital. The role of the public sector, on the other hand, is to serve as catalyst and facilitator by providing the enabling environment (i.e., hardware and software), conducive policy and regulatory environment, basic infrastructure and utilities, and by developing the institutions for promoting investments and facilitating cooperation among the countries and areas included in the corridors. Finally, the provincial and local authorities in the areas and communities covered by the economic corridors have important functions to perform including (i) identification of key issues and concerns that impact on local communities and proposing measures to address them; (ii) helping to facilitate transport, trade, and investment in their respective areas; (iii) promoting networking and exchange of information and experiences with counterparts in other corridor areas to come up with common approaches to shared concerns; and (iv) assisting in adapting regionwide/corridor-wide programs to specific circumstances in their respective localities.

15. He also presented key candidates for cross-border cooperation including (a) promotion of multi-country production and processing links in agriculture and agro-industry (including livestock, fishery and forestry); (b) promotion of multi-country manufacturing/production networks that take into account differences in skills and wage differentials, natural resource endowments and access to capital and technology; (c) facilitation of cross-border trade and investment; (d) joint tourism development; (e) development of cross-border economic zones and industrial estates; (f) coordination in transport, power and telecommunications development; and (g) human resource development and addressing migration issues. The ECF, GF, and GMS BF have important roles to play in strengthening the institutional mechanism for cross-border cooperation.

16. Mr. Hoang Van Dung, Chairman of GMS Business Forum (GMS BF) and First Vice President of Viet Nam Chamber of Commerce and Industry, presented the role of the private sector in the development of the GMS economic corridors, and the areas and mechanisms for cross-border cooperation along these corridors. He briefed the participants about the membership, strategic focus, scope of work, and significant achievements of GMS BF since its establishment in 1995. One notable achievement was the organization of the GMS-Business and Investment Dialogue as a side event of the Third GMS Summit in March 2008 and which discussed and reported to the GMS Leaders on key challenges to trade and investment in the GMS. In line with its commitment to work in partnership with the GMS Governments towards realizing the subregion's economic potential, GMS BF is working on important initiatives including proposals to create (i) a GMS freight forwarder and transport association (FRETA) that will facilitate the operation of GMS-based transport companies across the region and their access to regional or international insurance and customs guarantee schemes, and (ii) an SME Regional Development Fund that will provide technical assistance and equity investments in country-based or local guarantee institutions that will underwrite export financing for SMEs. Other activities to be pursued are the development of industrial and free trade zones, cross-border agricultural activities, pro-poor production activities, support for supply chains linking micro and small enterprises to large companies and niche markets, and support for pro-poor tourism activities. To improve coordination, GMS BF recommends that the work of its working groups be integrated with those of the GMS public forum and working groups.

17. Mr. Florian Steinberg, Senior Urban Development Specialist, Transport and Urban Development Division, Southeast Asia Department, ADB, presented the planned GMS Border Towns Development Project (CTDP) that will facilitate the transformation of GMS transport corridors into full-fledged economic corridors through priority infrastructure investments and capacity building in selected corridor towns. CTDP's geographic focus will cover: SEC (Poipet, Battambang City, Svay Rieng City, and Bavet, Svay Rieng Province in Cambodia; and Moc Bai in Viet Nam); and EWEC (Kaysone Phomvihane, Phine and Dansavanh in Savannakhet Province in Lao PDR; Lao Bao, and Dong Ha in Viet Nam). The economic infrastructure component will include markets, trade centers, logistics infrastructure, dry ports, incubators for SMEs, and transport facilities. The environmental infrastructure component will include urban roads and bridges, water supply, sanitation – waste water treatment, solid waste management, and flood control/drainage. The project will assist the target towns through strategic economic development planning, investments (soft loan from ADB, cofinancing from bilateral agencies), and capacity development of local authorities. The project preparatory technical assistance is in the pipeline for ADB funding in 2010, while the loan/grant is in the pipeline for 2011, with estimated budget requirement of \$104 million consisting of ADB funding, bilateral co-financing, and private sector investments.

### ***Open Discussions***

18. Following are some of the views and insights shared during the open discussions:

19. Representative of TNT as operator and user of transport corridors noted that EWEC has moved so far forward to where it is today because of significant cooperation among concerned authorities (transport and customs authorities). Actual processing time to cross borders is now down to 30-40 minutes, whereas previously, it took 3-4 hours for actual processing time, thus EWEC is working to promote movement of goods, vehicles, and people. Still there are problems, one of which is the lack of provision for electronic transmission of required documents, necessitating having to bring and present hard copies of documents to be stamped for customs clearance.

20. Representative of the Mekong Tourism Coordinating Office noted improvements made by some countries (Lao PDR, Cambodia, and Thailand) in easing overland cross-border travel

requirements and as well as work in progress in the other countries regarding pre-arrangements for visa on arrival. He emphasized the need for each country to iron out visa regulations, facilities and controls at the airports that would greatly enhance ease of travel within the GMS.

21. Mr. Wei Ran, Deputy Secretary General of the People's Government of Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, PRC, stated that Guangxi, as the only region in China linked with ASEAN by both land and sea, and as a member of the GMS Program, has unique geographical advantages in strengthening cooperation in trade, culture, education, tourism, and other sectors. He stressed that equal attention should be given to the development of both land and marine economic corridors in the pursuit of economic corridor development, and proposed the following points: (i) enhance transportation connectivity in cities along the economic corridors; (ii) promote the development of marine transportation passage; (iii) strengthen cooperation in trade facilitation and investment; (iv) strengthen industrial cooperation; (v) promote the development of cross-border economic cooperation zones and other nodes; and (vi) encourage and support the involvement of the private sector as a main player in the development of the economic corridors.

22. There are ongoing efforts to streamline trade procedures and formalities as provided in the CBTA. Immediately following the ECF-2, Cambodia and Thailand are scheduled to sign an addendum to their bilateral agreement that will accelerate the exchange of traffic rights between the two countries through the Aranyaprathet-Poipet border crossing, and help address the current problem of transshipment, which is causing delays in cross-border trade and tourism between the two countries. Consultations have also been held towards strengthening the national institutional arrangements in the GMS countries for implementation of the CBTA and other TTF initiatives.

23. Participants actively shared their views on how to move forward the concepts and principles articulated in the various sessions. Specific recommendations put forward by participants are summarized below:

- Provincial authorities unanimously stressed the importance of promoting intra-GMS trade to accelerate economic and social development in the subregion.
- They recognized, however, that there were location-specific challenges and that there is a need to enhance the understanding of the economic corridor development approach at the local level.
- They emphasized that support is needed not only in developing the backbone infrastructure but also the subsidiary routes and feeder roads in transport corridor development, and in improving communication facilities to enhance the role of provincial governors.
- Local governments will benefit from support from central agencies and development partners to improve their operational mechanisms and resources, and empower them to perform their key roles in accelerating corridor development and the well-being of their peoples.
- Assistance is needed in addressing security concerns and ensuring effective enforcement of local and international laws at the local level to guarantee security for travellers.
- Development of corridor towns needs to be rationalized in order to maximize these towns' contributions to social and economic development goals in the corridors.
- Environmental sustainability and climate change responsiveness of corridor development activities must be ensured.
- Provision of an enabling business climate could not be realized without workable public-private sector cooperation mechanisms and the clear definition of the division of responsibilities to implement the action plans for the corridors. Some specific recommendations made were the setting up of tourist information centers and the development of business networking arrangements for the private sector.

- A strategic and integrated approach is required in addressing cross-border transport and trade facilitation. This includes the adoption of measures to reduce the costs of moving goods and people across borders in order to enhance the viability of the economic corridors, supporting the improvement of the software aspects of the CBTA – including standardizing and harmonizing customs procedures and other software aspects of CBTA implementation, and implementing the single visa scheme and visa free arrangements to ease travel within the GMS.
- The next step in the evolution of the Governors Forum may be the setting up of smaller groups of provincial authorities within countries in order to determine their specific requirements for support from central government and development partners, specific sectors of cooperation, and approaches on how to get economic activities going.

## **V. Session 4: Closing Session**

24. The Chair noted that the active participation of the governors at the Forum demonstrated their strong interest in economic corridor development and provided meaningful guidance for required follow-up actions. He stressed the need to move one step further from transport corridors to economic corridors and to address not only trade issues but also try to energize the provinces along the corridors by putting in place policies that would allow these provinces to prosper. Moving forward, the GMS countries would need to set up mechanisms that would allow more in-depth discussions towards defining in greater detail the roles of the governors and the public and private sectors, and the mechanisms for cooperation among key players in economic corridor development.

25. In response to the Chair's request, the Co-Chair summarized the main points discussed at the Forum that the Chair would report to the ECF the following day. He concluded that the meeting demonstrated the strong interest in and commitment to foster stronger collaboration and enhanced coordination of economic corridor development programs on the part of the governors, the public and private sectors of the GMS countries, and the development partners.

### **Closing Remarks**

26. In his concluding remarks, the Chair, H. E. Mr. Sok Chenda Sophea, thanked his Co-Chair, fellow GMS Senior Officials and their respective delegations, the representatives of the GMS private sector, the development partners, and the ADB staff and secretariat for their assistance and active contribution to the success of the meeting.

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