**Joint Statement on Enhancing Sustainable Development Cooperation**

**of the Lancang-Mekong Countries**

8 June 2021, Chongqing

At the Sixth Lancang-Mekong Cooperation (LMC) Foreign Ministers’ Meeting held in Chongqing, the People’s Republic of China, on 8 June 2021, the Ministers reaffirmed the commitment of Lancang-Mekong Cooperation (LMC), which is to deepen good-neighborliness and pragmatic cooperation among the six countries, contribute collective efforts to the socio-economic development of the LMC countries and enhance the well-being of their people, narrow the development gap among countries, support the ASEAN Community building as well as advance South-South cooperation and enhance the implementation of the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The Ministers also reaffirmed the principles of consensus, equality, mutual consultation and coordination, voluntarism, common contribution and shared benefits, and respect for the United Nation Charter, ASEAN Charter and international law, as well as in accordance with domestic laws, and regulations and procedures of each member countries. In this context, the Ministers issue the statement as follows:

1. We commend the joint COVID-19 response of the six member countries, agree to strengthen cooperation on key medical supplies and vaccines production and technology transfer, and make full use of the LMC Special Fund for Public Health to secure the final victory over the pandemic.
2. We agree on the vital importance of stronger water governance, including the water resources management of the Lancang-Mekong River and cooperation among riparian countries for sustainable economic and social development in the region. We acknowledge the fact that the six member countries are facing growing water resources challenges, including increasing demand for water resources as a result of industrialization, urbanization and population growth, and uncertainties brought by climate change, frequent occurrence of floods and droughts. In this context, national capacity and sub-regional institutions in water governance and the development of water infrastructure need to be enhanced to meet the demand.

 We speak highly of the efforts made by the water authorities of the six member countries to actively strengthen the cooperation mechanism, steadily implement the *Five-Year Action Plan on Lancang-Mekong Water Resources Cooperation (2018 - 2022)*, and conduct extensive practical cooperation on basin planning, dam safety, comprehensive management of small basins, capacity building, emergency management and water-related risk and impact assessment. We welcome the *Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) under the Joint Working Group on Lancang-Mekong Water Resources Cooperation on the Provision of Hydrological Information of the Lancang River throughout the year by China to the Other Five Member Countries* signed by the six LMC countries and the steady implementation of the MOU. In this regard, the Ministers of Mekong countries expressed appreciation to China for sharing the year-round hydrological information of the Lancang River, and increasing the discharge upon the requests of downstream countries. We recognize water as a valuable natural resource on which peoples of the six member countries rely for their livelihood. We encourage all the six member countries to intensify their efforts and step up the coordination and collaboration at drainage basin level to address water-related issues of common concern, such as to improve conditions for local water supply, protect the ecosystem of the Lancang-Mekong River, address the adverse impacts of floods and droughts, and other extreme weather events caused by climate change.

We highly appreciate the broad consensus on future cooperation reached among the water authorities of the six member countries, including supporting China for convening the Second Lancang-Mekong Water Resources Cooperation Forum and Viet Nam for convening the Second Ministerial Meeting on Lancang-Mekong Water Resources Cooperation, strengthening pragmatic cooperation on flood and drought disaster mitigation, clean drinking water and sanitation services, hydrological information monitoring and alignment of technical standards, fully promoting the building of the Lancang-Mekong Water Resources Cooperation Information Sharing Platform through an appropriate mechanism, and enhancing the capacity of member countries in sustainable water resources development and management.

 We support the Joint Study on the changing Pattern of Hydrological Conditions of the Lancang-Mekong River Basin and Adaption Strategies by the Lancang-Mekong Water Resources Cooperation Center and Mekong River Committee Secretariat, which will put forward engineering and non-engineering measures to tackle climate change.

3. We commend the progress made in the Lancang-Mekong environmental protection cooperation, including strengthening cooperation and knowledge sharing on clean and renewable energy, joint efforts in promoting green and low carbon transition, and enhancing capabilities to address climate change. We agree to accelerate the implementation of the *Lancang-Mekong Environmental Cooperation Strategy* and the Green Lancang-Mekong Initiative, make full use of the Lancang-Mekong Environmental Cooperation Center, strengthen environmental policy exchanges and dialogue, and enhance cooperation on biodiversity conservation, air quality, clean water pilot programs, and sustainable infrastructure. Efforts will be made to jointly develop the Lancang-Mekong Knowledge Hub for Low-Carbon, Green, and Sustainable Infrastructure, carry out demonstration projects of sustainable and low-carbon communities and schools, promote nature-based solution through building a mangrove protection network and enhance knowledge sharing and cooperation on climate adaptation.

 4. We also emphasize the need for the six member countries to work closely together to promote economic growth models that are environmentally friendly and innovation-driven in order to help the region to build back better, greener and smarter in the post-COVID-19 era. To this end, more efforts should be made to bring about actions/measures on Bio-Circular-Green Economy (BCG) and promote innovation such as exploring the idea of innovation corridors, which are networks of R&D hubs to support economic and industrial zones in the border areas of the Lancang-Mekong region.

5. We encourage cooperation in the management and protection of forest resources, bolster exchanges and cooperation on the conservation of precious tree species and wildlife, legal forestry trade, forest ecological restoration and research, promote and develop community based forest products, enhance local livelihood through agroforestry, and joint forest fire prevention in border areas, prevent haze pollution, and work together to combat illegal logging and wildlife trafficking in an effort to enhance forestry management capacity of the Lancang-Mekong countries.

6. We take note of the *Joint Research Report on Promoting Synergy between Lancang-Mekong Economic Development Belt and the New International Land-Sea Trade Corridor* by the Global Center for Mekong Studies as well as China’s recommendations and measures in promoting the synergy. Relevant authorities of the six member countries are encouraged to carry out discussions on their suggestions and measures to enhance connectivity, trade, investment, e-commerce and production capacity cooperation, accelerate digital transformation and scientific and technological innovation, and jointly build the Lancang-Mekong Economic Development Belt.

We encourage relevant agencies of the six member countries to undertake further studies to formulate detailed plans to build the Lancang-Mekong Economic Development Belt while promoting the synergy with the New International Land-Sea Trade Corridor, which would enhance further connectivity between China and Southeast Asia through, in particular, the East-West Economic Corridor, North-South Economic Corridor and Southern Economic Corridor.

7. We recall the ASEAN-China Aviation Cooperation Framework, and reaffirm our commitment towards deepening aviation cooperation fields​ through strengthening exchanges and communication. Efforts will also be made to enhance sustainable transport action and measures in LMC for, in the long run, achieving universally accessible, safe, affordable, clean and low-carbon passenger and freight transport.

8. We reaffirm the LMC’s commitment to deepening cooperation in agriculture, poverty reduction, rural development, tourism, sports, media, gender equality, women, youth, and the disabled to deliver more benefits to the people. Cooperation in education and human resources will be enhanced to help the Lancang-Mekong countries train more science and engineering professionals and a high-caliber and skilled workforce.

9. We recognize the importance of funding for sustainable development of the region, welcome the *List of the Projects Supported by LMC Special Fund of 2021* released by China, and call for further enhancing project quality and implementation efficiency to produce greater influence and better serve the economic and social development of the six member countries.

10. We reaffirm to strengthen multilateralism to support win-win cooperation for addressing challenges and ensuring benefit to all LMC countries. Committing to the principle of openness and inclusiveness, we agree to foster greater synergy and coordinated development efforts between the LMC and other regional organizations as well as sub-regional cooperation frameworks including the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN), Ayeyawady–Chao Phraya–Mekong Economic Cooperation Strategy (ACMECS), Greater Mekong Subregion Economic Cooperation Programme (GMS) and the Mekong River Commission (MRC). Other international organizations and institutions, such as the World Bank, Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) and Asian Development Bank (ADB) are also welcomed to contribute to the LMC in promoting ASEAN Community building and regional economic integration.