

Donor Partners' Joint Statement

Second Greater Mekong Subregion Agriculture Ministers' Meeting

8 September 2017, Siem Reap, Kingdom of Cambodia

Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates, Dear Partners,

The Government of Sweden and the Nordic Development Fund would like to express our sincere apologies to the GMS Working Group on Agriculture (WGA) for not being able to attend the Second GMS Agriculture Ministers' Meeting (AMM-2) today. We would like to extend our appreciation to the WGA Secretariat and the host, the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, and Fisheries, Cambodia for sharing with us relevant AMM-2 documents to learn about the current status, trends and strategic future direction for regional cooperation in the agriculture sector of the GMS, and the way forward of the Core Agriculture Support Programme. Together, Sweden and the Nordic Development Fund are pleased to provide a joint donor statement to address some strategic points to ensure that the GMS will achieve a vision that is integrated, harmonious, prosperous, and equitable.

In the GMS, agriculture will remain an important sector that can help to alleviate poverty and increase equality, if done in the right way. The coordination and integration between countries in the GMS, as well as partnerships with public and private sector actors and civil society, are very important and need to be strengthened. The ADB has a crucial role to assist GMS member countries to strengthen inclusive food and agriculture value chains leading to increased incomes, and improve living standards of the people living in poverty and vulnerable groups.

In the GMS, the progress in economic development has made a significant contribution to poverty reduction. However, in several places, this rapid economic growth has an adverse impact on the environment, e.g. depletion of natural resources and climate change. We welcome and encourage the focus on climate change adaptation and mitigation, as well as environmentally friendly agriculture, in the agriculture programme. We hope that results, especially from the CASP, will promote and lead to sustainable practices and investment opportunities in environmentally and climate friendly agriculture in the GMS.

We acknowledge that the GMS Strategy and Action Plan 2018-2022 for promoting safe and environment-friendly agro-based value chains is for endorsement by the GMS Agriculture Ministers. We hope that this will increase the ownership and pursuit of the vision of GMS as a leading supplier of safe and environment-friendly agrifood products. Under the framework of the GMS agriculture cooperation, we believe that the CASP has played an important role in increasing and enhancing market access for safe and environment-friendly agriculture products benefitting small scale farmers in the GMS. We would like to emphasize the importance of this program being a pro-poor program, which is closely linked to social perspectives, such as gender and human rights, as well as an environmental program. The links are clear between environment and climate-resilient sustainable development and human rights,

democracy and gender equality. By working inclusively, we trust that the GMS will gain greater benefits towards sustainable development.

The GMS Regional Investment Framework (RIF) will drive the strategic future directions of the region. The proposed agriculture pipeline is guided by the strategic priorities under CASP2, and investments are projected to increase in the GMS economic corridors. This is a key initiative where CASP2 should use its experience to add value and provide leverage for the RIF's implementation plan.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Trusting that this collaboration under GMS agriculture program will help us move towards the eradication of poverty and a more sustainable future in the region. Thank you for your attention.