

Equality, Sincerity, Mutual Assistance and Kinship

—Speech at the Third Mekong River Commission Summit

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Speech by E Jinping

Minister of Water Resources of the People's Republic of China

at the Third Mekong River Commission Summit

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Your Excellency Prime Minister Hun Sen,

Your Excellency Prime Minister Thongloun Sisoulith,

Your Excellency Prime Minister Prayut Chan-o-cha,

Your Excellency Prime Minister Nguyen Xuan Phuc,

Your Excellency Minister U Ohn Winn,

Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

It gives me great pleasure to attend the Third Mekong River Commission Summit held in Siem Reap, for discussion on sub-regional water resources cooperation and development. I wish to thank our host, the government of Cambodia, for the warm hospitality and thoughtful arrangement.

Mekong River Commission(MRC) is one of the important mechanisms for Mekong River Basin cooperation. Over the past 20 years, MRC has committed itself to integrated basin development, water resources protection, disaster prevention and mitigation and navigation safety,

making active contributions to cooperation among riparian countries and regional economic and social development. In recent years, MRC has been promoting dialogues and cooperation between Member countries and Dialogue Partners and Development Partners, conducting effective institutional reform, and making headway in transformation and localization of MRC. Thanks to the concerted efforts, the vision of sustainable development of Mekong River Basin has gradually come into reality. This Summit will further propel the sustainable development of the Mekong River Basin, and enhance friendly cooperation and common development of the riparian countries of the Mekong river.

China attaches great importance to the cooperative relations with MRC, and has carried out diversified, fruitful and practical cooperation with MRC and its member countries in the realms of technical exchange, capacity building and joint research. As a Dialogue Partner, China has carried out 21 rounds of dialogues with MRC, effectively enhancing mutual trust and understanding. Since 2003, China has provided hydrological data of Lancang River free of charge during flood season to MRC for 15 consecutive years. On the occasions of severe drought, typhoon and other emergency situation, we have offered timely notification on upstream reservoir regulation, which has played an instrumental role in flood defense, drought relief and disaster mitigation in downstream countries. Particularly in 2016, when Mekong River suffered from a once-every-hundred-year severe drought, China carried out emergency water supply in spite of its own drought challenge. This operation effectively alleviated severe drought in downstream countries.

Ladies and gentlemen,

The Lancang-Mekong River connects the upper- and downstream

countries. Our six countries are close neighbors enjoying a deep bond of cultural and people-to-people affinity. For a long time, the sincere cooperation and mutual assistance among the six countries have not only boosted regional economic cooperation and development, but also expanded people-to-people exchanges and strengthened traditional friendship. China has established comprehensive strategic cooperative partnership with the five Mekong countries, and we have witnessed the convergence of interests and shared future. In order to promote the social and economic development of our six countries, advance the Belt and Road Initiative through consultation and collaboration, realize the UN 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda and Goals, facilitate the development of ASEAN Community, promote South-South cooperation, we jointly establish the Lancang-Mekong Cooperation (LMC) Mechanism. Through concerted efforts of all LMC member countries, the cooperation has made substantial progress over the past two years, ushering in a stage of high-speed growth. LMC is rooted in our traditional friendship and built on our shared interests. It will not replace any sub-regional mechanism. Instead, it will coordinate with existing mechanisms such as Greater Mekong Sub-region Economic Cooperation(GMS) and MRC, promote mutual development and inject new impetus into China-ASEAN cooperation. China is willing to work with MRC and all riparian countries under the existing cooperation mechanisms, making LMC a model of building a community with a shared future for mankind.

By the end of 2017, the 19th National Congress of the Communist Party of China was successfully held. The Congress report outlined China's diplomatic strategy and blueprint design in the new era. China reaffirms its commitment to the path of peaceful development, to international

cooperation on the Belt and Road Initiative, and to the building of a community with a shared future for mankind. China will continue to deepen relations with its neighbors in line with the principle of amity, sincerity, mutual benefit and inclusiveness and the policy of building friendship and partnership with its neighbors. China will increase assistance to other developing countries, especially the least developed ones, and do our part in narrowing the North-South development gap. Chinese President Xi Jinping emphasized at the recently-concluded first session of the 13th National People's Congress that China will contribute more Chinese wisdom, solutions and strength to the world, and promote the building of an open, inclusive, clean, and beautiful world that enjoys lasting peace, universal security and common prosperity. May everyone on earth benefit from the development of a Community with a Shared Future for Mankind.

Ladies and gentlemen,

The world is undergoing major developments, transformation and adjustment, but peace and development remain the call of our day. The global economy is picking up, bringing new opportunities and vast potential for both China and the Mekong countries for further development. The Mekong countries and China are natural partners. We must seize the opportunities and build on the momentum with greater resolve, better coordination and more effective measures, and jointly promote the sustainable development and common prosperity of the Lancang-Mekong River Basin. To make that happen, let us work together in the following areas:

First, strengthen the connectivity of the development strategies. The Belt and Road Initiative has received active response from the international

community. China will uphold the silk-road spirit of peace and cooperation, openness and inclusiveness, mutual learning and mutual benefit, and connect and align the development strategies of China and the Mekong countries. China suggests that we further strengthen the connectivity of the Belt and Road Initiative with regional strategy for sustainable development of MRC, Cambodia's "Four Corner Strategy", the Laos' strategy of "turning from a landlocked country to a land-linked country", Thailand's 4.0 Strategy, Vietnam's "Two Corridors Plus One Circle" strategy and Burma's national development strategy, in order to achieve the added-value benefit through strategic cooperation and share the development dividend together.

Second, enhance regional mechanism collaboration. Currently, GMS, MRC and Lancang-Mekong Cooperation mechanisms are productive channels for communication between China and Mekong river countries, playing positive roles in deepening mutual trust and practical cooperation. China suggests that we make full use of these channels, consolidate the dialogue partners' cooperation, build a community of shared future of Mekong countries for peace and prosperity and thereby strengthen the forces for peace and development in the sub-region.

Third, boost practical cooperation. China is willing to continue practical cooperation with MRC, and welcomes MRC and its Secretariat to play a constructive role in Lancang-Mekong water resources cooperation. Given their rapid industrialization, urbanization and agricultural modernization, the Mekong countries are all in pressing need of more water infrastructure and better water management. For its part, China has a wealth of experience in hydropower development and management, flood forecasting, defense and management. We stand ready to provide

technical training to water professionals from the Mekong countries, welcome mutual visits to up- and downstream hydrological stations and water facilities. In the meanwhile, we also encourage Chinese companies to participate in water development in Mekong countries, following the principle of sustainable development and win-win cooperation.]

Ladies and gentlemen,

Lancang-Mekong River is the mother river of the riparian countries. It is a gift from the nature which we rely upon for existence and also a natural bond for us to help and support each other. It has turned the six countries sharing the same river into a community of shared future, featuring “equality, sincerity, mutual assistance and kinship”. China cherishes the traditional friendship and is willing to join hands with every country, as our connections being reinforced by Lancang-Mekong river, to embrace an even brighter future of sub-regional cooperation.

Finally, I wish the summit a great success. Thank you.