

**DEVELOPMENT PARTNER' JOINT STATEMENT**  
**Second GMS Agriculture Ministers' Meeting**  
**8 September 2017, Siem Reap, Kingdom of Cambodia**

**We acknowledge the following:**

1. The Greater Mekong Subregion (GMS) has a great opportunity to be a major supplier of safe and environment-friendly agriculture products (SEAP). The GMS economies are growing rapidly, and their population of over 330 million is becoming richer and more urbanized. Increasingly, GMS consumers look for food characteristics such as safety, healthiness, and environment-friendliness. GMS farmers generate large surplus of agrifood products, and agribusiness companies are more sophisticated and better able to develop regional and global reach. Trade is growing and integration is accelerating thanks to policy initiatives and development of transportation corridors and logistics systems. Agriculture in the GMS continues to be a major source of employment and livelihoods in rural areas and contributes to poverty reduction.
2. Food safety, quality, and nutrition are recognized in the agricultural development strategies of each GMS country. The priority for much of the GMS is assuring the safety and sustainability of food and food supply systems and harmonizing food safety standards while ensuring that Goal 2 of the UN Sustainable Development Goals (end hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition, and promote sustainable agriculture) is achieved.
3. Agroecological approaches are becoming known throughout the GMS. Agroecological approaches include the gamut of locally appropriate production practices that seek to improve food safety, sustainable use of agrochemical inputs, and promote environment-friendly and climate-smart practices—such as the organic agriculture, integrated crop and pest management, conservation of natural resources, and agroforestry.
4. Building inclusive and effective value chains is crucial to promote safe and environment-friendly agrobased products. To this purpose, encouraging good practices such as contract farming, cluster development, code of conducts for agrifood investment, public-private partnerships, and geographical indications should be considered as a priority.
5. The GMS is strategically located at the crossroad of the larger China market, the Indian subcontinent, and the major transport corridors linking the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) to Central Asia and South Asia, in addition to the Pacific Ocean and the Indian Ocean. The continuity of its landmass, the rapid development of its economic corridors, and the diversity of its agroecological environment make it uniquely placed within ASEAN+3 to be a leader in agrifood trade.
6. The common features in the GMS—the sharing of the Mekong River, a large landmass with porous borders, dynamic growing economies, trade openness, and connectivity—suggest that a subregional strategy could enhance the success of the strategies pursued independently by each nation. Although GMS countries are at different levels of development, catching up within the subregion is not only occurring, but it is also highly desirable for the overall subregion to become more prosperous and growth to be sustainable.
7. The GMS Strategy and Siem Reap Action Plan for Safe and Environment-friendly Agro-based Value Chains will enhance coordination of policies and regional cooperation to solve transboundary challenges affecting food safety and the sustainable use of natural resources in agriculture.

**As development partners, we are committed to:**

1. Support the key actors in the GMS - including public and private sector, and civil society organizations to become a leading global supplier of safe and environment-friendly agrifood products.
2. Align development partners' programs with the priorities identified in the Strategy and Siem Reap Action Plan for safe and environment-friendly agrifood products.

**To this end we would therefore emphasize the need to:**

1. Commend the decision of the Agricultural Ministers of GMS to endorse the Strategy and Siem Reap Action Plan for Safe and Environment-friendly Agriculture Products Value Chain at the Second GMS Agriculture Ministers' Meeting in Siem Reap on 6-8 September 2017.
2. Promote harmonization of policies, standards, and systems and build relevant capacity to enhance trade within the GMS and beyond.
3. Seek funding to support the agricultural projects and technical assistance in the regional consolidated agricultural pipeline including (i) agroindustrial zones to support the promotion of inclusive safe and environment-friendly agro-based value chains; (ii) animal disease control zones particularly those located at border areas; (iii) cluster and inclusive value chain development for geographical indications (GI) related to safe and environment-friendly agricultural products; and (iv) agribusiness incubator development to promote innovative start-up and small and medium agro-enterprises, including those led by women, youth, and local communities.
4. Strengthen the collaboration with the Working Group of Agriculture (WGA), which was successfully pursued during the previous phases of Core Agriculture Support Program (CASP).
5. Work together to strengthen the decision support tools and information available to enable prioritization and decisions about the best approaches to capacity building and knowledge sharing on safe and environment—friendly agro-based value chains in the GMS.
6. Monitor the benefits of the programs developed under the Strategy to ensure that all GMS consumers have access to safer food products. Embedded in the food safety focus is the adoption of environment- and climate-friendly agriculture technologies and practices.
7. Fund a technical assistance (TA) project to support the implementation of the Strategy and Siem Reap Action Plan for SEAP. The TA will provide advisory, technical, project preparation, capacity building, communication, and logistics services to the WGA Secretariat and facilitate the coordination between WGA, development partners, and stakeholders from farmers organizations, public and private sector, and civil society organizations.