

**28th Annual Meeting of the Greater Mekong Subregion (GMS)
Working Group on Environment (WGE)
12 September 2024**

Phnom Penh, Cambodia (Hybrid meeting – In-person and Virtual)

RECORD OF DISCUSSION

1. The members of the Working Group on Environment (WGE) from the Greater Mekong Subregion (GMS), namely, the Kingdom of Cambodia, the People's Republic of China (PRC), the Lao People's Democratic Republic (Lao PDR), the Kingdom of Thailand, and the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam, met in person, and the Republic of the Union of Myanmar virtually on 12 September 2024 for the 28th Annual Meeting of the WGE (WGE AM-28). The WGE AM-28 was organized as part of the 4-day event from 10 to 13 September leading to the 6th GMS Environment Ministers' Meeting (EMM-6) on 13 September 2024.
2. In support of the upcoming 29th Conference of Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP29) to be held in Baku, Azerbaijan from 11 to 22 November 2024, and the 8th GMS Leaders' Summit to be held in Kunming, PRC from 5 to 7 November 2024, WGE-AM28 discussed the proposed GMS 2030 Strategic Framework for Accelerating Climate Action and Environmental Sustainability, and the Phnom Penh Joint Statement on Prevention of Plastics Pollution in the GMS. The WGE also noted the progress of activities under Theme 4 (Environmental quality management and circular economy) and Theme 6 (Financing low-carbon and climate-resilient infrastructure and technology) of the technical assistance: GMS Climate Change and Environmental Sustainability Program (CCESP).
3. The WGE noted the outcomes of the international workshop on climate actions and environmental sustainability held on 10 and 11 September 2024 with more than 200 participants from across GMS and beyond. The workshop discussed the lessons learned during the GMS Environment Program Phases I-III (2006-present) and identified key priorities for subregional cooperation and institutional strengthening in the GMS. While Day 1 covered progress in six themes of CCESP, Day 2 included 4 stakeholder-specific and 6 theme-specific sessions led by ADB and other development partners across GMS. The sessions helped in knowledge sharing and identification of opportunities for new partnerships and strengthening of networks.
4. The WGE noted that the ***GMS 2030 Strategic Framework for Accelerating Climate Action and Environmental Sustainability*** aligns with national priorities of GMS countries and recommended it in principle for endorsement by the EMM-6. The WGE supported the four priority themes of the strategic framework: (i) enhancing climate and disaster resilience for communities and ecosystems; (ii) supporting a just and inclusive low-carbon transition; (iii) fostering a circular green economy and strengthening pollution control measures; and (iv) deploying nature-based solutions for promoting biodiversity, ecosystem restoration, and improved livelihoods, and four cross-cutting issues: (i) youth, gender, and social inclusion; (ii) green and digital technologies; (iii) innovative financing mechanisms; and (iv) private sector engagement. The WGE provided some

recommendations to improve clarity of selected parts of the framework. The WGE also supported the adoption of ***Phnom Penh Joint Statement on Prevention of Plastic Pollution in the GMS*** and recommended it in principle for endorsement by the EMM-6.

5. The WGE noted progress made on environmental quality management in the GMS and discussed key challenges in rural waste management and water pollution. The WGE confirmed a few priorities for action to be pursued under this theme: (i) fostering social innovation for integrated waste management in rural and urban areas; (ii) promoting sustainable alternatives to reduce plastic waste; and (iii) promoting synergies among knowledge sharing platforms on waste management and circular economy.

6. The WGE noted progress made on the use of innovative financing instruments in the GMS. Key challenges in mobilizing financing for low carbon and climate resilient infrastructure and technology were discussed. The WGE confirmed a few priorities for action to be pursued under this theme: (i) use of targeted climate and disaster risk financing instruments; (ii) mobilizing collective efforts among the governments, private sector, financial industry and international development partners for strengthening capacity to use innovative instruments; and (iii) demonstrating financing instruments at provincial, city and community level to directly benefit local communities.

7. The WGE extended sincere appreciation to the financing partners of the GMS Climate Change and Environmental Sustainability Program: the Climate Investment Funds, the PRC Poverty Reduction and Regional Cooperation Fund, and the Asian Development Bank. The WGE encouraged ADB and other development partners to continue to coordinate and support the program and strengthen shared commitment and partnership for a more integrated, prosperous, inclusive, resilient, and sustainable GMS.

8. The WGE expressed its appreciation to the Government of Cambodia and its Ministry of Environment for co-hosting the meeting. The WGE members and ADB requested the People's Republic of China and its Ministry of Ecology and Environment to consider hosting the 29th Annual Meeting of the WGE.