

Third Friends of the Lower Mekong Ministerial Meeting
Joint Ministerial Statement
1 July 2013, Bandar Seri Begawan, Brunei Darussalam

On July 1, 2013, the Foreign Ministers of Australia, Japan, New Zealand, the Republic of Korea, the High Representative of the European Union, the Secretary General of ASEAN, and senior representatives of the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and the World Bank joined the U.S. Secretary of State and Foreign Ministers of Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, Thailand, and Viet Nam in Bandar Seri Begawan, Brunei Darussalam for the Third Friends of the Lower Mekong (FLM) Ministerial Meeting.

At the meeting, Ministers reaffirmed their commitment to supporting transnational cooperation and coordination in the Lower Mekong sub-region. They agreed that FLM has contributed to building capacity, improving infrastructure and promoting stability in the region, and expressed a desire to continue to work closely with Lower Mekong countries to achieve sustainable growth and address the development gap in the region thus contributing to ASEAN integration and community building.

Ministers agreed that donors and other actors in the region should coordinate their efforts in order to avoid unintentional duplication and to identify areas of potential collaboration. To that end, Ministers committed to working together with other donors, ASEAN, and the Mekong River Commission to promote complementary efforts in the region. LMI is already engaging with ASEAN to identify areas of overlap and potential collaboration. Ministers expressed support for similar coordination efforts within the donor community, in particular through information sharing and donor mapping.

Ministers agreed that one of the most important issues in the region was that of environmental issues and shared water resources. They noted that Lower Mekong country partners were already providing regional leadership in these areas, and considered further steps FLM partners could take to collectively advance these issues and support Lower Mekong country partners' efforts.

Within the framework of the establishment of the ASEAN Economic Community and the challenge of reducing the existing development gaps, Ministers urged LMI Members and the ASEAN Secretariat to ensure optimal complementarities between their activities in this area. Ministers suggested that greater interaction with Lower Mekong partner countries, for example through Regional Working Group meetings and other regional mechanisms such as the Mekong River Commission and the ADB's Greater Mekong Sub-region program would enable the alignment of FLM partner technical strengths and programs with Lower Mekong partner countries' priorities. This would allow the identification of opportunities for donors and countries in the region to work together on specific projects in support of sound management of natural resources and shared water resources.