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Mekong Development and China's (Yunnan) Participation in the Greater Mekong Subregion Cooperation

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Abstract

Mekong development is a commonly wish of people in Mekong subregion. As a country in upstream of Mekong River, China quite attaches importance to development of the subregion cooperation. Since the GMS program came into being, the Chinese government always has taken positive attitude to GMS and actively participated in the cooperative mechanism and given play to cooperation. Yunnan Province is a main part of China's participation in the GMS cooperation and it has been actively pushing forward the development of GMS cooperation. Yunnan Province undertakes a set of the projects concerning infrastructure and most of them have finished. Yunnan's participation in GMS cooperation convincingly promotes Yunnan's economic and social development, broaden Yunnan's opening up, promotes friendship with neighboring countries and maintain state security. China will continue to common push development of GMS with other countries in subregion.

Keywords:

Mekong, development, GMS, China, participation

1. INTRODUCTION

The Mekong River is an important international river in Asia. The source of Lancang-Mekong River is located in Zaduo County, Yushu Tibet Autonomous Prefecture of northwest China's Qinghai Province, which is about 5,200 meters above sea level. The overall length of Lancang-Mekong River is 4909 km,¹⁾ of which 2198 km is in mainland China and 1247 kilometers in Yunnan Province.²⁾ Its Chinese section is known as the Lancang River. The Mekong River valley covers about 2.6 million square km and about 320 million people live within the subregion, which share the world's 12th largest river and have close cultural and historical linkages.

The greater Mekong subregion consists of Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, Thailand, Vietnam, and Yunnan Province of the People's Republic of China. The subregion is rich in natural resources. Along with its strong agricultural base, the subregion contains extensive timber and fisheries resources, considerable mineral potential, and some of Asia's best potential for hydropower projects and large coal and petroleum reserves.³⁾

The rich natural and human resources of the Mekong subregion have made it a new frontier of Asian economic growth. Indeed, the Mekong subregion has the potential to be one of the world's fastest growing areas. However, the subregion remains poor. The great majority of the people live in rural areas where they lead subsistence or semi subsistence agricultural lifestyles. And even in Thailand, the most developed country among the Mekong subregion, there remains large agricultural communities, particularly in the north and northeastern Thailand. The people live on less than 1 USD a day in most of the subregion. Despite significant economic growth, poverty is still widespread. The Mekong subregion faces numerous challenges, including the disparities between urban and rural communities, a growing gap between rich and poor, inadequate attention to the special needs of ethnic minorities, gender inequities, lack of access to basic health and education, inadequate protection of the environment on which traditional livelihoods depend. Clearly, the full potential of the Mekong su-

1) Most of data said length of Lancang-Mekong River is 4880 km. the Chinese scientists made field study and got new data. see report Source of Mekong River Pinpointed, People's Daily. Beijing. October 27, 2002.

2) Source of Mekong River Pinpointed, People's Daily, Beijing, October 27, 2002.

3) see ADB website, MRC website, SEAN Secretariat website and so on

region countries can be realized only if the above problems are adequately addressed.

The people in the Mekong subregion have had a strong willingness for many years to develop Mekong basin and brought it benefit to the subregion people. But, Mekong development has not been realized because of historical reasons. In 1951, Economic Commission for Asia and the Far East made investigation on Mekong River and published an investigation report on water resource of the Lower Mekong in 1957. After that, Mekong River Commission established in October 1957 supported by UN. Its member contained Thailand, South Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos. In the wake of expansion of Vietnam War in 1960s-1970s, the Lower Mekong development actually did not carry out.

After the end of Vietnam War, Mekong subregion fell into another local war and various upheavals again. Indochinese area did not realized peace until early 1990s. The end of the Cold War brought about an improved political and security climate in the subregion. Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar and Vietnam began to opening up and reform, and underwent a transition to a market-based economy. The political and security situation in the subregion would be possible to achieve subregion cooperation, and six members of Mekong subregion also recognized that their future well-being depended on economic and social cooperation.

Since 1980s economic globalization has speeded up and also facilitated regional integration process. In the beginning of 1990s, the regional cooperation in Asia developed rapidly following in the globalization. Some cooperative mechanism which revolved around Mekong development rose in the inside and outside of Southeast Asia. The Greater Mekong Subregion Cooperation (GMS), as one of Mekong development cooperative mechanism, rose in response to the proper time and condition. GMS produces most marked effect in numerous Mekong development cooperative mechanisms.

In Mekong development cooperation, China mainly participates in GMS cooperation mechanism and is an important member of GMS. The paper will focus on China's participation, mainly Yunnan Province's participation and its policy and practice.

II. CHINA ATTACHES IMPORTANCE TO THE GREATER MEKONG SUBREGION COOPERATION

1. China's Position and Attitude towards the Greater Mekong Subregion Cooperation

The Greater Mekong Subregion Cooperation is an outcome of globalization and regional economic integration. Under the globalization, the broad developing countries are aware that facing challenge of globalization, it is difficult to only depend on indigenous strength for resolving difficult problems in development and they only strengthen cooperation, bring about economic complement, economic and social development can be realized. Asian experience also showed that regional cooperation could be a powerful means to minimize the risks of globalization.

In 1992, the Asian Development Bank initiated the Greater Mekong Subregion Cooperation program, which is proven in practice a program assuming an increasingly important role for economic growth of this region. It was supported actively by the Mekong subregional countries.

Since GMS started in 1992, the GMS program has launched about 100 cooperative projects covering infrastructure, energy resources, trade and investment, telecommunications, environment, tourism, agriculture and human resources development. All of the programs have made remarkable achievements in the past 17 years. It becomes a good example in multilateral cooperation in the developing countries.

As a country in upstream of Mekong River, China quite attaches importance to development of the subregion cooperation. Since the GMS program came into being, the Chinese government always has taken positive attitude to GMS and actively participated in this cooperative mechanism and given play to cooperation.

China's leaders express the position and attitude of the Chinese government towards GMS for many times and emphasis that China supports GMS and is willing to strength cooperation with other countries, to seek common development.

Early in August 1993, when Mr. Qiao Shi, chairman of the standing committee of the National People's Congress visited in Thailand he pointed out that China was quite concerned with Mekong development and utilization, and China highly approved of the Mekong development and cooperation.⁴⁴

4) People's Daily, August 7, 1993.

In August 1996, Vice-Premier Jiang Chunyun pointed out in the 6th GMS Ministerial Conference held at Kunming, China that the Chinese government supported and attached importance to economic cooperation with subregional countries, and would positively participate in subregion cooperation and made out the own contribution for promoting subregion cooperation according to principle of the equal consultation, mutual benefit, common development.⁵⁾

President Jiang Zemin and ASEAN leaders signed Joint Statement of the Meeting of the President of the People's Republic of China and Heads of State/Government of the Member States of ASEAN on 16 December 1997. The joint statement pointed out that "China and ASEAN member states regarded the development of a partnership of good-neighbourliness and mutual trust between them as an important policy objective for relations between China and ASEAN in the 21st century", "They reaffirmed their common interest in developing the Mekong Basin and pledged to strengthen their support for the riparian countries by promoting activities in the areas of trade, tourism and transport."⁶⁾

In the Fourth China-ASEAN Summit, Chinese Premier Zhu Rongji mentioned the GMS cooperation and point out emphatically that China supported development of the GMS cooperation and would increase input in the development of the Mekong.⁷⁾

In the Fifth China-ASEAN Summit, Premier Zhu Rongji put forward that Mekong River basin development should be listed one of focal cooperative field in China-ASEAN Free Trade Area.

The Chinese leaders' above speech shows China has attached importance to the Greater Mekong Subregion cooperation.

2. The Overall Target on China's Participation in the Greater Mekong Subregion Cooperation

China has issued three state reports separately in 2002, 2005 and 2008 on participating in the Greater Mekong Subregion draw up by the National Development and Reform Commission, Ministry of Foreign Af-

5) People's Daily, August 31, 1996.

6) Joint Statement of the Meeting of Heads of State/Government of the Member States of ASEAN and the President of the People's Republic of China, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, 16 December 1997.

7) Xinhua News Agency, November 25, 2000.

fairs and Ministry of Finance. These reports review course of GMS development, introduce China's economic and trade relations with subregional countries, China's the basic thinking and consideration, tentative plan on China's participation in the Greater Mekong Subregion Cooperation. According to the reports, China's overall target of China's participation in GMS cooperation is that linking land passageway between Southwest China and Indochina Peninsula, realizing connection of market between Southwest China and Southeast Asia, strengthening mutual exchange and economic tie, pushing multilevel, multiform, multiaspect economic and technological cooperation, realizing sustainable development in subregion, making employment opportunities, increasing income, eliminating poverty, promoting social progress and improving people's life level, deepening subregion cooperation through dialogue and enforcement of common projects, establishing economic relations in mutual benefit, constructing a appropriate international trade and investment circumstances, pushing forward peace and development in subregion, setting up stable and long friendly cooperative relations between China and Southeast Asian countries.⁸⁾

We are able to know China's consideration for participating in GMS cooperation from the overall target. First, China's participation in GMS cooperation is an important component of strategy of opening up. Since entering new century, China has regarded its foreign policy of friendship and partnership with its neighboring countries as the most important task in its foreign work. To participate in GMS cooperation accords with China's foreign policy of friendship and partnership with its neighboring countries and is beneficial to development of relations between China and its neighboring countries, and beneficial to creation of a favorable international environment for China's reform and opening up and modernization construction.

Second, to construct transport network and open land passageway linking Southwest China and Southeast Asia, facilitate movement of people and goods between two-sides, lay the foundations of economic integration in the subregion.

Third, to make underdeveloped Southwest China and the subregional

8) China-ASEAN Expo Website, January 23, 2005
http://www.caexpo.org/gb/news/special/GMS/coporation/t20050123_30926.html<http://www.caexpo.org>

countries can speed up economic and social development, realize mutual benefits and win-win through participating in GMS cooperation.

3. China's Viewpoint and Principles of Deepening GMS Cooperation

In order to deepen GMS cooperation, Chinese government put forward the principles and recommendations concerned. Mainly contents are as follows.

-----As countries in the GMS vary in size, development level and national conditions, they should adhere to the principle of equal consultation and mutual benefit. They should steadily promote cooperation on the basis of mutual respect, friendly consultation, and voluntariness.

----- The subregional countries should adhere to the principle of centering on projects and emphasizing practical results. The subregion cooperation should follow its "result-and action-oriented" principle and focus on promoting the cooperation on specific projects and programs, so as to bring about an all-round development of their riparian economies.

----- The subregional countries should adhere to the principle of stressing key areas and proceeding in a step-by-step manner.⁹⁾

----- Treat each other with sincerity and enhance consultation and mutual trust. We shall forge close ties, increase mutual understanding, and form synergy so as to cement a stable and harmonious environment for mutually beneficial cooperation in the sub-region.

----- Step up development of transport, power and communications and make infrastructure in various countries inter-connected and internet-based so as to provide strong support for upgrading sub-regional cooperation.

-----Promote both sub-regional cooperation and domestic development of individual countries, meet demands for human resources, preferential policies, industrial development and financing in a balanced way, and fully exploit the resources both in and outside the subregion so as to achieve balanced progress of cooperation in various fields.

-----Strike a balance between economic development and environmental protection, develop resources in a rational way, and place high priority on environmental protection and energy conservation and emission reduc-

9) Premier Zhu Rongji's key note speech delivered at the First Greater Mekong Subregion Economic Cooperation Summit held in Phnom Penh, on November 4, 2002.

tion so as to ensure sustainable development of sub-regional cooperation.¹⁰⁾

These principles and recommendations, in fact, guide China's work for participation in GMS cooperation.

4. China's Implementation of the GMS Cooperation Program

After participating in GMS cooperation, China took a series of measures to implement GMS program. In order to effectively guide the cooperative work, the Chinese Government established a National Coordinating Group for a Pre-feasibility Study on Development of the Lancang-Mekong River Subregion in 1994. This high-level group, with the State Development and Reform Commission, Ministry of Finance, and the State Science and Technology Commission as the lead agencies and over ten ministries as members, has convened a series of meetings for discussing new areas of cooperation, policies, measures, recommendation.

In addition to implementation of determined projects, China provided USD 30 million for the construction of the Laos section of the Kunming-Bangkok highway, USD 5 million for the navigation channel improvement project on the Upper Mekong River, provided training programs for more than 500 people on agriculture, customs affairs and telecommunications. In 2004, China set up a special fund totaling USD 20 million under the ADB for cooperation among Asian developing countries on human resources development and poverty alleviation. In 2005, China decided to individually expand the range of products eligible for preferential tariff from the Laos, Cambodia and Myanmar as of January 1, 2006 with an aim to raise the level of intra-regional trade cooperation. The Chinese leaders pledged China would continue to give financial support within its capacity to the subregion cooperation.

At the Third GMS Summit in 2008, China made a package of pledges on boosting cooperation among members of the GMS. It covered the following contents.

-----China pledged RMB 20 million Yuan to conduct engineering feasibility study on the non-rail connected section of the Eastern Line of the Singapore-Kunming Rail Link (Bat Deng-Loc Ninh). China would be ready to explore with other stakeholders the feasibility of project financing and

10) Wen Jiabao, Premier of the State Council of The People's Republic of China speech at the Third Greater Mekong Subregion Economic Cooperation Summit held in Vientiane, Laos, March 31, 2008.

provide technical, management and equipment support so that the Eastern Line can be completed at an early date.

-----China would build methane-generating pits for 1,500 rural households in GMS countries.

-----China would provide training to 1,000 people from the subregion countries, doubling the previous number, under the GMS economic cooperation framework in the next three years.

-----China would provide 200 more government scholarships to students from the subregion for them to study in institutions of higher learning in Yunnan Province, Guizhou Province and Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region of China.¹¹⁾

-----Based on China's proposal, the six countries -- China, Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia, Myanmar and Thailand -- officially set up the Greater Mekong Subregion (GMS) Economic Corridors Forum in Kunming, capital of southwest China's Yunnan Province. The first GMS Economic Corridors Forum held in Kunming on June 6, 2008. Representatives from six countries are in agreement on speeding up the transformation of the transport, resources and regional advantages into economic advantages for the region's development. The Second GMS Economic Corridors Forum held in Phnom Penh, Cambodia on September 16, 2009. Representatives from six countries discussed role of government and enterprises in GMS Economic Corridors.

III. YUNNAN'S PARTICIPATION IN THE GMS COOPERATION

1. Yunnan's Economic and Social Development

Yunnan Province is located at the southwest frontier areas of China, bordering on Laos, Myanmar and Vietnam in the west and in the south, boundary line is 4,060 km and is close to Thailand, Cambodia, Bangladesh and India. Yunnan is also upper stream of three international rivers, Mekong, Irrawaddy and Honghe River. Yunnan Province has 128 counties, of which 27 counties border on Myanmar, Laos and Vietnam. Based on these conditions, Yunnan Province is called a bridge and passageway of China's accession to Southeast Asia and South Asia by land. Yunnan has a total territory of 394,000 km², ranking the eighth in China with a straight-line

11) Xinhua News Agency, April 01, 2008.

distance of 864.9 km from east to west and 990 km from south to north. By the end of 2008 it had a population of 45.43 million,¹²⁾ of which the ethnic minorities accounted for over 1/3.

Owing to historical reasons, though Yunnan possesses rich natural resources and geographic advantage of access to Southeast Asian market, it has been in state of poor and underdeveloped for a long term. Up to 2008, there still were 5.5 million peoples living in rural areas and remote areas were state of poor in Yunnan Province.¹²⁾ To rid of poverty and catch up the national development level is hard task.

After China carried out policies of reform and opening up, Yunnan met with rare opportunity of development. In 1990s Yunnan provincial government put forward a development strategy, namely building Yunnan as a power province with developed green economy, a province with rich and colorful national culture and major passageway towards Southeast Asia and South Asia.

By hard efforts for a long time, great changes take place in Yunnan Province. According to Statistics Bulletin of National Economy and Social Development of Yunnan Province published on 31 March 2009, Up to end of year 2008, Yunnan's GDP reached RMB 570 billion Yuan (convert into USD 85 billion), per capita GDP reached RMB 12587 Yuan (convert into USD 1842), increased 10.3 percent over the previous year. The volume of export and import reached USD 9.59 billion, increased 9.3 percent over the previous year, the urban residents per capita disposable income reached 13250 Yuan (about USD 1977), increased 9.4 percent and farmers per capita net income reached 3103 Yuan (about USD 463), increased 9.1 percent over the previous year.¹³⁾

However, generally speaking, Yunnan's economic strength is behind coastal areas and inland areas in China.

2. Important Significance of Yunnan's Participation in the GMS Cooperation

Yunnan Province is a main part of China participation in the GMS cooperation and it has been actively pushing forward the development of GMS cooperation. The reasons of Yunnan Province participates in GMS

12) The Bureau of Statistics of Yunnan Province, Statistics Communiqué of Yunnan Province on the 2008 National Economic and Social Development, published on March 31, 2009.

13) The Bureau of Statistics of Yunnan Province, Statistics Communiqué of Yunnan Province on the 2008 National Economic and Social Development, published on March 31, 2009.

are as follows.

First, Yunnan is located upper reaches of Lancang-Mekong River, which length is 1247 km within Yunnan Province. Geographically, Yunnan belongs to Mekong River valley. It is as a matter of course to participate in GMS cooperation. So, the Chinese government from beginning determined Yunnan province as China side participating in GMS cooperation.

Second, Yunnan needs to open passageway towards Southeast Asia and South Asia. As said above, Yunnan is an underdeveloped landlocked province. Especially its poor transport facilities restricted its economic development. In order to change its state of backwardness, Yunnan must build communication network linking with Southeast Asia, get rid of communication "bottleneck" and open access to the sea. Yunnan's consideration tallies with the GMS program, such as the aim of project of construction of three North-South transport corridors is just for linking Yunnan, Southwest China with GMS countries. As starting points of three North-South transport corridors, Yunnan plays a key role in building north-south transport corridors, even economic corridors.

Third, it is helpful to deepen Yunnan's opening up to outside world. Through participating in GMS cooperation, Yunnan is able to more conveniently access to international market, strengthen economic complementation with Southeast Asian countries. Thus, Yunnan can full use resources and markets at home and abroad for promoting its economic and social development.

Fourth, Yunnan needs to maintain a peaceful and stabile neighboring environment. Because Yunnan's special geographic position which borders on three countries, it must address relations better with neighboring countries, strengthen friendship and cooperation with them. Yunnan's participation in GMS cooperation is most important to maintain peace and stability in frontiers of the Southwest China.

Based on above consideration, Yunnan vigorously participates in the GMS cooperation and carried forward development.

3. Yunnan Takes Measures to Implement Projects of the GMS Cooperation

Since the establishment of GMS cooperative mechanism, many major projects were identified by the GMS ministerial meeting. Yunnan Province undertakes a set of the projects concerning infrastructure according to arrangement of the GMS ministerial meeting including:

- (1) Road transport
 - R3 Chiang Rai (Thailand)–Kunming road improvement project via Myanmar or Laos
 - R4 Kunming- Lashio(Myanmar) road system improvement project
 - R5 Kunming-Hanoi road improvement project
- (2) Railway transport subsector
 - RW1 Yunnan-Thailand railway project
 - RW2 Yunnan-Vietnam railway project
 - RW5 Yunnan-Myanmar railway project
- (3) Water transport projects
 - W1 Upstream Lancang-Mekong River Navigation improvement project
 - W3 Red River Navigation improvement project
- (4) Air transport projects
 - A2 Yunnan Province airports improvement project
- (5) Telecommunication projects
 - C9 Thailand-Laos-Yunnan optical fiber cable link
 - C10 Thailand-Myanmar-Yunnan optical fiber cable link
 - C11 Yunnan-Vietnam optical fiber cable link
 - C12 Myanmar-Yunnan optical fiber cable link
 - C13 Yunnan-Laos optical fiber cable link
- (6) Power generation and transmission
 - E3 transmission interconnection with Thailand of the Jinghong hydropower project in Yunnan

Besides above infrastructure projects, Yunnan province participated in other cooperative projects in the fields of trade and investment, tourism, environment protection, human resource, drug control, etc.

Yunnan has taken effective measures to implement projects since projects started. In order to strengthen leadership and management, Yunnan provincial government established a leading group, governor as its head, to coordinate work concerned. Besides the group, Yunnan provincial government established Yunnan Province Coordinating Group for a Pre-feasibility Study on Development of the Lancang--Mekong River Subregion so that reinforce research work.

By efforts of the people of all ethnic groups in Yunnan, under the strong support of the central government, tremendous achievements have received in implementing GMS projects.

Some important program and projects have completed up to now.

In road construction, Cuxiong--Dali--Baoshan expressway loaned by ADB completed and opened to traffic in 2006, it serves as part of the trunk line linking China with Myanmar and South Asian countries. About Kunming-Bangkok highway, China's section has completed and opened in March 2008. The Lao section (80 km) of the Kunming-Bangkok highway which China helped to construct has completed in June 2006. Kunming--Hekou (trading port in China-Vietnam border) high-grade highway, as a section of Kunming--Lao Cai--Hanoi--Hai Phong transportation corridor, has completed in 2009.

That means, so far, three North-South transport corridors in sections of China have established expressway or high-grade highway. This is great a event with milestone sense in Yunnan's history of highway construction.

In energy projects, Yunnan Electric Network Company has successfully transmitted power to Vietnam through two lines of 110 kilovolt since year 2004. Yunnan has transmitted 2.32 billion kwh of electricity from September 2004 to November 2007.¹⁴⁾

In water navigation projects, after open of navigation of Lancang-Mekong in 2001, navigation of Red Rive has been lifted to agenda. China and Vietnam are consulting on the issue. Its open will not so far.

In telecommunication projects, Yunnan completed Yunnan-Laos optical fiber cable link and Yunnan -Myanmar optical fiber cable link.

In health and human resources projects, Yunnan enforced the project of "monitor of disease in Mekong subregion", carried out education cooperation with GMS countries. In fields of personnel training, recruitment of foreign students produced a marked effect.

Cooperative projects in other field such as trade and investment, tourism, border trade, development of human resources are under implementation.

In short, through participating in GMS cooperation, Yunnan Province highly widened space of economic development, promoted readjustment of distribution of productive forces, pushed forward urbanization, brought along reform in industries concerned, accelerated economic and social development in border areas.

14) Xinhua News Agency, Kunming, December 4, 2007.

IV. YUNNAN FACES CHALLENGES IN THE GMS COOPERATION

Though Yunnan enjoyed results by participating subregion cooperation, Yunnan needs to overcome some obstacles in the GMS cooperation. Main obstacles and problems are as follows.

(1) Yunnan is still underdeveloped province in China though its economic strength is stronger than some subregional countries. Yunnan needs to increase more infrastructure construction, but inadequate funds restricted major projects to develop.

(2) Enterprises' enthusiasm is less than government in participating in GMS cooperation. To mobilize more enterprises, especially medium and small side enterprises to participate in the GMS cooperation remains problem.

(3) Information exchanges are not enough. The information concerned mainly circulates at the governmental departments and academic circles. The public lack of awareness and knowledge about the GMS cooperation. How to share information is a problem to be solved.

(4) Yunnan faces challenges from at home. Yunnan's opening up is later than inland and coastal areas. At present other provinces and cities are also attach importance to open Mekong subregion market. Comparing to coastal areas in China, Yunnan's capability of open international markets is weak. This makes Yunnan faces more competition from at home in the GMS subregion.

(5) The countries in the subregion have different social systems, laws and model of management, also have different development goals that sometime may clash with those of others. In the wake of development of the GMS cooperation, difficulties increase in mutually coordination.

(6) Coordination is not enough. There are various bodies and departments participating in work of subregion cooperation in Yunnan Province, but coordination is insufficient among them.

(7) Yunnan also faces challenge from non-traditional security. Yunnan borders on three countries and close to Golden Triangle, place of drug production and place of group of the unlawful traffic in drugs. Facilitation of transport maybe increase transnational crime activates. It needs input more human power, financial and material resources to deal with all kinds of complicated situations.

V. CONCLUSION

The Greater Mekong Subregion Cooperation is an inevitable outcome of globalization and regional integration. The cooperation has achieved great results.

To participate in GMS cooperation is an important opportunity of Yunnan's opening up. It makes Yunnan's advantages is full played, expands Yunnan space of opening up, creates rare conditions for Yunnan's access to Southeast Asian market. GMS cooperation regards to enhance economic tie, eliminate poverty, facilitate development as its aim. This is identical with Yunnan's aim, namely deepens reform, speeds poverty reduction, and promotes economic and social development.

The facts prove that Yunnan's participation in GMS cooperation convincingly promotes Yunnan's economic and social development, broaden Yunnan's opening up, promotes friendship with neighboring countries and maintain state security.

In pace with China's economic rise and enhancement of international status, China's role playing in GMS cooperation is more remarkable. China has a grave responsibility in the cooperation. Yunnan province, as a key part of China's participation in GMS, will make more effort to push GMS cooperation forward.

Though there are above problems, the mechanism of the GMS cooperation shows its vigour and potential. It will go on its cooperation process under the efforts of all countries in the subregion and achieve more and more accomplishments.

Table 1: Mekong River Drainage Area

	Drainage Area (sq km)	Share of whole river (%)
China, Yunnan	165,200	21
Myanmar	24,000	3
Laos	202,300	25
Thailand	184,000	23
Cambodia	155,000	20
Vietnam	65,500	8
Total	795,000	100

Source : The Mekong River Commission Secretariat.

Table 2: General Facts of the GMS

	Land area (thousand sq km)	Population (million)	GDP per capita (USD)
China, Yunnan	394	44.5	1842 (2008)
Cambodia	181	13.8	823 (2008)
Laos	237	5.6	859 (2008)
Myanmar	677	54.8	446 (2008)
Thailand	513	65.3	4116 (2008)
Vietnam	332	83.1	1042 (2008)

Source : figures of Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, Thailand and Vietnam were from International Monetary Fund. Figures of Yunnan, China was from Statistics Bulletin of National Economy and Social Development of Yunnan Province, March 31, 2009.

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