

**Congratulatory Message of H.E. SOK Chenda Sophea**  
**Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs and International**  
**Cooperation of the Kingdom of Cambodia**  
**Mekong-Lancang Cooperation Week 2024**

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On behalf of the Royal Government and people of Cambodia, I extend warm wishes to the peoples of the Mekong-Lancang region on the Eighth Anniversary of Mekong-Lancang Cooperation and MLC Week 2024 from 18<sup>th</sup> to 24<sup>th</sup> March, 2024.

The launch of Mekong-Lancang Cooperation in Sanya in 2016 reflected the common aspirations of our six Leaders to promote peace, stability, and all-round development – and to build a community with a shared future of peace and prosperity for our people and beyond. Over eight years, the MLC mechanism has reached new heights. It has become an effective model of win-win cooperation, offered consistent and significant progress, and enhanced cooperation. It has also promoted the region’s long-term growth and sustainable development, especially through the Five-Year Action Plan for 2018 to 2022, which yielding fruitful benefits for the well-being of our peoples.

Despite growing geopolitical uncertainty, volatility, and complexity, the framework remains on its practical path. At the Fourth MLC Leaders’ Meeting in December 2023, our heads of government adopted the **Nay Pyi Taw Declaration**. In agreeing to advance the Lancang-Mekong Economic Development Belt, they highlighted the need to seize opportunities in the fields of science, technology and industry. Leaders also agreed to cooperate in new energy fields – such as electric vehicles and photovoltaics – and consider a Lancang-Mekong Comprehensive Information Platform for Agricultural Economy, Trade and Technology.

Leaders adopted a new **Five-Year Plan of Action for 2023 to 2027** which includes exploring for new models of tourism cooperation. As part of efforts to engage youth in new patterns of travel across different platforms, Cambodia is launching a Mekong-Lancang Youth Tourism Ambassador web portal. This recognizes the ability of young people to easily adapt to technology and digital transformation.

The third document adopted – **Joint Initiatives on Lancang-Mekong Cooperation Innovation Corridor Development** – aims to improve collaboration in science, technology and innovation. Fields covered range from poverty alleviation,

industrial development and public health to digital and green technologies and entrepreneurship – including the climate for startups. In Cambodia, the main focal point for developing such innovation corridors across the Mekong-Lancang region is the Ministry of Industry, Science, Technology and Innovation.

The MLC Special Fund remains a crucial financing instrument for new projects in the fields of rural development, poverty alleviation, water resources, agriculture, air transport, health, education, tourism, culture and women's empowerment. I sincerely thank the Government and people of the People's Republic of China for their support and active engagement in advancing the MLC framework.

Mekong-Lancang Cooperation will continue as a positive catalyst with other mechanisms. It complements the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership as well as China's Belt and Road Initiative, Global Development Initiative, Global Security Initiative, Global Civilization Initiative and Global Artificial Intelligence Governance Initiative. These are designed to further promote inclusive growth and digital economic development, which will advance sub-regional integration and ASEAN community building.

I am confident the framework will continue to support a community with a shared future with prosperity for all as a promising development for the region.

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