

# Joint Ministerial Statement of the 10th Mekong-Ganga Cooperation Ministerial Meeting

August 02, 2019

1. The 10th Mekong-Ganga Cooperation Ministerial Meeting (10th MGC MM) was held on 01 August 2019 in Bangkok, Thailand. The Meeting was preceded by 11th MGC Senior Officials' Meeting (SOM) in New Delhi on 9 July 2019.
2. The Meeting was co-chaired by H.E. Pham Binh Minh, Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam and H.E. Dr. Subrahmanyam Jaishankar, External Affairs Minister of India, and attended by H.E. Dr. Sok Siphana, Advisor to the Royal Government of Cambodia; H.E. Mr. Saleumxay Kommasith, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Lao PDR; H.E. Mr. Kyaw Tin, Union Minister for International Cooperation of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar; and H.E. Mr. Don Pramudwinai, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Thailand.
3. The Ministers noted the report of the 11th MGC SOM and welcomed the progress made in cooperation in prioritised sectors under the MGC Plan of Action 2016-2018.
4. The Ministers adopted the new MGC Plan of Action 2019-2022 that envisages project-based cooperation in the seven areas of MGC cooperation, namely tourism and culture, education, public health and traditional medicine, agriculture and allied sectors, transport and communication, MSMEs as well as three new areas of cooperation, i.e. water resources management, science and technology, skill development and capacity building.
5. The Ministers agreed to celebrate the 20th Anniversary of MGC in 2020 and noted with satisfaction that the MGC Plan of Action (2019-2022) adequately captures the activities and events to commemorate the Anniversary.
6. The Ministers welcomed India's proposal to develop a website of MGC, which would contribute to branding of the regional grouping and will have useful information on the various joint programmes and activities.
7. The Ministers welcomed India's assistance to Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar and Viet Nam under the MGC Quick Impact Projects (QIP) Scheme and noted that since its inception in 2014, 24 projects have been completed so far. In 2019, 18 QIPs will be implemented in Cambodia, Viet Nam and Lao PDR at a cost of USD 900,000. Myanmar is urged to identify projects of mutual interest under the QIP Scheme.
8. The Ministers welcomed India's joining the Ayeyawady-Chao Phraya-Mekong Economic Cooperation Strategy (ACMECS) as a Development Partner and noted that ACMECS Inaugural SOM with India was held in Bangkok on 29 July 2019. The Ministers directed the Senior Officials to identify specific projects from the list of ACMECS priority projects for joint implementation, focusing particularly on projects that can also complement joint projects already being undertaken by India with the ACMECS countries both under bilateral and other multilateral frameworks such as the MGC, the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) and ASEAN-India Dialogue Relations.
9. The Ministers appreciated the ongoing cooperation in the education sector and India's contribution towards capacity building and human resource development in Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar and Viet Nam. The Ministers noted with satisfaction the fact that all the scholarship schemes offered by India for the Mekong countries have seen active utilization, including annual scholarships and training programmes.

10. The Ministers underscored the importance of connectivity among MGC countries and expressed support for cooperation projects to develop sustainable and resilient infrastructure for inclusive growth in MGC countries. Furthermore, the Ministers looked forward to the early completion of the India-Myanmar-Thailand Trilateral Highway and directed their officials to work towards the early finalisation of the India-Myanmar-Thailand Motor Vehicle Agreement (IMT MVA).
11. The Ministers also recognized the importance of synergizing the MGC with the ASEAN Master Plan on Connectivity 2025 (MPAC 2025) and connectivity initiatives of other sub-regional and inter-regional frameworks through, inter alia, the extension of the Trilateral Highway to Cambodia, Lao PDR and Viet Nam. The Ministers noted the commissioning in March 2019 of a study by the Jakarta-based Economic Research Institute for ASEAN and East Asia (ERIA) on 'Trilateral Highway and Possible Extension to Cambodia, Lao PDR and Viet Nam: Current Status, Challenges, Opportunities', which will examine the feasibility of the development of the planned highway as a vibrant economic growth corridor. They look forward to the study's earliest completion.
12. Welcoming India's announcement of a USD 1 billion Line of Credit (LOC) for connectivity projects in ASEAN, the Ministers directed their officials to identify bankable projects and discuss modalities for utilisation of the LOC. In this context, they welcomed India's offer to facilitate discussions on the terms, conditions and modalities for drawing on this credit line, including by sending specialists to interested ASEAN Member States for discussions.
13. The Ministers from Mekong countries appreciated India's pledge of Indian Rupees 5 billion (equivalent to USD 72.5 million) under a Project Development Fund to facilitate Indian investments in Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar and Viet Nam. The Ministers directed relevant officials from India and Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar and Viet Nam to discuss specific projects of mutual interest that can be realised for utilising these funds.
14. The Ministers appreciated assistance from India's Centre for Development of Advance Computing (C-DAC) in setting up of Centres for Excellence in Software Development and Training (CESDT) in Mekong countries. The Ministers welcomed the operationalization of these Centres in Cambodia and Lao PDR. The Ministers also appreciated the training provided by C-DAC to teachers and students from Mekong countries as part of the project.
15. The Ministers appreciated India's assistance towards the setting up of the MGC Asian Traditional Textiles Museum (ATTM) in Siem Reap, Cambodia to preserve and showcase the rich and vibrant textile heritage of the Mekong-Ganga region. They encouraged the relevant agencies to explore possibilities to make the Museum financially self-sustainable in the medium to long term, including promoting the Museum as a tourist attraction. The Ministers also welcomed India's proposal to co-host an MGC Conference on Heritage Conservation Techniques in Siem Reap, Cambodia in 2020.
16. The Ministers reviewed the progress in the establishment of a Common Archival Resource Centre (CARC) at Nalanda University. They urged further collaboration and cooperation among line agencies in MGC countries with the CARC to build it as a centre for academic research on India-Southeast Asia historical and civilisational linkages.
17. The Ministers reiterated the importance of tourism cooperation and recalled that 2019 has been identified as the "India-ASEAN Tourism Year". The Ministers encouraged all stakeholders to intensify tourism promotion efforts, combining synergies with the

India-ASEAN Tourism Year activities. In this regard, the Ministers encouraged relevant officials to establish institutional contact between national hospitality/ tourism management institutes and related agencies through exchange of faculty, training collaboration and exposure visits of students. The Ministers also encouraged efforts to develop tour packages for thematic circuits and Buddhist Trails with multiple destinations in two or more MGC countries. The Ministers appreciated Myanmar's implementative effort on MGC Buddhist Trails through production and distribution of the "Visitor's Guide for Mekong-Ganga Buddhist Pilgrimage Sites" aiming to attract tourists to MGC countries.

18. The Ministers highlighted the importance of developing cooperation in fields of culture and people-to-people contacts. India offered to host artisans and cultural troupes from Mekong countries to participate in prominent cultural fairs and festivals in India. The Ministers also welcomed MGC countries' decision to develop a joint calendar of important Travel Fairs and Cultural Festivals for information dissemination and promotion.
19. The Ministers highlighted the importance of water resources management as a new area of cooperation, encompassing namely: sustainable water management, water harvesting, water data collection, climate change adaptation and mitigation, integrated water resources management, groundwater management, transboundary basin management, water quality monitoring, flood and drought management and disaster reduction etc. They appreciated India's offer to conduct training programmes and workshops in water resource management and community farming.
20. The Ministers reiterated their commitment to enhance trade cooperation. India expressed its interest in organising an MGC Trade Fair either in India or any other MGC countries in conjunction with a prominent trade exhibition focusing on MSMEs as well as an MGC Business Forum focusing on MSMEs on the sidelines of ASEAN-India Business Expo and Summit being organized by Viet Nam in 2020.
21. The Ministers underscored the importance of cooperation in the field of agriculture and fisheries. They welcomed India's offer to organise workshops on preservation of rice germplasm and productivity enhancement through mechanization, and on sustainable practices in fisheries and dairy sectors.
22. The Ministers emphasized the importance of cooperation in the field of health, and acknowledged the richness of MGC countries' traditional medicinal practices. They welcomed India's proposals to promote training in traditional systems of medicine through exchanges of faculties and students among MGC national institutions and to organize a regional workshop on traditional and complimentary medicine.
23. The Ministers appreciated Thailand for organising Annual International Training Courses (AITC) on topics related to MGC areas of cooperation, which will further enhance the MGC countries' implementation of SDGs.
24. The Ministers agreed to hold the 11th MGC Ministerial Meeting on the margins of ASEAN Foreign Ministers' Meeting in 2020 in Viet Nam. The date and venue will be communicated through diplomatic channels in due course.

**Bangkok,  
MGC FMM held on August 01, 2019**