



**Greater Mekong Subregion
Statement of the Eighth Meeting of the Joint Committee
for the Cross-Border Transport Facilitation Agreement**

Preamble

We, the members of the Joint Committee for the Agreement between and among the Governments of 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, and the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam for Facilitation of the Cross-Border Transport of Goods and People in the Greater Mekong Subregion (referred to as the “CBTA”), met in Hainan, PRC, for the Eighth Meeting of the Joint Committee on 13 December 2023. We were pleased to be joined in our discussions by staff of the Asian Development Bank.

Recognizing that the reduction of non-physical barriers to transport and trade is key to increasing the benefits of improved connectivity in and between our countries, boosting trade, tourism, and investment, increasing competitiveness through cutting costs, and improving living standards throughout the GMS (including on the back of the Covid-19 global health pandemic), we continue to work towards the common goals of transforming transport corridors into economic corridors, and aligning our transport and trade facilitation efforts with the ASEAN Economic Community Blueprint 2025, and investment needs identified in the GMS Regional Investment Framework.

Resumption of the CBTA ‘Early Harvest’

Recalling that operationalization of the exchange of commercial traffic rights along the CBTA route network on a subregional basis is a significant milestone towards full implementation of the CBTA, we are pleased to announce our intention to further extend the Memorandum of Understanding of the ‘Early Harvest’ Implementation of the CBTA to 31 December 2026.

We task the Senior Officials of our National Transport Facilitation Committees (NTFCs) to expedite the issuance of GMS Road Transport Permits and Temporary Admission Documents (TADs) for commercial vehicles, and to compile and exchange National Registers of vehicles in receipt of these documents.

For countries that have issued GMS Road Transport Permits and TADs, and submitted their National Registers, we further agree that ‘Early Harvest’ transport operations may recommence starting 1 April 2024, including on the expanded routes and border crossings included in the CBTA Protocol 1 Expansion MOU, and task our NTFC Senior Officials to resume its monitoring, address any operational issues and bottlenecks as

occur, and report twice-yearly to the Joint Committee on the progress and outcomes of these actions.

Recalling the previous decisions of the CBTA Joint Committee, we further agree that:

- (i) 'Early Harvest' GMS Road Transport Permits and TADs for vehicles shall maintain the same format used previously, with the waiver of guarantees for vehicles and containers, and waiver of TADs for containers.
- (ii) Permits shall continue to be issued annually (valid for 12 months) and TADs issued every two years (subject to annual extension).
- (iii) The competent authorities, including Transport and Customs agencies, in each country should publicize the EH relaunch.
- (iv) 'Early Harvest' implementation shall be subject to annual review by the CBTA Joint Committee.
- (v) Contracting Parties may already start to issue GMS Road Transport Permit and Temporary Admission Documents to licensed international transport operators in their country; however, the physical movement of vehicles and mutual recognition of GMS Road Transport Permits and TADs shall only begin on 1 April 2024, as the effective date of the CBTA 'Early Harvest' relaunch.
- (vi) Myanmar shall join the 'Early Harvest' CBTA implementation through Initial Implementation of the CBTA-type agreements with neighboring countries, during a grace period extended until 31 December 2026.
- (vii) Meetings of the relevant CBTA sub-Committees shall take place, as needed, with a view to facilitating the implementation of the 2024-2028 CBTA Work Plan (see below).

Expansion of Protocol 1 of the CBTA (Routes and Border Crossings)

We are pleased to announce completion of country signatures for the CBTA Protocol 1 Extension MOU, and its immediate entry into force, effective 13 December 2023. The signed MOU text and revised List of Corridors Routes and Border Crossings is given in **ANNEX 1** of this Joint Committee Statement. We encourage the GMS countries to expedite the inclusion of routes and border crossings referenced in the revised List of Corridors Routes and Border Crossings, but not yet open, and task the CBTA Transport Sub-Committee to explore the inclusion of further routes and border crossings, as relevant, to enhance the CBTA route network.

2024-2028 CBTA Work Plan

We are pleased to endorse the 2024 CBTA Work Plan given in **ANNEX 2** of this Joint Committee Statement, including but not limited to:

- (i) Implementation and monitoring of the CBTA 'Early Harvest'.
- (ii) Collection, analysis and exchange of Transport and Trade Facilitation data, with surveys of transport operators, and training, as requested (to assess CBTA benefits, and how the CBTA relates to other traffic rights agreements

- to which GMS countries are party).
- (iii) Information sharing and exploration of solutions for international Customs transit, and for the further extension of the CBTA Protocol 1 route network, through meetings of the relevant CBTA Sub-Committees.
 - (iv) Development of CBTA 'Early Harvest' Corridor Handbooks to enhance compliance among operators in possession of GMS Road Transport Permits.
 - (v) Future accession of Myanmar to the main CBTA 'Early Harvest', and
 - (vi) Discussion of a 'CBTA 2.0' (i.e., the process of CBTA updating), and relationship of the CBTA to IICBTAs.

Monitoring and evaluation

We underscore the importance of data-driven decision making, based on effective TTF monitoring mechanisms, and task the Senior Officials of the NTFCs to implement previous commitments with respect to data collection at Protocol 1 border crossings.

Acknowledgments

We appreciate the continued support from ADB in serving as the Secretariat of the Joint Committee and helping to coordinate and facilitate relaunch of CBTA 'Early Harvest' implementation and CBTA Protocol 1 extension, with support from other development partners, including the Government of the United Kingdom.

We express our appreciation and gratitude to the People's Republic of China for its kind hospitality and excellent arrangements made for the Eighth Meeting of the Joint Committee, and look forward to the Chairmanship of the CBTA Joint Committee and related meetings of Lao PDR, commencing 1 January 2024.

Endorsement

This Statement of the Eighth Meeting of the Joint Committee for the Cross-Border Transport Facilitation Agreement was endorsed in Hainan on 13 December 2023, by the members of the CBTA Joint Committee,

- (i) H.E. Mr. Leng Thunyuthea, Secretary of State, Ministry of Public Works and Transport, Royal Government of Cambodia
- (ii) H.E. Mr. Li Yang, Vice Minister, Ministry of Transport, Government of the People's Republic of China
- (iii) H.E. Ms. Phosalath Vilaykham, Vice Minister, Ministry of Public Works and Transport, Government of the Lao People's Democratic Republic
- (iv) H.E. Mr. Aung Myaing, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Transport and Communications, Government of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar

- (v) H.E. Mr. Surapong Piyachote, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Transport, Government of the Kingdom of Thailand
- (vi) H.E. Mr. Nguyen Duy Lam, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Transport, Government of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam