

**SUMMARY OF MINUTES
OF
THE TWENTY-SECOND MEETING OF
THE MRC COUNCIL
(SESSION 1)**

**MEKONG RIVER COMMISSION
13-14 January 2016 in Phnom Penh, Cambodia**

GENERAL

1. The MRC Council held its Twenty-second Meeting (hereinafter referred to as “The Meeting”) on 13-14 January 2016 in Phnom Penh, Cambodia. The proposed Programme and Agendas covered the following items:

- Consideration for approval of the proposal for extension of the current MCs contribution formula and discussion on MCs contribution formula after 2016
- Consideration for approval of the revision of the Rules of Procedures of the MRC JC and Council
- Consideration for approval of the MRCS new structure including staffing plan

2. The Meeting was opened and chaired by H.E. Mr. Lim Kean Hor, Minister of Water Resources and Meteorology, Chairperson of Cambodia National Mekong Committee, Chairperson of the MRC Council for 2015-2016. The Meeting was attended by 78 participants, including Delegates from Cambodia, Lao PDR, Thailand and Viet Nam and professional and support staff from the MRC Secretariat (the Secretariat).

3. On 12 January 2016, the MRC Joint Committee held a Private Meeting and a Preparatory Meeting to discuss issues of mutual concern and interest prior to the Meeting.

A. STATEMENT OF THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE MRC COUNCIL FOR 2014-2015

4. H.E. Mr. Chu Pham Ngoc Hien, Deputy Minister of Natural Resources and Environment, Vice Chairperson of Viet Nam National Mekong Committee, on behalf of H.E. Mr. Nguyen Minh Quang, the Chairperson of the MRC Council for 2014-2015, welcomed all the distinguished Delegates from the Member Countries, especially H.E. Mr. Lim Kean Hor, the incoming Chairperson of the MRC Council for 2015-2016, for his warm welcome and gracious hospitality for his Delegation to participate in this 22nd Council Meeting. On behalf of the outgoing Chairperson, the Deputy Minister recalled the achievements made for the previous MRC Strategic Plan 2011-2015 that would be continued in the new Strategic Plan 2016-2020 including the work on the IWRM-based Basin Development Strategy, MRC Procedures, decentralisation, MRC structural and operational reforms, the work on the transboundary impacts assessment, and that on hydropower development. The Deputy Minister informed the Viet Nam-initiated Study on the Impact of Mainstream Hydropower on the Mekong River had been successfully completed at the end of December 2015. The Deputy Minister requested the MRC to assign the Secretariat to refer to the results of the Viet Nam initiated Study for reviewing and updating the 1994 run-off river hydropower development plan aiming to harmonise the mutual benefits of all riparian countries and to ensure achievement of sustainable development for the whole basin. Recapping the significant achievements made by the organisation, the Deputy Minister assured the incoming Chairperson of the MRC Council for 2015-2016 of Viet Nam’s support for his tenure as well as the support by the MRC Council.

B. WELCOME ADDRESS BY THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE MRC COUNCIL FOR 2015-2016

5. Addressing the presence of the distinguished delegates from all the Member Countries, H.E. Mr. Lim Kean Hor, the Chairperson of the MRC Council for 2015-2016 (The Chairperson) delivered his welcome address, expressing his profound thanks and deep appreciation to H.E. Mr. Nguyen Minh Quang, the outgoing Chairperson of the MRC Council for 2014-2015, for significant achievements he has made over the past year. The Chairperson continued to express his dedication and commitment to achieving all the common goals as stated in the Hua Hin Declaration which thereafter had been reaffirmed by the four Heads of the Government at the 2nd MRC Summit, specifically through the Ho Chi Minh City Declaration. The Chairperson then moved to provide a snapshot of all the important agenda items which were put forward for the Meeting and awaiting careful deliberation and guidance by the Council members so as to bring a number of pending issues to their finalisation. The Chairperson also provided the Meeting with a brief information about the celebration of the 20th Anniversary of the Mekong Cooperation after the completion of the Session 2. Then he went through all the agenda items specifically stressing the Council's comments and insightful guidance to approve a number of organisational issues with strategic importance for the MRC presented in both Session 1 and 2. As a conclusion, the Chairperson invited all the participants for their active discussions and meaningful engagement and thanked the Secretariat for their efforts in organising the Meeting and declared the Meeting open.

C. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

6. The Chairperson sought comments and suggestions from the floor on the agendas for today's Meeting. The Agenda was adopted as proposed.

D. MANAGEMENT AND FINANCIAL MATTERS

D.1 Consideration for approval of the proposal for extension of the current MCs contribution formula and discussion on MCs contribution formula after 2016

7. The Secretariat presented the above agenda item with some brief background leading to the decision made by the JC in its Preparatory Meeting. The Secretariat then reported on the status of the discussions on the above agenda in the JC Preparatory Meeting and raised for the Council consideration the agreement made by the JC regarding the formula, raised by Thailand, for 20% contribution for Cambodia and Lao PDR and 30% contribution for Thailand and Viet Nam with annual increment of 10% of total contribution over the period of three years starting from 2016 until 2018.

8. The Meeting approved the proposed contribution formula with annual increment of 10% of total contribution for the three years from 2016-2018. The Member Countries would continue to discuss to derive a new contribution formula towards the equal contribution by 2030.

E. MEKONG RIVER COMMISSION MATTERS

E.1 Consideration for approval of the revised Rules of Procedures of the MRC JC and Council

9. The Secretariat provided some background of the development of the revision of the Rules of Procedures of the MRC JC and Council in a number of governance meetings thus far. The Secretariat also briefed the Meeting on each of the Rules of the revised draft RoPs endorsed by the JC in its 42nd Meeting on 10 September 2015 in Vientiane, Lao PDR. The Secretariat then reported on the discussions and endorsement provided by the MRC JC in its Preparatory Meeting on the day before for the RoPs of the JC and Council. The Secretariat thereafter sought approval for both RoPs above by the MRC Council.

10. The Meeting approved the final version of the revised RoPs of both JC and Council.

F. MRC Reform

F.1 Consideration for approval of the MRCS new structure including staffing plan

11. For the above agenda item, the Secretariat reported to the Meeting on status of the discussions in the JC Preparatory Meeting, where the JC agreed in principle to endorse the new structure proposed by the Secretariat with some recommended changes. The Secretariat sought approval of the MRC Council on the proposed new structure of the Secretariat, the selection method of Division Head per country and rotation, and the process of recruitment of Division Heads.

12. The Meeting approved the new structure which has been endorsed by the JC, including the use of Division instead of Unit. The Meeting also agreed to have the issue of Staffing Plan further discussed in greater details by the JC and report back to the MRC Council for information.