

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

Excellency Sok Chenda, Minister attached to the Prime Minister, Royal Government of Cambodia,

Mr. Arjun Thapan, Director General, Southeast Asia Dept., Asian Development Bank,

Honorable Governors,

Distinguished Delegates,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good Morning!

First of all, on behalf of the Myanmar Delegation, I would like to extend my deep appreciation to the Royal Government of Cambodia for graciously hosting the Governors Forum back to back with the Second Economic Corridors Forum and the excellent arrangements made for the Forum.

It is indeed an honor and privilege for me to make brief statement at this inaugural meeting of the Governors Forum.

The GMS Countries met for the first time in 1992 and launched a program of sub-regional economic cooperation designed to enhance economic linkages across their borders.

It is now more than 16 years of cooperation among the six GMS countries. During this remarkably long term of cooperation, there are substantial improvements in each and every GMS priority sector. The physical connectivity in transport, telecommunications, energy, electric power and the development of soft infrastructure in agriculture, tourism, environment, human resource, trade facilitation and investment and private sector participation are witnessing the Program's significant achievements.

Since its inception in 1992, the Greater Mekong Sub-region Economic Cooperation Program has persistently focused on transportation initiatives to enhance connectivity and improve competitiveness within the sub-region. As it evolves, it is expected to extend beyond physical connectivity; the benefits of improved transport linkages are to be extended to remote and border areas along the economic corridors.

Today's Governors Forum will raise awareness of the needs and priorities of economic corridor development at provincial and local level to make it more meaningful for development.

Distinguished Delegates,  
Honorable Governors,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

The Governors Forum is part of the Economic Corridors Forum, which has been established since last year to promote the development of the GMS economic corridors. When the economic corridor concept was adopted in 1998, the corridor framework envisioned the transformation of three transport corridors namely the East West Economic Corridor, the North-South Economic Corridor and the Southern Economic Corridor, into full-fledged economic corridors.

The East West Economic Corridor - from Danang in Vietnam to Mawlamyaing in Myanmar - the Myanmar portion of about 200 kilometers covers from Myawady to Mawlamyaing. In this corridor, a road section of 40 kilometers between Thingannyinaung and Kawkareik is to be upgraded. It has been surveyed and designed in mid 2007.

In North South Economic Corridor, the route Kunming-Chiang Rai-Bangkok passes Myanmar and our portion is Mongla-Kyaington-Tachileik section of about 257 kilometers.

The Southern Economic Corridor can reach Dawei in the southern part of Myanmar if we have road connection from Bangkok to Dawei.

Distinguished Guests,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Here, I would like to take the opportunity to present our national endeavors with regards to the development of border areas of our country, where many national races are residing.

The government has established Ministry of Progress of Border Areas and National Races and Development Affairs since early 1990s. The 13-Year Master Plan for the development of border areas and national races was formulated and established under firstly, a short-term 3-Year Plan from 1993-94 to 1995-96, followed by two 5-Year medium-term plans until 2005-06. The development measures have been implemented in 18 regions in the remote and border areas of the whole country, which is 31.9% of the total area of Myanmar, benefiting 5.3 million people or 11.2% of total population.

Development measures include establishment of schools, monastic schools, hospitals, dispensaries, rural health centers, roads, bridges, dams,

canals, reserved forests, telephones, telegraphs, TV sub-stations, electricity, diesel generators and cattle breeding. The government is undertaking these measures with own national resources.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The GMS East West Economic Corridor passes Mon and Kayin States whereas the North South Economic Corridor passes through Shan State. These areas are designated as regions where national development measures are being undertaken.

These regions are rich with natural resources and they have their own uniqueness in terms of cultural heritage, whereby we have great potentials for tourism and investment in particular. The enhancement of trade and transport facilitation measures and private sector investment under the GMS Program will promote cross border movement of people, services and goods as well.

You may be aware that we have Yunnan Province of China on our north-eastern side, Lao PDR on our east and Thailand is on the south-eastern side of Myanmar. The border areas comprise of the areas on these sides and on our western and north-western parts as well.

If we look at the economic side, as far as the GMS Countries are concerned, border trade with Thailand is being established under Myanmar-Thailand Bilateral Border Trade Agreement since 1996. We have four border trade posts on Myanmar-Thai border. We have established Myawady Border trade zone and on the software side, export-import, SPS, quarantine, security and immigration formalities are administered through One-Stop Service at each border checkpoint. Regional border trade chambers of commerce have been organized and regular meeting are being held between traders and responsible personnel from Myanmar, Thailand and Lao PDR.

Between Myanmar and China, we have 105-Mile border trade zone. With regards to immigration measures, e-entrance system at border checkpoints – Myawady, Tachiliek and Kawthoung – along Myanmar-Thai border and Muse checkpoint on Myanmar-China border is being established.

Last but definitely not least, is the role of private sector in our GMS Program. We warmly welcome the private sector participation in the Governors Forum and we do look forward to having substantial inputs and contribution from the private sector at this Forum

Honorable Governors,  
Distinguished Delegates,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

To achieve our committed goal of ‘fully connecting GMS’, greater resources, greater inputs, greater efficiency and greater efforts from all GMS countries at all levels, whether union, central or provincial, are of vital importance to the sub-region.

Especially this Forum, which will be a mechanism for coordination among governors of the provinces along the GMS economic corridors, it is my sincere belief that it will be a mechanism for facilitating cooperation and coordination among the local authorities of the GMS Countries in pursuing our common goal of economic corridor development.

Thank you.