



**Twenty-Second Meeting of the Greater Mekong Subregion  
Subregional Transport Forum  
Mandalay, Myanmar  
21–22 June 2018**

**SUMMARY OF PROCEEDINGS**

**Introduction**

1. The Twenty-second Meeting of the Greater Mekong Subregion (GMS) Subregional Transport Forum (STF-22) was held in Mandalay, Myanmar on 21–22 June 2018. The forum, with the theme “*Committed to Moving Forward along the Path of the New GMS Transport Strategy*”, was jointly organized by the Ministry of Transport and Communication (MOTC) of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar and the Asian Development Bank (ADB). The objectives of the forum were to: (i) be briefed on the implications of the Ha Noi Action Plan (HAP) 2018–2022 adopted by the Sixth GMS Summit on the GMS transport sector, and review the supporting pipeline of GMS transport sector projects in the GMS Regional Investment Framework (RIF) 2022; (ii) review the state of development of GMS economic corridors; (iii) review the progress of work on the priority rail links identified under Greater Mekong Railway Association (GMRA); (iv) be briefed on the progress of the Cross-Border Transport Agreement (CBTA) “Early Harvest” implementation; (v) review the status of road safety in GMS countries; and (vi) discuss other topics that have a bearing on the GMS transport sector. (The meeting program and agenda are attached as **Appendix 1**).

2. The forum participants included delegations from the Kingdom of Cambodia, the People’s Republic of China (PRC), the Lao People’s Democratic Republic (Lao PDR), the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, the Kingdom of Thailand, the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam, and ADB. Representatives from development partner organizations, namely the Agence Française de Développement (AFD); Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA); and the Neighboring Countries Economic Development Cooperation Agency (NEDA) of Thailand also attended the forum. (The list of participants is attached as **Appendix 2**).

3. The forum was chaired by Mr. Win Khant, Permanent Secretary, MOTC, Myanmar and co-chaired by Mr. Hiroaki Yamaguchi, Director, Southeast Asia Department Transport and Communications Division, ADB. His Excellency, Kyaw Myo, Deputy Minister, MOTC, Myanmar delivered the Welcome Remarks.

**Day 1 Proceedings:**

**Opening Session**

4. In his Welcome Remarks, H.E. Kyaw Myo, noted that the timing of the forum is significant because it follows the adoption of the Ha Noi Action Plan (HAP) 2018–2022 and the Regional Investment Framework (RIF) 2022 at the 6th GMS Summit held in Ha Noi in March 2018, and that the discussions in the forum will help toward their full implementation. He then outlined current developments in Myanmar, including the country’s participation in regional and international cooperation programs; and the government’s strive to ensure the progress of

education, health, agriculture, rural development, electricity, water supply, small- and medium enterprise development, law enforcement, peace, and democracy, and noted that efficient and low-cost transportation is essential in achieving these objectives.

5. He mentioned some key transport projects that Myanmar are currently implementing, including the main rail lines Yangon-Mandalay, Yangon-Mawlamyine, Mandalay-Myitkyina, and Yangon-Pyay; upgrading expressways, highways, bridges, and rural road access; establishment of six port terminals and expansion of the port terminals in the Thilawa SEZ; and upgrading of airports such as Kawthaung, Mawlamyaing, Heho, and Muse domestic airports. He expressed hope that Myanmar can overcome remaining challenges in the transport sector through regional and subregional cooperation and support from its development partners. Expressing confidence that the forum will be productive, he concluded by thanking ADB for its support and the STF secretariat/coordinators, and the MOTC staff for their efficient organization of the meeting. (His opening speech is in **Appendix 3**.)

6. In his remarks, Mr. Win Khant, Chair noted that the living pipeline projects in RIF 2022 are aligned with regional and national plans. The RIF 2022 also serves as marketing tool to attract new financing for project implementation. With regard to trade and transport facilitation, he recalled that at the 6th Joint Committee of the CBTA meeting in Vietnam in March 2018, member countries recognized that the reduction of non-physical barriers to transport and trade is the key to realizing the benefits from improved connectivity, boosting trade, tourism, and investment. He also noted that member countries have already drafted the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on the additional routes and border crossings under Protocol-1 of the CBTA. Likewise, member countries are scheduled to start 'Early Harvest' Implementation this year; Myanmar will join through initial implementation with neighboring countries during a grace period until 1 June 2020. Myanmar will commence implementation of CBTA with Thailand in August 2018 and is now under process to finish its internal procedures.

7. On rail transport, he thanked ADB for its technical assistance (TA) to review the nine priority rail links agreed at the GMRA meeting in 2015 and reported that the Framework Agreement for Cross Border Railway Transport Connectivity in the GMS is currently being finalized. He further noted that the high incidence of road crash fatalities is an important concern in the region as it results in significant loss in socioeconomic development, and informed that Myanmar, in its efforts to reduce the loss of lives, accidents, environment impacts, and traffic congestion, has launched the Myanmar Road Safety Action Plan (2014–2020) which intend to reduce road crash fatality rate by 50% by 2020. Finally, he expressed confidence that the meeting will result in significant outcomes for GMS cooperation and integration. (His opening speech is in **Appendix 4**).

8. In his opening statement, Mr. Hiroaki Yamaguchi, Co-Chair, provided a background on the new GMS Transport Sector Strategy (TrSS) 2030, the preparation of which the GMS countries mandated to succeed the previous GMS Transport Sector Strategy 2006–2015. It was recognized that a new strategy would be needed to ensure that progress in the sector is sustained beyond 2015 and that cooperative activities and interventions in the sector would better respond to the new challenges and opportunities from a very dynamic regional and global context. The new GMS TrSS 2030 was subsequently endorsed by the GMS countries' transport ministers and officials and has gained the support of the GMS Leaders in their 6th Summit in March 2018. The TrSS 2030 has set the medium-to-long term strategic thrusts and operational priorities for GMS transport sector development. He then outlined these strategic directions, namely: (i) completing the GMS economic corridor network and improving links with South Asia and the rest of Southeast Asia; (ii) facilitating cross-border transport; (iii) strengthening

intermodal links; (iv) promoting the development of logistics; (v) improving road asset management; and (vi) enhancing road safety.

9. He explained that the different sessions of the forum are intended to tackle a number of these strategic directions. He also noted the importance of the countries' presentations on the progress of their transport projects in the GMS RIF 2022, which all aim to contribute toward realizing these strategic thrusts. It will only be possible to ascertain that we are succeeding toward achieving the overall goals set in the strategy when we see progress in implementing the specific projects and interventions aimed at them. He concluded that hopefully STF-22 will contribute toward the realization of a "seamless, efficient, reliable, and sustainable GMS transport system", the vision set by the GMS TrSS 2030, which in turn is a key ingredient in the overall GMS vision of an integrated, prosperous, and harmonious subregion. (His opening speech is in **Appendix 5**.)

### **Session 1. Implications of the Ha Noi Action Plan (2018–2022) on the GMS Transport Sector and Review of the Pipeline of GMS Transport Sector Projects in the GMS Regional Investment Framework (RIF) 2022**

10. Ms. Rhodora Concepcion, Senior Regional Cooperation Specialist, Southeast Asia Department, ADB, briefed the meeting on the outcomes of the recently concluded 6th GMS Summit (31 March 2018, Ha Noi, Viet Nam), including the HAP 2018–2022, the RIF 2022, particularly as they relate to the new GMS TrSS 2030 and the GMS transport sector in general. She explained the key elements of the HAP, which provides directions and operational focus to the GMS programs and guides the identification of projects for the next five years, as well as its relationship and interface with the strategic directions and operational priorities contained in the TrSS 2030.

11. She also presented an overview of the RIF 2022, including the role and share of transport projects in it. Finally, she described the process for the implementation, review, and updating of the RIF 2022. She noted that the progress reports to be presented by the countries on their transport projects are part of the overall review and monitoring process. She noted that the delivery of the sector strategies and projects means supporting the commitments made by the GMS leaders during the 6th GMS Summit to advance HAP and the RIF. (Her presentation is in **Appendix 6**.)

### **Country Progress Reports**

12. Mr. Kong Sophal, Deputy Director General, Department of Public Works, Ministry of Public Works and Transport (MPWT), Cambodia presented Cambodia's progress report on its transport projects in RIF 2022. (His presentation is in **Appendix 7**.)

13. In the following open discussion, he explained that they may propose a new TA for financing by development partners/ADB for strengthening the capacity and provision of facilities and equipment for the proposed Bus/Truck Driving Test Center investment project included in the RIF. The MPWT has already secured the buildings/testing field for the Center and it is targeted for launching in the initial stage in July 2018. With regard to another project, the Link Road between National Road (NR) 5 and NR6 near Kampong Tralach, north of Phnom Penh, NEDA ([Ret.] Sr. Col. Saranyu Viriyavejakul, Vice President, NEDA) of Thailand informed the forum that they are considering possible assistance for this proposed project.

14. Mr. Shang Hongjun, Deputy Director General, International Cooperation Department,

Ministry of Transport (MOT), PRC presented their RIF progress report. (His presentation is in **Appendix 8.**)

15. In the following discussion, the Chair commented that railway projects are complicated, and, in this regard, Myanmar would like to consult with PRC on railway development, given their extensive experience in this field.

16. Mr. Visara Khamvongsa, Technical Officer, Department of Planning and Cooperation, MPWT, Lao PDR presented their RIF progress report. (His presentation is in **Appendix 9.**)

17. In the following discussion, Viet Nam (Mr. Nguyen Ngoc Thuyen) informed that the railway from Vientiane-Thakek-Vung Ang is being pursued under the Singapore-Kunming Rail Link (SKRL) program. Agreement on the project may be reached by the end of 2018, although there are still some remaining issues, such as on the railway's alignment. The project is an important one, as it aims to connect the Lao PDR capital Vientiane to a key Viet Nam seaport.

18. Ms. Aye Aye Hla, Advisor/Joint Secretary of NTFC of Myanmar, Union Minister's Office, MOTC, Myanmar presented Myanmar's progress report. (Her presentation is in **Appendix 10.**) There were no comments or questions regarding the presentation.

19. Dr. Siriphan Jitprasithsiri, Director of International Highways Development Division, Bureau of International Highways Cooperation, Department of Highways, MOT, Thailand presented their RIF progress report. (Her presentation is in **Appendix 11.**)

20. In the following discussion, Cambodia (H.E. Vasim Sorya) expressed appreciation for the substantial information given on Thailand's railway projects. He inquired if the new railway lines being developed to connect to the border are of meter or standard gauge. Dr. Siriphan responded that for international rail linkages they intend to implement standard gauge but for domestic lines they implement meter gauge. With regard to the question of what gauge is being implemented for projects 11 (New Railway Line from Den Chai to Chiang Rai and Chiang Khong), 12 (New Railway Line from Baan Pai (Khon Kaen) to Mahasarakham, Roi Et, Mukdahan, and Nakhon Phanom), and 15 (National Railway Improvement Project), Dr. Siriphan responded that these are all in meter gauge.

21. The Co-Chair noted that in Southeast Asia, railways are mostly in meter gauge. Although there is a technology that allows connection and interoperability between meter gauge and standard gauge, this is not efficient. He mentioned that discussions of these issues can continue in the GMRA.

22. Mr. Nguyen Ngoc Thuyen, Deputy Director General, International Cooperation Department, MOT, Viet Nam presented their RIF progress report. (His presentation is in **Appendix 12.**) He informed that Viet Nam is proposing an additional project, which is a TA project to complete the Framework Agreement for Cross Border Railway Transport Connectivity in the GMS, which is similar to the CBTA for road transport. He further informed that there is an existing PRC-supported TA for preparing an agreement for software connectivity along the SKRL. He remarked that given that railway projects require huge investment and gestation period, it is only appropriate to invest in efforts to come up with the software for cross border rail connectivity. Co-Chair agreed with this point and thanked the PRC for supporting such efforts; he said that discussions will continue on how to further support software development for rail connectivity. Another new TA project proposed is the GMS Road Corridors Maintenance project, which will aim to provide institutional and operational strengthening of GMS road maintenance

and road asset maintenance.

## **Session 2. Review the State of Development of the GMS Economic Corridors**

23. Dr. Filologo Pante, Jr., principal consultant for the Study on the Assessment of GMS Economic Corridors, presented the key features and results of the study. He recalled the study was undertaken after the GMS Ministers endorsed in their 21st Ministerial Conference in December 2016 the recommendations of the Review of the Configuration of the GMS Economic Corridors to expand and/or extend the network of GMS economic corridors, with a directive to assess their actual state of development. He then explained the objectives of the study, which were to assess the actual physical condition of transport infrastructure along the corridors, as well as their economic potential, with the aim of increasing awareness, identifying gaps, and providing a benchmark for monitoring their development. The study's outputs consisted of six country reports, and integrative report, and improved and amended GMS economic corridor geographic information system (GIS) database and maps. He presented samples of the new GIS corridor maps, with some maps showing the road class and road condition of road sections along the GMS economic corridors. He then proceeded to present the study's main findings and recommendations. (His presentation is in **Appendix 13**.)

24. In the open discussion that followed, the country delegations expressed interest in the new GIS maps. Co-Chair appreciated the usefulness of the GIS maps, but also noted that with regard to the classification/categorization of roads, there may be some differences of opinion among transport professionals, for instance, on whether a particular road is to be categorized as "good", "fair" or "poor" condition. Nevertheless, the approach taken is a useful starting point. With regards to declaring whether there is a "missing link" or not, considerations such as traffic volume and road classification should be taken into account.

25. PRC shared some lessons from their experience regarding expressway development. PRC's policymakers realize the important role of infrastructure in economic development, and therefore provide the needed policy support and financial investment for this purpose. PRC's expressways rank first in the world. At the beginning, their standards were low but it was later realized that their design must be upgraded. PRC currently adopts very high standards for expressway development. Some lessons that may be considered: (i) take traffic volume growth into consideration during the design phase; (ii) expressway development should be at a reasonable pace and should not be too fast; and (iii) infrastructure development does not immediately lead to prosperity, rather transport facilitation is the key to prosperity.

26. U Htun Zaw from Myanmar's Ministry of Planning and Finance expressed hope that there will be an opportunity for further discussions at the upcoming 10th GMS Economic Corridors Forum (ECF-10) (to be held in Myanmar later in the year). He also noted that it may be useful to discuss at ECF-10 if it would be useful to link the GMS corridors to other corridor development initiatives, such as the China-Myanmar corridor.

27. Viet Nam (Mr. Nguyen Ngoc Thuyen) noted that there is some difficulty in collecting appropriate road users fees on toll roads. He also expressed interest in hearing a report on the progress of work on the final sections of the East West Corridor in Myanmar, as these sections would fully operationalize the East-West Economic Corridor.

## **Session 3. Review of the Progress of Work of the Greater Mekong Railway Association**

28. Mr. Aung Win, General Manager, Myanma Railways, MOTC, Myanmar briefed the forum

on the progress of work of the Greater Mekong Railway Association (GMRA). He first gave a short background on the GMRA, its origin, mission (which is to increase railway connectivity throughout the GMS in order to promote efficient, safe, and environmentally sustainable rail transport of goods and people within and beyond the subregion), goals and priority actions, and the various TA projects that support it. He then gave updates on the work that has been done so far by the GMRA as a whole and by its various Working Groups (on Network Connectivity, on Network Integration and Inter-operability, and on Partnerships and GMRA Operation). These include the identification of, and agreement on, the nine priority railway links to be developed and the initiation of work on a Cross Border Rail Framework Agreement. Finally, he presented some issues that bear on GMS railway network development, including the huge investment requirements and the need to ensure that both national networks and regional connections are upgraded and operating efficiently. (His presentation is in **Appendix 14.**)

29. The Chair expressed appreciation for the presentation, noting the importance of railway connectivity and of the GMRA's work toward realizing it. No further comments or questions were raised.

#### **Session 4. Progress on the CBTA “Early Harvest” MOU**

30. Mr. Nguyen Ngoc Thuyen gave a presentation on behalf of the of the National Transport Facilitation Committees (NTFC) on the progress of the Early Harvest implementation of the CBTA. The Early Harvest is basically a program that was designed to accelerate implementation of the CBTA through immediate implementation of provisions that can already be implemented while the other provisions are being updated. He discussed the features of the Early Harvest, the issuance of Road Transport Permits and temporary admission documents, and the rules governing them. He then reported the status of the program, including the signing of the MOU on the Early Harvest by the countries, the planned schedule for its effectivity, the next steps, as well as the related activities of the NTFC and Joint Committee of the CBTA. (His presentation is in **Appendix 15.**)

31. PRC noted that based on the progress report on GMS activities presented at the 6th GMS Summit in Ha Noi in March 2018, the Early Harvest implementation should have started on 1 June 2018. In anticipation of the implementation, they are already coordinating with various agencies, such as Customs. The governments of Yunnan and Guangxi have already issued 400 Road Transport Permits. They said they will continue coordinating with other countries and expressed hope that implementation would not be further delayed beyond 1 August 2018.

32. Cambodia, referring to the 3rd bullet point of slide 5 of the presentation (“No financial [Customs bond] guarantees are required for the movement of goods and vehicles in line with CBTA Article 18”), commented that this actually refers to movement of containers. Cambodia also noted that while private transport operators have quite easily adapted to bilateral cross border road transport arrangements, they are finding trilateral and/or multilateral (involving more than two countries) arrangements difficult. They therefore suggested that there should be more effort to create greater awareness among transport operators regarding such arrangements. Both Chair and Co-Chair expressed recognition of the difficulties in implementing such multilateral agreements.

33. Lao PDR (Dr. Bounta Onnavong) said that they have been working hard on the Early Harvest program and have been consulting internally and with other countries. There are still remaining unresolved issues and preparations have not been completed, and this was why Lao PDR proposed moving the start of implementation from 1 June 2018 to 1 August 2018. He

pointed out that for transit cargo, the host country still bears the burden of road maintenance and road safety. This is particularly difficult for Lao PDR as many of its roads are not yet of the appropriate standards. While the number of road transport permits has initially been limited to 500 per country, this number is already big for Lao PDR. He repeated the observation that is easier to implement bilateral agreements than multilateral agreements, and informed that Lao PDR is now in the process of forging such a bilateral agreement with Myanmar.

34. Viet Nam (Mr. Nguyen Ngoc Thuyen) reiterated that CBTA multilateral road transport permits are not attractive to private transport operators as there is little flexibility for operations. He also stressed that multilateral systems need to focus deeper on the interests of the transit countries. He further noted that it is easier to enforce transit fees in the case of bilateral arrangements but very difficult to do so in multilateral ones.

35. Ms. Rhodora Concepcion, ADB noted that a lot of effort has been exerted in addressing such issues and that ADB will continue to help the countries in this work. However, she said that there are more appropriate venues for discussing these and other issues regarding the “Early Harvest” implementation program, such as the NTFC and the Joint Committee of the CBTA.

36. In concluding the session, Co-Chair commented that it would be important to continue efforts with the Early Harvest implementation and see how the progress would be. Useful lessons can then be learned (learning by doing) that would help to improve the system.

#### **Session 5. Review of the Status of Road Safety in GMS Countries**

37. Mr. Shihiru Date, Senior Transport Specialist, Southeast Asia Department, ADB made a presentation on road safety in GMS countries. He first explained some fundamental concepts in road safety (e.g., difference between “crash” and “accident”; the “3Es”—engineering, education, enforcement; the ways of expressing the crash rate; and the most common causes of crashes). He then presented some of the key challenges in addressing road safety and the road fatality rates in the GMS countries. He emphasized the importance of collecting sufficient and accurate data to be used in diagnostics toward formulating effective policies, executing measures, and measuring performance. He also presented some approaches for promoting road safety, much of which involves the community-based approaches. He concluded by recapping the challenges and presenting ADB’s assistance in the GMS context and the future pipeline for road safety promotion in GMS countries. (His presentation is in **Appendix 16**.)

38. During the discussion, PRC informed the forum that PRC has different agencies responsible for road safety depending on the type of motor vehicles. MOT is responsible for road safety involving freight vehicles. He shared some of the reform measures being undertaken in this regard, including: (i) a yearly public consciousness campaign undertaken with other ministries; (ii) improving the quality of drivers through trainings and orientations; (iii) standardization of road transport companies; (iv) improving safety performance of commercial vehicles by phasing out non-roadworthy vehicles; and (v) tighter monitoring of commercial vehicles through a national supervision system. He said that these measures were relatively successful as evidenced by the decreasing incidence of accidents and fatalities. He further noted that by 2019, the PRC will have surpassed the United States in terms of number of vehicles.

39. Lao PDR commented that the United Nations has already set the so-called “5 pillars of road safety” in place of the “3Es”. Mr. Date explained that the study is aware of the 5 pillars, but

believes that without rejecting the 5 pillars, these can be reduced to the 3Es. This may introduce more simplicity in understanding the overall road safety context.

40. The Chair concluded the session by highlighting that road safety is very important, given its significant impact not only on overall development but more importantly on human lives. All countries must therefore improve their road safety performance.

### **Wrap Up of First Day Sessions**

41. Upon the Chair's request, the Co-Chair wrapped up the first day's proceedings, as follows:

- The first session reaffirmed the importance of the transport sector in the context of overall GMS development, including its role in the HAP and the RIF. Transport development continues to be the foundation of GMS connectivity. The transport sector accounts for the biggest share in the pipeline of projects in the RIF 2022, with an 85% share in terms estimated total cost.
- The reports of the countries on their respective projects in the RIF 2022 pipeline showed that most of these projects are moving. There are also developments in new areas/subsectors, such as railways, logistics, and road safety promotion. There are still some challenges that need to be addressed effectively, such as adequate financing and interoperability (e.g., connecting railways at the borders), but we are confident that we will overcome these challenges. There are, therefore, substantial opportunities where ADB and other development partners can work with the GMS countries in the further development of the GMS transport sector.
- In Session 2, the forum witnessed the results of the assessment of the actual state of the GMS economic corridors. These results provide a very useful guide for identifying sections that still need improvements, upgrading, repairs, and other interventions, as well as identifying bottlenecks. The development of the GIS maps is certainly a very interesting exercise. Building and finalizing the database on these will certainly be very useful guide for planning and monitoring purposes. PRC has also given us some very useful advice from their experience in expressway development. Hopefully, some countries with extensive experience in expressway and/or toll road development, especially with private sector involvement, can share their experience with us in future forums.
- In Session 3, the forum was briefed on the progress of work of the GMRA. The GMRA, despite still being a relatively new organization, has done much work toward the ultimate goal of realizing GMS railway connectivity. It has identified and helped the countries to agree on the priority railway links to be developed. It has established working groups focusing on particular issues of railway development, such as network connectivity, interoperability, and operational requirements, including resource mobilization and attracting private investments. We also thank the PRC Regional Cooperation Fund, through the ADB TA operations, for its support to the GMRA work.
- In Session 4, the forum was able to hear updates on the "Early Harvest"

implementation of the CBTA, which is a key effort in jumpstarting the implementation of this very important instrument in facilitating cross-border freight traffic and trade in the region. There are still some challenges, including how to make the program attractive to the private sector, changing their mindset toward it. We understand, however, that a lot of effort is already being done in certain forums, such as the NTFC and Joint Committee of the CBTA. ADB always stands ready to contribute to and support these discussions.

- Finally, in Session 5, the forum was briefed on the results of a review of the state of road safety, as well as the related policies in the region. The record on road crashes and road fatalities is quite disturbing. We certainly need to address this problem, as it has a significant impact not only on overall economic development but also on human welfare.

42. The Chair concluded the first day of the meeting, expressing that the discussions have been very productive and helpful. He also noted that the discussions showed the depth of cooperation among the countries and their strong ownership of the Forum and its activities.

## **Day 2 Proceedings:**

### **Session 7: Statements/Updates from Development Partners**

43. Mr. Loïs Sevestre, Project Officer (Myanmar, Thailand) of Agence Française de Développement (AFD) presented AFD's development assistance activities focusing on the transport sector. Overall, AFD has committed €10.4 billion for its official development assistance program in 2017 and has allotted €1 billion for Asia. Its assistance program has a positive impact on climate change. In terms of sectoral breakdown, about €1.24 billion went to transport, about 16% went to Asia. AFD's transport sector assistance strategy focuses on efficient transport, inclusive transport, and sustainable transport. He gave some examples of AFD-supported transport sector projects in specific GMS member countries. (His presentation is in **Appendix 17.**)

44. Mr. Win Ko Ko, Senior Program Officer, Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), Myanmar Office, made a presentation on JICA's assistance in the GMS corridor-related projects in the transport sector in Myanmar. He presented the 3 pillars of JICA's assistance for infrastructure development in Myanmar: urban development, transport, and power. He also presented the Road Map for Assistance on Corridor-based Projects in the Transport Sector, which is aligned with the corridor-based approach. (His presentation is in **Appendix 18.**)

45. Mr. Kota Tsuda, Project Officer, Team 1 Transportation and ICT Group, Infrastructure and Peacebuilding Department, JICA, made a presentation on JICA's Future Cooperation in the Road/Bridge Sector in Myanmar from the Perspective of "Asset Management". (His presentation is in **Appendix 18.**)

46. (Ret.) Sr. Col. Saranyu Viriyavejakul, D.Sc., Vice President, NEDA of Thailand, presented the key features and objectives of NEDA's cooperation strategy for 2018–2021, as well as specific ongoing projects in certain GMS member countries. He also presented a report on a project in the RIF 2022 which NEDA is supporting (i.e., Mekong Bridge at Bungkan–Paksan between Lao PDR and Thailand). (His presentations are in **Appendixes 19 and 20.**)

## **Other Matters**

47. In line with the tradition of rotating the venue of the STF among the GMS members according to the alphabetical order of country names, Thailand confirmed that they will be pleased to host the Twenty-third Meeting of the GMS Subregional Transport Forum (STF-23) in 2019. The specific venue will be provided in due course.

### **Wrap up and Closing**

48. The Co-Chair noted that the summary of most of the topics discussed in the meeting has already been given during the first day. On the presentations by the development partners, he said these have been very informative and substantial. He noted that much of ADB's interaction with development partners is in the form of cofinancing projects. With regard to TA assistance, he noted that this is usually limited. He said that ADB will always welcome discussing and exploring with development partners on how to improve their joint assistance programs and how to further support the GMS countries.

49. The Chair thanked the country delegations and the participants for their active participation in the meeting, which he noted has been very productive and successful. He noted that the GMS countries have achieved much success in their cooperation in the transport sector and that they should continue to pursue their well thought out plans for the future. He expressed confidence that with everyone's cooperation, full subregional connectivity can be achieved. He expressed hope that the countries will continue their effective coordination in future meetings of the forum, and formally closed the meeting.

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