

KUNMING CONSENSUS

“ESTABLISHING THE ECONOMIC CORRIDORS FORUM FOR THE SUSTAINABLE AND BALANCED DEVELOPMENT OF ECONOMIC CORRIDORS IN THE GREATER MEKONG SUBREGION”

**Joint Ministerial Statement
Kunming, Yunnan Province, People’s Republic of China
6 June 2008**

Whereas, notable achievements have been made by the Greater Mekong Subregion (hereinafter referred to as the GMS) countries in improving physical connectivity along its East-West, North-South and Southern corridors, thus creating conditions for fostering broad-based economic growth and integration in the GMS;

Whereas, non-physical barriers, restrictive and non-harmonized policies and regulations, as well as social and environmental issues associated with increased connectivity persist, thereby preventing GMS countries from taking full advantage of their progress in strengthening infrastructure linkages and holding back the economic, social, and environmental integration of areas along the GMS corridors;

Whereas, institutional arrangements for promoting and coordinating economic corridor development in the GMS need to be established and be made operational as soon as possible to help accelerate the transformation of current and future transport corridors into full-pledged economic corridors;

Whereas, the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) “Toward Sustainable and Balanced Development of the GMS North-South Economic Corridor and Enhanced Organizational Effectiveness for Developing Economic Corridors” that was signed by GMS Ministers during the Third GMS Summit held in Vientiane, Lao PDR on 30-31 March 2008 agreed to (i) promote, support and pursue the transformation of GMS corridors into full-fledged economic corridors; (ii) strengthen the institutional arrangements for developing such corridors; and (iii) establish an Economic Corridors Forum, the inaugural meeting of which would be convened as soon as possible after the Third GMS Summit;

Whereas, in their Joint Summit Declaration, the Heads of Governments of the GMS countries welcomed the planned establishment of an Economic Corridors Forum to promote economic corridor development in the GMS:

We, the Senior Minister of Commerce and Minister in charge of the GMS Program of the Kingdom of Cambodia; the Minister of Commerce of the People’s Republic of China; the Minister of the Prime Minister’s Office and GMS Minister of the Lao People’s Democratic Republic; the Minister of Commerce of the Union of Myanmar; the Vice Minister of Commerce of the Kingdom of Thailand; and the Vice Minister of Planning and Investment of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam, met in Kunming, Yunnan Province, People’s Republic of China for the inaugural meeting of the Economic Corridors Forum (hereinafter referred to as the ECF). We were joined by senior officials from the six GMS countries and the Asian Development Bank (hereinafter referred to as ADB). We hereby agreed to:

1. **Officially establish the ECF, with this meeting in Kunming as its inaugural meeting.** The ECF shall be the main advocate and promoter of economic corridor development in the GMS, and shall be part of the GMS institutional mechanism. It shall promote coordination, networking and facilitation of initiatives to develop GMS economic corridors. Existing GMS institutional bodies, i.e., the GMS Summit, the Ministerial-level

Conference, the Senior Officials' Meeting, and sector working groups and forums, shall be involved to the fullest extent possible in the operations of the ECF.

2. **Endorse the terms of reference of the ECF** recommended by the Experts' Group on Economic Corridors Forum (hereinafter referred to as the Experts' Group), which met in Kunming on 5 June 2008. Among others, the ECF shall: (i) provide a platform for strengthening collaboration among GMS forums and working groups, and links among the East-West Economic Corridor, North-South Economic Corridor and the Southern Economic Corridor (hereinafter referred to as EWEC, NSEC and SEC, respectively); (ii) discuss strategies and measures to address major issues and bottlenecks in the development of economic corridors; (iii) discuss the implementation of strategies and action plans for economic corridor development and proposed actions to resolve implementation issues; (iv) increase involvement of local authorities and communities, and expand public-private partnership in economic corridor development; and (v) help mobilize technical and financial resources to support economic corridor development.

3. **Endorse the establishment and terms of reference of the Governors' Forum** as proposed by the Experts Group. The Governors' Forum, which shall be established as part of the ECF, is aimed at raising the awareness, heightening the participation and securing the commitment of governors (or their equivalent) of provinces along the GMS corridors to the development of economic corridors. Among others, the Governors Forum shall: (i) provide a platform for networking among governors (or their equivalent) along the GMS economic corridors; (ii) consider possible actions to resolve issues that arise in the implementation of strategies and action plans for economic corridor development; (iii) bring to the attention of ECF issues that need resolution at the central level; (iv) assist in resolving issues that arise in implementing approved cross-border initiatives in respective areas; and (v) promote private sector participation in cross-border development.

4. **Endorse the basic thrusts and elements of the proposed Strategy and Action Plan for NSEC development, and support its expedient implementation.** This Strategy and Action Plan is expected to (i) result in the adoption of a multi-sector, holistic approach, and provide a vision and framework for the development of NSEC; (ii) improve coordination and ensure effective implementation of NSEC initiatives; and (ii) help in mobilizing resources and broadening support for NSEC development.

5. **Encourage all concerned GMS instrumentalities to review and update the strategy and program for the development of EWEC taking into account developments since 2002, and to formulate a strategy and action plan for the development of SEC as soon as possible.** In this regard, we request the continued assistance from ADB.

6. **Look forward to reviewing, endorsing, and putting into action the respective strategies and action plans for EWEC and SEC.**

We agreed that the venue of subsequent meetings shall be rotated among the GMS countries or as agreed to by the GMS countries. We also took note of the wish expressed by the Chinese Government that Yunnan Province is willing to collaborate with any future host in providing the venue for the ECF Meeting.

We wish to express our thanks and appreciation to the Government of the People's Republic of China, including authorities of Yunnan Province and its capital city of Kunming, for the gracious hospitality and excellent arrangements that ensured the success of this meeting.

Adopted in Kunming on 6 June 2008.