

**Plan of Action (POA) 2021-2025  
on the Mekong-Republic of Korea Cooperation  
for the implementation of Mekong-Han River Declaration**

**1. Introduction**

The Plan of Action (PoA) 2021-2025 under the Mekong-ROK Cooperation framework between the five Mekong countries (Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Thailand and Viet Nam) and the Republic of Korea (ROK) will serve as the guideline for the Mekong countries and the ROK (the Partner countries) by setting specific goals and measures for the next five years (2021-2025) to build a Partnership for People, Prosperity and Peace, as proclaimed in the Mekong-Han River Declaration adopted at the first Mekong-ROK Summit, on 27 November 2019 in Busan, ROK. The Plan of Action will be updated, when necessary, to timely address the changing environment of the development cooperation in the Mekong region and the needs of the Mekong countries and the ROK on a regular basis.

**2. Cooperation Mechanism**

- 2.1.** Convene annual Mekong-ROK Summit Meeting and Foreign Ministers' Meeting, either on the sidelines of the annual ASEAN-related meetings, or in the ROK on the basis of consensus of the Partner countries ;
- 2.2.** Hold Senior Officials' Meeting and other working-level meetings on a regular basis and/or when deemed necessary;
- 2.3.** Continue to expand and develop the Mekong-ROK Cooperation Fund and the projects it finances through the Mekong Institute, according to procedures specified in the Memorandum of Understanding between the Mekong Institute and the ROK;
- 2.4.** Strengthen existing bilateral strategic and policy dialogues to reinforce the Mekong-ROK Cooperation, and encourage other relevant Ministries and authorities of the Partner countries to explore ways to foster dialogue and cooperation on specific issues;
- 2.5.** Continue full cooperation with the business communities of all partner countries, especially with the Mekong-ROK Business Council of the five Chambers of Commerce of the Mekong Countries and the Korean International Trade Association of the ROK, and hold annual Mekong-ROK Business Forum, hosted by each partner country in alphabetical order;
- 2.6.** Seek closer, synergized collaboration with other regional cooperation initiatives, in particular with the ASEAN-ROK Cooperation and other Mekong related institutions and cooperation mechanisms;

### **3. Partnership for People, Prosperity and Peace**

#### **<People for Inclusive Society>**

##### **3.1. Culture and Tourism**

- 3.1.1. Carry out joint projects and strengthen coordination among agencies of six countries to pursue a shared vision of achieving a people-centered and people-oriented community that leaves no one behind and moves forward on the basis of people-centered cooperation that ensures economic, financial and social inclusiveness;
- 3.1.2. Commemorate the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Mekong-ROK Cooperation in the year of 2021 which was designated “Mekong-ROK Exchange Year” at the 1<sup>st</sup> Mekong-ROK Summit in 2019;
- 3.1.3. Deepen mutual awareness and understanding between the peoples of the Mekong countries and the ROK about the different culture, language and customs, by expanding education, tourism, people-to-people exchanges and strengthening cooperation in the cultural and sports sector;
- 3.1.4. Continue to step up joint efforts to preserve and restore cultural heritage and work together for the development of sustainable tourism in the Mekong region, with the focus on agritourism, culinary tourism and smart tourism;
- 3.1.5. Promote cooperation in the field of sports by strengthening exchange such as joint training and education programs for athletes and coaches;
- 3.1.6. Enhance support and protection for multicultural family, migrant workers and all other expatriates from Mekong countries and ROK;

##### **3.2. Human Resources Development**

- 3.2.1. Encourage and promote joint academic and educational activities with a view to advancing human resources development in digital age for sustainable development and prosperity in the region;
- 3.2.2. Encourage more active and frequent educational exchanges between institutions, professors, researchers, and students across various sectors;
- 3.2.3. Continue to promote and expand invitational scholarships and training programs for the students from the partner countries;
- 3.2.4. Enhance cooperation on the capacity-building in improvement of e-learning resources to promote inclusive and equitable opportunities to higher education in the Mekong region;
- 3.2.5. Encourage universities in the region to collaborate on establishing new departments and curriculums in their partner universities in a way that meets the needs of people in the partner countries;

- 3.2.6. Promote linguistic understanding through language education of each other's language in educational institutions in a bid to enhance social, economic and cultural cooperation and increase mutual understanding between the Mekong and the ROK;
- 3.2.7. Enhance cooperation to promote human resources development for regional sustainable development and prosperity by sharing policy experiences in skills developments, employment services;
- 3.2.8. Enhance cooperation on vocational training through encouraging collaboration between the ROK companies operating in Mekong region and local universities, vocational training centers and ROK institutions;

### **<Prosperity by Sharing Experience>**

#### **3.3. Agriculture and Rural Development**

- 3.3.1. Strengthen joint efforts to further improve livelihood of people and narrow the development gap among the Mekong countries' agricultural and rural communities, which serves as a foundation for continued development and growth of the Mekong region;
- 3.3.2. Encourage closer cooperation and dialogues based on bilateral Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on agricultural cooperation between each Mekong country and the ROK;
- 3.3.3. Work together to increase income level and reduce poverty in rural communities by enhancing leadership and capacity building, productivity and infrastructure at local level, especially through integrated rural development programs including the Saemaul Undong;
- 3.3.4. Strengthen cooperation for sustainable development of smart agriculture by sharing best-practices, experiences, information and technologies and study the possibility to establish the Smart Agriculture center;
- 3.3.5. Explore ways to ensure stronger regional food security and food safety by stabilizing food supply and promoting trade and investment in the agricultural sector of the Mekong region;
- 3.3.6. Enhance the exchange of information regarding demand and supply of agricultural products in each country's domestic market and strengthen the cooperation among Mekong countries and the ROK in developing supply chains and high-tech agriculture;

#### **3.4. Infrastructure**

- 3.4.1. Promote regional and sub-regional connectivity through various development projects in harmony with the Master Plan on ASEAN Connectivity 2025, as well as with other development plans at sub-regional or national level;
- 3.4.2. Continue joint efforts to construct and upgrade transportation infrastructure including roads, highways, bridges, railroads, and airports, as well as expand cooperation in

formulating masterplans to enhance local and regional connectivity; continue to promote connectivity between rural area and urban city in respective countries;

- 3.4.3. Further develop connectivity between maritime and inland waterways transportation by putting joint efforts to upgrade logistics and port, and aids to navigation systems in the Mekong region;
- 3.4.4. Enhance cooperation for stronger energy security and more efficient, sustainable and environmentally friendly use of energy in the region;
- 3.4.5. Seek ways to improve business conditions for micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) in the region aiming at boosting the market, and stimulating the integration of MSMEs into regional value chain by exchanging best practices and promoting trade and investment opportunities, including use of e-commerce between the partner countries;
- 3.4.6. Make efforts to promote each partner country's position in the regional and global value chain by facilitating cooperation based on the bilateral and regional agreements in accordance with the principle of open, fair and transparent trade and investment;
- 3.4.7. Strengthen engagement with stakeholders by encouraging the participation of private sectors of the Mekong countries and the ROK (including micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) and start-up companies) in regional supply chains to promote business and investment opportunities in the region;
- 3.4.8. Enhance cooperation and mutual support in implementing the appropriate measures to restore economic development, financial resilience, connectivity;
- 3.4.9. Maintain necessary interconnectedness in the region by facilitating the essential flow of goods, services, and movement of people, and improving cross border trade and regional value chain efficiency without being affected by the pandemic of communicable diseases or other threats to minimize socio-economic impacts in the region;

### **3.5. Information and Communication Technology**

- 3.5.1. Encourage the implementation of Information and Communications Technology (ICT) - driven projects in the region based on shared prospect that the development of ICT will promote innovation in response to the 4<sup>th</sup> Industrial Revolution;
- 3.5.2. Explore joint efforts to promote digital economy by application of emerging technologies to production, consumption and distribution system and promote digital connectivity , digital infrastructure in the region;
- 3.5.3. Continue cooperation on planning and establishment of smart cities and promoting smart city network in the Mekong region;
- 3.5.4. Work together to further enhance science and ICT competitiveness in the region through collaborative projects including knowledge sharing programs, exchanges and training of experts and scientists;

- 3.5.5. Continue cooperation on enhancing capability in ICT application in public governance to enhance the efficiency and quality of public administration services in the Mekong region;
- 3.5.6. Encourage cooperation in Digital technology and transformation, such as: the internet of things (IoT) and ICT standardization, Artificial Intelligence (AI), open data, big data, cloud computing, block chain technology and software, digital content and media park;

### **<Peace for Sustainable Development>**

#### **3.6. Environment**

- 3.6.1. Strengthen cooperation among relevant sectors to address the impacts of climate change and environmental challenges including air, water and land pollution, flood and drought, and saltwater intrusion, and promote environmentally friendly technologies and cooperative projects to contribute to sustainable development in the region;
- 3.6.2. Continue to share experience and expertise to address the effects of pollution caused by transport emission, and promote the use of low Green House Gas (GHG) transport;
- 3.6.3. Assist in building e-mobility ecosystems in the Mekong region with the purpose of implementing the Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) in the Transport sector;
- 3.6.4. Support the implementation of program/project in the use of Electric Vehicle (EV) by promoting green transport and to develop low carbon GHG emission policy for vehicle in Transport sector;
- 3.6.5. Promote biodiversity conservation and management by utilizing the Mekong-ROK Biodiversity Center as a hub for providing shared knowledge and capacity building to support biodiversity initiatives and preservation of biological resources;
- 3.6.6. Support the development of green industries and green cities, and enhance cooperation in green economy, green building, energy efficiency, energy conservation, circular economy, sustainable consumption and production, eco-labelling and environmental protection;
- 3.6.7. Enhance sustainable management and utilization of resources in the Mekong river, through cooperation with Mekong River Commission; and operation of the Korea-Mekong Water Management Collaboration Research Center (KMCRRC); enhancing capacity in the management of inter-reservoirs, ecosystem, wetland, and groundwater;
- 3.6.8. Ensure proper access to clean and sufficient water for the wellbeing, health and safety of the population through constructing appropriate cascade water regulation schemes, exchanging experiences and technology in river and coastal banks protection, wastewater treatment;
- 3.6.9. Continue to support exchanges of experts, research, training, data and information on

environmental issues to strengthen human capacity which would lead to the long-term environmental sustainability, and to improve systems and capacities to mitigate environmental health risks;

- 3.6.10. Collaborate through Peace Forest Initiative, Korea-Mekong Forest Cooperation Center and Asian Forest Cooperation Organization to support sustainable forest management, and rehabilitation of forests and damaged land;
- 3.6.11. Continue to support and promote the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, water, and forest resources in the Mekong region such as a reforestation plan, sustainable management of biodiversity, coastal aquaculture environment and water catchment;
- 3.6.12. Continue to support member countries in implementing the United Nations' 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development through improving capacity building and financial capability;

### **3.7. Non-traditional Security Challenges**

- 3.7.1. Encourage close coordination among relevant agencies of six countries in combating non-traditional security threats such as communicable diseases, natural disasters, transnational crimes, terrorism, cyber-crimes, and drug trafficking, to promote peace and security in the region;
- 3.7.2. Continue to collaborate in tackling a global health crisis such as COVID-19 pandemic, by timely exchange of information on the situation on the ground and measure taken by each country in combatting COVID-19, sharing experience and the best practice in the prevention and control of transmission as well as the treatment of infected cases. Make joint efforts to address the subsequent social and economic challenges from the impact of pandemic, and to strengthen health security by supporting each other with necessary consulting, medical supplies, and medical infrastructure and ensuring that the most vulnerable groups are well-protected; building capacity for public health institutions and personnel in preventing, detecting and responding to future outbreaks and pandemic threats;
- 3.7.3. Work together to develop a stronger monitoring and early-warning system to enhance the preparedness and capability to reduce the disaster risk caused by natural hazards such as floods and droughts, and to strengthen cooperation for timely and effective restoration in the aftermath of such disasters caused by natural hazards;
- 3.7.4. Enhance regional cooperation against transnational crimes including cyber-crimes, trafficking of illicit drugs and terrorism, by promoting information and knowledge sharing and training, and work together to strengthen the legal infrastructure and building capacity in order for the Partner countries to respond more effectively to transnational crimes;
- 3.7.5. Continue joint projects including the Korea-Mekong Future Peace Community program to help the Mekong region recover from the shadow of passed wars and conflicts, by clearing explosive remnants of war (ERW), supporting the war victims and the affected

village, and, promoting universal human rights of the region;

#### **4. Collaboration with other cooperation mechanisms**

- 4.1.** Strengthen coordination and synergy with ASEAN and other Mekong-related regional frameworks and initiatives, including but not limited to Ayeyawady-Chao Phraya-Mekong Economic Cooperation Strategy (ACMECS), the Cambodia - Lao PDR - Viet Nam Development Triangle Area (CLV-DTA), Cambodia - Lao PDR - Myanmar - Viet Nam Cooperation (CLMV), Mekong River Commission (MRC), Greater Mekong Sub-region Economic Cooperation (GMS), Mekong – US Partnership (MUSP), Friends of Mekong (FM), Mekong-Japan Cooperation, Mekong-Lancang Cooperation (MLC) and Mekong-Ganga Cooperation (MGC); and further promote cooperation between regional actors;
- 4.2.** Facilitate the implementation of priority projects under the framework of ACMECS-ROK cooperation in close consultation with the Mekong Institute, using the ROK's financial contribution to ACMECS-ROK cooperation as a dedicated Development Partner of ACMECS since 2019;

#### **5. Implementation Mechanism**

- 5.1.** The Partner countries will share responsibility to implement this PoA and use the Mekong-ROK Cooperation Fund and other available funding sources from the Partner countries;
- 5.2.** The implementation will be reviewed regularly through appropriate Mekong-ROK mechanisms, including the Senior Official's Meeting, Foreign Minister's Meeting and the Mekong-ROK Summit Meeting;
- 5.3.** The Progress report of the implementation of this PoA will be submitted to the annual Mekong-ROK Summit.

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