

**ACMECS Foreign Ministers' Meeting,
4 May 2007, Mandalay, Myanmar**

Joint Statement

1. As agreed at the ACMECS Ministerial Retreat and the ACMECS Foreign Ministers' Meeting with Development Partners on 3-4 July 2006, in Pakse, Champasak Province, Lao PDR, the ACMECS Foreign Ministers' Meeting was held on 4 May 2007 in Mandalay, the Union of Myanmar.
2. The respective delegations to the meeting were led by H.E. Mr. Huy Kanthoul Vora, Secretary of State of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of the Kingdom of Cambodia, H.E. Dr. Thongloun Sisoulith, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Lao People's Democratic Republic, H.E. U Nyan Win, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Union of Myanmar, H.E. Mr. Nitya Pibulsonggram, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Thailand and H.E. Mr. Pham Gia Khiem, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam.
3. The Ministers reaffirmed their strong political will to further strengthen the aims and objectives of the Bagan Declaration to increase competitiveness, to narrow economic disparity and to promote socio-economic development in the sub-region, and to realize the Bagan Declaration efficiently, effectively and in a timely manner.
4. The Ministers expressed appreciation for the reports of the Working Groups Chairmen on the progress and status of ACMECS projects. The Ministers updated each other on the activities in the areas of cooperation coordinated by their respective countries. The Ministers also exchanged views on the status of implementation of

the assigned ACMECS projects. The Ministers expressed their satisfaction on the significant progress made in the areas of cooperation such as trade and investment facilitation, transport linkages, agriculture, industry and energy, public health, and tourism cooperation and human resource development. They also noted that most of them are bilateral projects involving Thailand. In this regard, the Ministers reiterated the need to speed up the implementation of common and bilateral projects between the ACMECS member countries.

5. In the area of Trade and Investment Facilitations, the Ministers welcomed the progress made in facilitating the flow of goods and investments, which are crucial for job creation, income promotion and reduction of socio-economic disparities in the ACMECS region. They welcomed Thailand's call for the establishment of more one-stop-service centers along the East-West Economic Corridor. The Ministers endorsed the proposal of Vietnam that an ACMECS Leaders' Declaration on Facilitation of Trade, Investment and Tourism in border areas be discussed and adopted at the 3rd ACMECS Summit with a view to reducing barriers to trade, investment and tourism flows at the border areas. They also called for more involvement from the business sector and encouraged the joint ACMECS Business Council to become a driving force in business sector cooperation in the region. In this regard, they encouraged the ACMECS Business Council to arrange their meetings regularly.
6. In the area of Agricultural Cooperation, the Ministers tasked the officials to expedite, through the Working Group on Agriculture, exploration of Cambodia's proposal on establishing an association of rice producing countries. The Ministers welcomed Cambodia's offer to host a meeting to discuss the possibility of establishing an association of rice producing countries.

7. The Ministers also looked forward to cooperating in contract farming, and committed to the expeditious conclusion and signing of Memoranda of Understanding on contract farming.
8. The Ministers noted the inclusion of new common project on “Development of Jatropha plantation and Bio Fuel production in ACMECS Region” under the agricultural cooperation for a closer cooperation on bio-fuel crops production among the ACMECS member countries.
9. In the area of Industrial and Energy Cooperation, the Ministers expressed their continued support for the ongoing ACMECS study on alternative and renewable energy sources, including hydropower and bio-fuels so as to build up closer cooperation for energy security among the ACMECS member countries.
10. In the area of Transport Linkages, the Ministers noted progress of several road and railway linkage projects. They underlined the importance to develop infrastructure support for transport linkages among ACMECS member countries. In this regard, the Ministers welcomed Thailand’s concept paper on positioning the sub-region as a transportation hub and its offer to organize a special ministerial level meeting to this end in the near future.
11. In the area of Tourism Cooperation, the Ministers welcomed the progress made in the ACMECS Single Visa pilot project between Thailand and Cambodia and looked forward to the signing of the Agreement on the Implementation of the ACMECS Single Visa between Cambodia and Thailand at the ACMECS Summit in Vietnam in October 2007, while understanding that other members may consider joining the scheme when they are ready. The Ministers welcomed the progress on negotiation of the Arrangement among Laos, Thailand and Vietnam on the Operation of the Tourism Road Transport in an effort to facilitate the

- movement of tourists by road vehicles between and among the three countries and expected the Arrangement to be concluded by the end of 2007. They also noted that creation of job opportunities in the tourism sector will contribute towards increasing income among ACMECS member countries. The ministers also encouraged to establish an ACMECS Eco-tourism network and to organize an ACMECS Tourism Festival soon in the near future.
12. In the area of Human Resource Development, the Ministers expressed their appreciation to the Government of Thailand for extending training and scholarship programmes to neighbouring countries. They also emphasized the need for capacity building and training programs for ACMECS member countries. They welcomed the interest of development partners in pursuing such programmes in collaboration with ACMECS. The Ministers reiterated the initiative on the partnership cooperation between Vietnam and Thailand in promoting human resource development for ACMECS countries as stated in the 2nd ACMECS Summit Declaration and expected that the two countries shall consider signing of an MOU on their partnership in vocational training development for the ACMECS countries, preferably on the occasion of the 3rd ACMECS Summit. The Ministers expressed their appreciation to the Government of the Union of Myanmar for its endeavour to get the endorsement at the 6th ASEAN Ministers for Agriculture and Forestry (AMAF) + 3 meeting for the common project on Strengthening Human Resource Capacities for Agricultural Competitiveness of ACMECS Countries. The Ministers underlined the need for capacity building in this area and welcomed the willingness of the People's Republic of China and the Republic of Korea to support ACMECS member countries to implement the project.
 13. In the field of Public Health, the Ministers expressed the need for collective strategic measures to strengthen cooperation among the

ACMECS countries. They also called for heightened efforts in the prevention and control of emerging infectious diseases, in particular through implementation of the Immediate Action Plan for Preventing and Controlling Avian Influenza Pandemic adopted at the ACMECS Special SOM on Avian Influenza Pandemic Preparedness on 8 May 2006 in Bangkok.

14. The Ministers welcomed the Development Partners' willingness to work closely in partnership with the ACMECS member countries in realizing the goals of ACMECS. They commend Japan for coming up with specific assistance plans in various ACMECS projects. They appealed to other Development Partners who have yet to come up with a specific assistance plan to do so in the near future, and welcomed the draft Guidelines for Development Partners' Participation in ACMECS Projects. They instructed that the draft Guidelines be further discussed among member countries before discussing with the Development Partners to be held in Bangkok later this year, and requested SOM to report back to the next Ministerial Meeting. The Ministers also agreed to post the finalised Guidelines for Development Partners' Participation in ACMECS Projects including 14 priority flagship ACMECS projects on the ACMECS Official Website.
15. The Ministers agreed in principle that the 3rd ACMECS Summit shall be convened during the week of 22nd – 26th October 2007 in Hanoi, Vietnam. An ACMECS SOM Meeting and an ACMECS Ministerial Meeting shall precede the Summit on the same occasion for preparation of the Summit. The Ministers also proposed that a Dialogue between ACMECS Leaders and business associates be held back-to-back with the Summit to strengthen the partnership between the ACMECS countries' Governments and business sectors. The Ministers urged the different Working Groups to meet regularly to discuss on progress made in implementing ACMECS projects. They also encouraged members

to send their highest level of representation possible to the meetings of the ACMECS Working Groups (AWG) in Bangkok. They also called on AWG as the virtual secretariat to update the status and progress of implementation on ACMECS projects through ACMECS official Website regularly.

16. The Ministers expressed their deep appreciation to the Government of the Union of Myanmar for hosting the ACMECS Ministerial Meeting and for the warm hospitality accorded to all participants. As it was agreed at the Leaders' Midterm Review Meeting in Cebu, the Philippines, the Ministers agreed to hold the next ACMECS Ministerial Meeting in Thailand in 2008.