



SOCIALIST REPUBLIC OF VIET NAM
MINISTRY OF NATURAL RESOURCES AND ENVIRONMENT

PROCEEDINGS

THE THIRD CONFERENCE ON CLIMATE RESILIENT AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF MEKONG RIVER DELTA OF VIET NAM



Ha Noi, March 2021



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PREFACE

The Resolution No. 120/NQ-CP dated November 17, 2017 of the Government is an epoch-making policy, enabling climate resilient and sustainable development of the Mekong River Delta. Implementing the Resolution, ministries and local agencies have gradually removed barriers, addressed challenges, made use of potentials and strengths and created a strong impetus for the Mekong River Delta.

After three years of implementing the Resolution, the nature-based development philosophy has been imbued in the awareness, mindset and action of all levels, sectors and local agencies in the Mekong River Delta, which has also been positively responded by the people and businesses and effectively supported by international partners. The important results have contributed to creating a solid foundation for the Mekong River Delta to prosper in the future in the context of more complicated, faster happening and hard to be forecast natural disasters and climate change, especially the short-term impacts, and serious water, sand and alluvial shortage expected.

Implementing the direction of the Prime Minister, the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment in coordination with relevant ministries and agencies, Can Tho city People's Committee organised the Third Conference on Climate Resilient and Sustainable Development of Mekong River Delta of Viet Nam to comprehensively assess the achieved results and propose extensive solutions to continue to remove limitations in the implementation of the Resolution. Addressing the Conference, the Prime Minister raised a new strategic approach for ministries and local agencies to study, complete and supplement missing contents in the Resolution, focusing on making more breakthrough solutions for the prosperous and sustainable development of the Mekong River Delta.

Following the Proceedings of previous Conferences, the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment wishes to present the Proceedings of the Third Conference on Climate Resilient and Sustainable Development of the Mekong River Delta of Viet Nam to supplement and enrich useful resources and documents about the Mekong River Delta for national and international policy makers, experts and scientists./.



MAP OF MEKONG RIVER DELTA OF VIET NAM

Dr. Trần Hồng Hà

Minister of Natural Resources and Environment

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H.E. MR. TRƯƠNG HÒA BÌNH

Permanent Deputy Prime Minister

OPENING SPEECH

His Excellency Mr. Nguyễn Xuân Phúc, Member of the Politburo, Prime Minister of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam,

Distinguished leaders, former leaders of the Party, the State, the Fatherland Front of Viet Nam,

Distinguished leaders of ministries, agencies, local agencies,

Distinguished international guests, delegates,

Ladies and gentlemen,

On behalf of the Government, I would like to warmly welcome leaders, former leaders of the Party, the State, the Fatherland Front of Viet Nam, leaders of ministries, agencies, local agencies, representatives of international organizations, embassies, foreign diplomatic agencies, representatives of research institutes, universities, associations, the business community, Vietnamese and foreign experts and scientists to the Third

Conference on Climate Resilient and Sustainable Development of Mekong River Delta of Viet Nam.

Over the past years, the Party and the State have issued directions, policies, solutions, programmes and implemented specific projects to promote potential, advantages and create a driving force to promote the development of Mekong River Delta. Since 2017, the Government has issued the Resolution No.120/NQ-CP and organised three conferences on the climate resilient and sustainable development of Mekong River Delta. The enactment of the Resolution has marked a breakthrough in the mindset of shaping the development strategy for the Mekong River Delta's prosperous and sustainable future towards integrating the socio-economic development of the whole region into the long-term vision, strengthening the development linkage, ensuring the

continuity, and promoting inter-regional and inter-disciplinary principles with focus, through a unified coordination mechanism.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

After more than three years of implementation, with the special attention of the Party, the National Assembly, the Government, ministries, agencies and local agencies in facilitating and promoting the active participation of enterprises, along with development efforts of the Mekong River Delta people and the effective support of international partners, we have achieved significantly positive results, established important foundations for Mekong River Delta to continue to prosper and take off in the coming time.

The Government and the Prime Minister have acknowledged and highly appreciated the efforts of Party Committees and local governments at all levels, people in Mekong River Delta, and development partners and international organizations for their close cooperation, efficient support and valuable experiences. However, the implementation of Resolution still faces many limitations and difficulties, some requirements and expectations of local governments and people in the region have not been met yet.

This Conference is held in the context of our country entering the first implementation year of the 13th National Party Congress Resolution, the National Socio-Economic Development Strategy for the period of 2021-2030, the



Socio-Economic Development Plan for the period of 2021-2025 in a new context with new potential. This Conference is highly significant as it once again affirms the consistency of the vision and the attentiveness of the Government and the Prime Minister to the Mekong River Delta's sustainable development. The evaluation of achievements, especially the outstanding results after three years implementing Resolution, will also help

identify shortcomings, limitations and lessons learned, and propose solutions for a prosperous, modern, environmentally sustainable Mekong River Delta with unique cultural identity.

According to the agenda, after the opening session, leaders of ministries, agencies and local provinces will present and report the implementation results of Resolution on all aspects. After that, representatives of international

organisations, experts, scientists, and the business community will contribute ideas and propose solutions to the Government and the Prime Minister. Due to the limited time, I suggest that the leaders of ministries, agencies and local provinces focus on the following issues:

First, evaluating implementation results of the assigned tasks under the Resolution, limitations, difficulties and causes.

Second, identifying tasks and solutions for the future to promote an effective implementation of the Resolution, including: (1) strategies, planning, tasks, projects, key works that need investment in the period 2021-2025; (2) solutions on mechanisms, science and technology policies, resources; and (3) participation and orientation of development partners to support the implementation of Resolution in recent years.



Third, proposing the orientation and solutions to strengthen regional linkage and to promote economic development between the Mekong River Delta and Ho Chi Minh City and the Southeast region.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The Government hopes that this important Conference will continue to promote the actions of all levels, sectors, local agencies, the business community and people in the Mekong River Delta, together with the support and cooperation of the international community to effectively

implement the tasks and solutions in the Resolution and the Overall Action Plan for the Implementation of Resolution for the sustainable and prosperous development of the Mekong River Delta in the near future.

With such spirit, I declare open the Third Conference on Climate Resilient and Sustainable Development of Mekong River Delta of Viet Nam.

Now, I would like to respectfully invite the H.E. Mr Nguyen Xuan Phuc, Prime Minister, to chair the conference.

Thank you!



MR. TRẦN HỒNG HÀ

Minister of Natural Resources and Environment

EVALUATION REPORT ON THREE-YEAR IMPLEMENTATION OF THE GOVERNMENT'S RESOLUTION NO.120/NQ-CP ON CLIMATE RESILIENT AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF MEKONG RIVER DELTA

The climate resilient and sustainable development of the Mekong River Delta has been one of the top focuses of the Party and the State with many development policies to promote potential and strengths to create a driving force for the region's socio-economic development.

In 2017, Prime Minister Nguyễn Xuân Phúc on behalf of the Government signed the Resolution No.120/NQ-CP on climate resilient and sustainable development of Mekong River Delta. The Resolution has demonstrated a strategic vision with the policy of "thuan thien" (nature-based) development to proactively address challenges caused by climate change and the exploitation of Mekong River water resources to realise fully its potentials, capabilities, strengths, creating a strong momentum for the development of Mekong River Delta.

After more than three years of implementing the Resolution, the

nature-based development orientation has gradually proved to be efficient, creating a fundamental change in the awareness, mindset and actions of all levels, sectors and local agencies in Mekong River Delta with active participation of people and enterprises and effective supports from international organisations and development partners. Although the implementation time has not been long, some remarkable achievements have been made, specifically as follows:

I. HIGHLIGHTED ACHIEVEMENTS

1. Enabling institutions and policies to promote sustainable development in Mekong River Delta in a unified manner with inter-regional linkage to create synergy

Investment encouragement mechanisms and policies have been recommended to be developed, supplemented and improved for the sustainable development



of Mekong River Delta, prioritising such areas as renewable energy and energy efficiency, environmental infrastructure and engineering, agriculture and aquaculture, food processing and related transportation (logistics) services. As a result, enterprises have been attracted to promote their investment in agriculture; the linkage of four actors (managers, investors, scientists and farmers) has thereby been strengthened to improve the value chain, creating a foothold for agricultural products in the world market; and land

policies have been amended to remove bottlenecks to create an open mechanisms to attract investment¹. The promulgation of the Reform Action Framework for mechanisms and policies for the Mekong River Delta has served as a basis to attract resources contributing toward the development of specific mechanisms and policies for the sustainable development in the Mekong River Delta.

- The task of developing Mekong River Delta master plan for the period of 2021-2030 with a vision to 2050 has

been approved and implemented in the direction of multi-sectoral integration, based on strengths of natural areas, in line with the Resolution's nature-based outlook; sectoral planning has been reviewed and adjusted for the Mekong River Delta's climate resilient and sustainable development.

- The task of formulating provincial planning for the period of 2021-2030 with a vision to 2045 of 13 provinces and cities of the region has been approved by the Prime Minister and procedures have

currently been processed for the plans to be soon developed; the Construction planning to 2030 and vision to 2050 in Mekong River Delta²; the Scheme of Sustainable Smart Urban Development in Viet Nam for the period of 2018-2025 and orientations to 2030³, including research and development of a pilot program for smart city development in the Mekong River Delta have been approved; the water supply planning in the Mekong River Delta to 2030 with a vision to 2050 has been adjusted; the development of

⁽¹⁾ Decree No.57/2018/ND-CP on mechanisms and policies to encourage enterprises to invest in agriculture and rural areas; Decree No.98/2018/ND-CP on policies to encourage the development of cooperation and linkage in agricultural production and consumption; Decree No.148/2020/ND-CP amending and supplementing a number of decrees elaborating the implementation of the Land Law.

⁽²⁾ Decision No. 68 / QĐ-TTg dated January 15, 2018 of the Prime Minister.

⁽³⁾ Decision No. 950 / QĐ-TTg dated August 1, 2018 of the Prime Minister.



construction materials for the construction of sea and island works by 2025 to promote the development, production and use of construction materials for coastal and island constructions; the modernisation of irrigation in Mekong River Delta and the prevention of river and coastal erosion to 2030 have also been approved.

- The Master Programme on sustainable and climate-smart agricultural development in Mekong River Delta until 2030 with a vision to 2045 has been approved and being implemented; the Programme on building residential clusters and houses in flooded areas in Mekong River Delta in the period of 2018-2020 is being implemented in the provinces of Dong Thap, An Giang, Vinh Long, Tien Giang, Hau Giang and

Can Tho city for 44,811 households. The construction of 863 residential clusters and 119 surrounding embankments has been completed to ensure that 191,000 households with nearly 1 million people in flooded areas in the Mekong River Delta will be able to live safely, stably and step by step to develop sustainably. The average rate of urban residents having access to clean water in the region has reached about 89.6% (an increase of 1.5% compared to 2017), the average rate of water loss was 22.5% (4% higher than the national average).

- Ministries have issued mechanisms and policies for regional development, such as preferential policies to encourage enterprises to become the nucleus for the restructuring of the agricultural sector in

the direction of modernisation, promotion of high technology application, increase of added value and competitiveness, climate change adaptation and administrative reforms to promote start-ups in agriculture and rural areas. As a result, businesses and foreign investors have invested in implementing projects in the fields of agriculture, transportation and renewable energy, making a contribution to brightening the region outlook as well as promoting the country economic development.

Local agencies have been promoting administrative reforms, improving the investment environment, creating favourable conditions for enterprises and people to promote economic restructuring towards climate change adaptation in line with natural conditions and advantages of the region⁴.

2. Moving from passive to proactive adaptation by enhancing climate monitoring capacity, early weather forecasting and timely warning of natural disasters; transforming production and businesses towards utilising natural strengths

Ministries, sectors and local agencies have promoted the activities of investigations, surveys, warnings and forecasts in the fields of environment and climate change, contributing to socio-economic development according to the Resolution's nature-based development orientation as demonstrated in the

following aspects:

- Strengthening the monitoring network of hydro-meteorology, marine, mud and sand fluctuations, automatic rain measurement. The whole region has 408 monitoring works on underground water resources. As a result, hydro-meteorological forecasts, early warning of natural disasters have been improved in terms of both quality and timing, vitally contributing to adaptation solutions such as water storage, change of cultivation seasons, restructuring of crops and animals, strengthening and protecting houses and production establishments... Thanks to the early forecasts and warnings, ministries and local agencies have implemented effective solutions, minimising negative impacts on daily life and production in the Mekong River Delta. Particularly, though the saline-drought of 2019-2020 witnessed a severer and more extensive level than the historic saline-drought in 2015-2016 thank to the proactiveness in forecasting and timely action in the production restructuring, the affected rice production area was reduced by 90% compared to 2015-2016.

- Actively investigating, surveying, exploring, searching and rationally exploiting water resources for daily use and production in the Mekong River Delta in dry seasons and during saline intrusion periods. Underground water sources have been investigated and searched in 32 regions across seven provinces of



⁴ In 2020 alone, the number of level 4 online public services in the whole region has doubled compared to 2019.

Mekong River Delta, including: Bac Lieu, Ca Mau, Dong Thap, Kien Giang, Long An, Soc Trang and Tra Vinh with a total of 35 public works with the capacity of 33,000m³/day to provide water to more than 333,000 people. Up to now, groundwater maps and numerous drilled wells have been handed over to all local agencies in Mekong River Delta to develop concentrated water supply facilities. In addition, local agencies, that announced the emergency situation of saline-droughts, have been directly supported with hundreds of millions of VND through Viet Nam Environment Protection Fund. In particular, during the saline-droughts in 2020, many emergency water supply points have been built, and the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment alone has supported building 10 points with a total supply capacity of 3,700m³/day, for 62,000 people in seven provinces.

Economic transformation continues to be promoted in accordance with strengths of the region and each sub-region; gradually removing conflicts between economic models; strengthening economic and infrastructure connection within the region and with Ho Chi Minh City and the Southeastern region; forming a network of domestic production and consumption and creating agricultural, fishery and fishery export sources for Ho Chi Minh City and the Southeastern region. According to preliminary statistics, 1,165 cooperation projects of about VND 280,000 billion (approximately USD 12 billion) have been signed by enterprises from Ho Chi

Minh City and provinces in the Mekong River Delta to realise economic linkage and transport connection to implement Resolution No.120/NQ-CP.

- Agricultural production has been gradually transformed to concentrated large-scale production areas, specialising in key products, including shrimp, pangasius, rice, fruit and applying modern processing technologies and consuming along the value chain of agricultural products in line with the policy for increasing production of seafood and fruits while reducing production of rice. The total rice cultivation area in the Mekong River Delta is 4.19 million ha, accounting for 54.3% of the country's total area; creating famous brands for Vietnamese rice in the world market (ST25 rice has consistently been ranked the first or second for the best rice in the world). At the same time, in 2020, farmers and enterprises in Mekong River Delta were very happy to make an important contribution to the success of the country's rice export with volume reaching 6.2 million tonnes, earning USD 3.12 billion (11.2% higher than the figure of the previous year). In 2019, the catfish farming area reached 6,000 ha, with an output of 1.4 million tonnes. The demand for seedlings was about 3-4 billion. The whole region is home to 230 catfish hatcheries and about 4,000 household-owned nurseries with a total area of about 3,500 ha, concentrated mainly in Dong Thap, An Giang and Tien Giang provinces, and Can Tho city, capable of producing nearly 4 billion seedlings. The

brackish water shrimp farming area is about 669,000 ha, accounting for 92.9% of the country's area; in 2019, about 16 billion seedlings were produced, meeting 45% of the demand. The region has about 335,400 ha of fruit trees, accounting for 36.3% of the country's area, including major fruits such as dragon fruit, mango, orange, pomelo, rambutan, longan, durian, pineapple, etc. Many varieties of high quality fruits, adapted to the Delta conditions, have been produced, increasing export value and turnover.

Overcoming difficulties caused by the Covid-19 pandemic, in 2020, many provinces and cities in the Mekong River Delta achieved positive results in export with rice, agricultural and aquatic products gaining USD billion export turnovers. In An Giang province alone, the 2020 total export turnover reached USD 928,150 million, an increase of 4.29% compared to 2019; for rice alone, the earning was USD 270 million, an increase of 18.6% over 2019. These achievements are attributed to the exploitation of regional advantages along with the strengthened cooperation between enterprises in the Mekong River Delta and foreign trade representative agencies in Viet Nam as well as taking advantage of opportunities from free trade agreements of the new generation (i.e, CPTPP, EVFTA, RCEP,...).

The industry sector has gradually increased the effectiveness of transformation in the direction of being associated with the region's potential and advantages, especially to support the

agricultural economy, focusing on green and low emissions industry development and increasing value of agricultural products through promoting the processing industry. Particularly in 2020, the Ministry of Industry and Trade funded VND 14,058 million for 21 projects in the framework of the national industrial promotion to apply advanced machinery and equipment in industrial production, handicraft, improving productivity and quality, enhancing efficient use of raw materials and fuel, minimising environmental pollution; supported the participation in investment promotion fairs and exhibitions to introduce and promote products.

- Focus has also been shifted to exploiting potentials of clean and renewable energy: Bac Lieu 1 and 2 wind power plants have been completed, with other wind and solar power plants in Bac Lieu, Ca Mau and Long An provinces being built. The 12 MW bagasse power plant has been put into operation and the 25 MW rice husk power plant and the 10MW rice straw power plant are being built in Soc Trang province. The rural electricity network in Mekong River Delta has been being developed and the Viet Nam Electricity (EVN) has invested in 3,944 km of medium voltage lines, 4,488 transformer stations, 892 km of low voltage lines, providing electricity for 21,976 households and 2,727 pump stations covering 968,900 ha (so far electricity has been provided to 2,583 households) in the region.

Trade promotion activities across the country were reformed to cope with

changes in domestic and international markets fierce trade competition from major countries, and the Covid-19 pandemic, thereby contributing to promoting brands and industries of the Mekong River Delta in export markets.

- Many economic models suitable to natural conditions, applying high-tech and adapting to climate change have been deployed and developed by localities such as the sustainable shrimp farming model; selecting, breeding and developing varieties of plants, animals and aquatic varieties having potential and strengths of the region; improving seedling quality; the “Climate smart livelihood” and “Clean water and environment” of Soc Trang province; energy efficiency office

buildings equipped with the solar power system in Vinh Long province have become role models.

- Ecological strengths, cultural and historical heritages have been conserved and developed, thereby promoting the tourism and service economy in Mekong River Delta. Many biosphere reserves, ecotourism, river culture areas, craft villages in the region have become tourist attractions such as the Tram Chim National Park, the Cai Rang floating market, the Thoi Son islet, the Chau Giang Khmer village (An Giang), Rice Paper Roll village (Son Doc, Ben Tre), Sa Dec Ornamental flower village (Dong Thap), etc. According to statistics, in 2019 alone, the total number of visitors to the Mekong River Delta



reached 47 million of whom, overnight visitors were 13.5 million, resulting in tens of trillions of VND in revenues.

3. Shaping development space and regional infrastructure connection planning with Ho Chi Minh City and Southeastern region

- The inter-regional connection in terms of infrastructure and economy has been instructed by the Prime Minister on the basis of promoting advantages and development spillover effects of Ho Chi Minh City and the Southern key economic region with the Mekong River Delta, including developing inter-regional traffic routes, forming large-scale industrial parks and major cities to solve comprehensively the connection issue.

- In the period of 2016-2020, the National Assembly, the Government, the Prime Minister directed investments in 31 traffic projects and works with a total of about VND 88,963 billion (VND 29,426 billion has been allocated) with 14 projects completed having a total investment of VND 41,474 billion, 14 projects ongoing projects having a total investment of VND 40,494 trillion and 3 projects to be commenced soon having total investment of about VND 6,995 billion. Up to now, the National Highway 1 with 4 lanes has been invested in accordance with the plan, the Lo Te - Rach Soi section connecting Can Tho with Kien Giang was completed along with 40 km from the Ho Chi Minh City to Trung Luong, and the Trung Luong - My Thuan section open to traffic...;

many key projects have been approved and implemented such as the Rach Mieu 2 bridge, the My Thuan 2 bridge, the My Thuan - Can Tho expressway, the improvement project of the National Highway 1 from Nga Bay, Hau Giang province to Chau Thanh, Soc Trang, the route bypassing National Highway 1A through Ca Mau city...

- Waterway transport has been identified as the strength of the Mekong River Delta with six main routes connecting Ho Chi Minh City (Southeast) and the Mekong River Delta being invested and upgraded to grade III standards for 800-1,000 tonne heavy ships to travel, taking advantage of tides, to ensure the connection between the Mekong River Delta provinces and Ho Chi Minh City to increase the transport market share and take advantage of rivers and waterway of the region.

- The Mekong River Delta currently has 12 seaports, 40 ports, 7.6 km of wharves with a designed capacity of about 31 million tonnes/year, acting as satellite cargo ports for the ports in Ho Chi Minh City and Cai Mep - Thi Vai and for short distance inter-regional transportation. The total cargo volume in 2020 was 22.9 million tonnes. The harbours receive 20,000 tonne ships, and 500-1,000 TEU container ships.

- The Mekong River Delta has four airports, including two international, namely Phu Quoc and Can Tho, and two domestic, namely Rach Gia and Ca Mau with a total designed capacity of 7.6 million passengers/year. In 2019, the airports

served nearly 5.1 million passengers while the Phu Quoc international airport alone served 3.7 million, reaching 90% of the design capacity.

- Railways: approved by the Prime Minister, the 1.435 m gauge Ho Chi Minh City - My Tho - Can Tho - Ca Mau railway of 320 km in length connecting Ho Chi Minh City with several Southwestern provinces is expected to be invested after 2020.

- The Government has paid attention to increasing investments in irrigation, fishery

infrastructure projects, fishing ports, anchor areas in the Mekong River Delta, including (i) The water management project in Ben Tre province; (ii) The Northern Ben Tre irrigation system project, phase 1; (iii) The Cai Lon - Cai Be irrigation system project, phase 1; (iv) The Ca Mau irrigation system project for sub-regions II, III and V; (v) The Ninh Quoi boat lock project; (vi) The Tha La, Tra Su sewer gate project. Up to now, these projects and facilities have initially met the requirements of climate-smart agriculture development by developing a system of dykes to prevent salinity, control

high tide and storm surges and gradually increase resistance to storm surge and flood water, effectively preventing and controlling salinity.

- The localities in the region have also enhanced the implementation of infrastructure investment projects such as upgrading sea dykes combined with building a salinity prevention system from My Thanh 2 bridge to Bac Lieu, Soc Trang province (VND 264 billion); developing a system of sewer gates to prevent saline intrusion and irrigation canals to store fresh water in critical areas in Soc Trang

province (VND 153 billion). Vinh Long has invested more than VND 2,000 billion to build more than 1,300 irrigation facilities, etc.

- Total capacity of urban water plants is about 1.32 million m³/day and night. The average rate of urban residents having access to safe water in the region reached about 89.6% (an increase of 1.5% compared to 2017). In the Mekong River Delta, three localities (Ben Tre, Kien Giang provinces and Can Tho city) have developed and approved provincial water supply planning as the basis for managing



and implementing investment projects.

- The Government continues to permit investments in constructing additional residential clusters, embankments in existing flood residential areas to ensure that people in flood areas can live safely and stably⁵.

- The exploitation of sand from river beds for ground levelling has gradually been limited with the promulgation of 20 technical standards and guidances on the use of ash, slag and gypsum as raw materials for construction material production and use in construction work.

- Rural environmental protection has received attention and investment, especially in the treatment of domestic waste and wastewater in residential areas and the improvement of landscape and the support of environmental protection equipment. Solid waste management has been strengthened together with the implementation of investment projects on solid waste treatment facilities, wastewater collection and treatment systems. The Mekong River Delta safe water supply project has been implemented, ensuring sufficient water supply capacity and quality for water and social security.

- The Mekong River Delta Regional Coordination Council was established with operational regulation to advise, propose and assist the Prime Minister in instructing, coordinating, examining and supervising

the implementation of regional linkage, and climate resilient and sustainable development of the Mekong River Delta. At the same time, coordination groups at the ministerial and provincial levels and expert advisory groups have been formed to assist the Council effectively advise the Prime Minister on specific mechanisms, policies, strategies, plans, programmes and projects of regional and inter-regional scale for climate resilient and sustainable development of Mekong River Delta. This is the initial foundation for the formation and implementation of mechanisms and policies more suitable to the Mekong River Delta's natural features and socio-economic conditions in order to remove barriers and effectively release resources for development in the future.

4. Promoting public investment as seed capital to encourage investments from private sector and international community for sustainable development

- The Government and the Prime Minister have always paid attention to and promoted public investment as a catalyst for resolving urgent livelihood issues. The total state budget assigned annually by the Prime Minister in the 2016-2020 period to local agencies was VND 220 trillion, accounting for 16% of the whole country. State budget capital allocated for the Mekong River Delta through a number of ministries in the 2016-2020 period in some specific fields was as follows:

agriculture, VND 28,200 billion; transport VND, 32,961 billion; and health care, VND 947.5 billion. Additional medium-term funding for the 2016-2020 period amounted to VND 2,500 billion to address urgent and dangerous landslides.

- The medium-term public investment plans of the ministries and local agencies to support Mekong River Delta in the 2021-2025 period are as follows: (i) Total state budget capital invested through the localities is VND 266,049 billion; (ii) Total demand for state budget through a number of ministries to implement projects in the region include VND 32,859 billion for the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development; VND 1,927 billion for the Ministry of Health; about VND 198,823 billion for the Ministry of Transport (proposing the Government to support at least about VND 57,346 billion).

- For other preferential resources: the Ministry of Planning and Investment has cooperated with the World Bank to study and propose a sustainable development target budget support of USD1.05 billion (equivalent to VND 24,600 billion) for the Mekong River Delta in the period of 2021-2025, focusing on improving and reforming policies and mechanisms associated with regional linkage projects to invest in infrastructure, droughts and saline intrusion prevention and climate change adaptation under instructions of the Prime Minister in the Directive No.23/CT-TTg dated September 5, 2019.

5. Promoting scientific research, technology development, international cooperation, awareness-raising communication, training and career transition for economic restructuring

- Scientific research and technology development activities have been invested in to provide scientific and practical bases for sustainable development of the Mekong River Delta in a fundamental and systematic manner with a long-term vision such as studying, selecting and breeding plant varieties, improving soils; preventing natural disasters, land subsidence, landslide of river banks and coastlines; studying changes in water resources, water quality and proposing appropriate exploitation solutions to change production structure; monitoring surface water and warning droughts; assessing causes of riverbank erosion in some key areas and proposing orientations for structural and non-structural solutions; testing and proposing solutions and technologies to prevent, combat and mitigate the impacts of natural disasters and overcoming their consequences; developing the climate change monitoring system in the Mekong River Delta, etc. Many science and technology activities have been actively implemented by localities, such as the research and production of bio-products, genetic modification, and proposing models for crop conversion on rice growing land (Tien Giang province); conducting research and transferring urban, high-tech agriculture production models (Can Tho city), etc.

⁵ Provinces An Giang, Dong Thap, Vinh Long, Hau Giang are completing investment procedures to build 49 additional residential clusters to relocate about 13,000 households, with the budget of VND 3,000 billion from the local budget; Tien Giang province has started the construction of 10 embankments in existing residential areas with a total length of 56.5 km and the estimated cost of VND 87.8 billion.

- The total number of workers in the region accounts for 20% of the total country and has been considered as one of the Mekong River Delta's advantages. Over the past few years, careful attention has been made to training and improvement of the quality of local human resources. The vocational training network has been re-organised for job change, job creation for agricultural and rural workers in the Mekong River Delta towards specialisation, professionalisation, gradually moving them from the agriculture to the service sector.

- Communication and awareness raising activities have been strengthened through the propaganda project on the implementation of Resolution No.120/NQ-CP and propaganda activities on climate resilient and sustainable development of the Mekong River Delta. From 2017 up to now, the topic of the climate resilient and sustainable development of the

Mekong River Delta has been promoted by central and local press agencies, diversifying contents and forms, including documentary films, video clips and newspaper articles; materials to raise the community's awareness of mangrove forest development and protection in some provinces of the Mekong River Delta have been formulated and disseminated; training and capacity building programmes and seminars have been organised to provide market information and improve the capacity of enterprises; investment promotion workshops have also been held regularly to improve the value chain of the agro-food processing industry...

- International cooperation has been promoted to attract resources, knowledge and technology for the Mekong River Delta. Viet Nam has proactively participated in many bilateral and multilateral cooperation frameworks for developing the Mekong River Delta sub-regions, including the

Mekong-Japan, the Mekong - the Republic of Korea and the Greater Mekong Subregion, the Mekong - Lancang, the Mekong - Ganga, CLMV, ACMECS, US-Mekong Partnership cooperation mechanisms. In particular, in 2020, Viet Nam as Chair of ASEAN proactively connect the Mekong River Delta in ASEAN to find a common voice on the importance of sub-regional development.

Promoting countries in the basin to cooperate in the sustainable and equitable exploitation and use of resources, including water, on the basis of harmonisation of sustainable development interests. Expanding and strengthening strategic partnerships to respond to climate change (including important cooperation mechanisms such as the Viet Nam - Netherlands Intergovernmental

Committee on climate change adaptation and water management and cooperation and partnership with EU, USA, France, Germany, Japan, the World Bank...). Proposing to establish and develop new cooperation frameworks with countries, organisations and international partners; taking full advantage of external resources, including investment capital, science and technology to support the Mekong River Delta sustainable development. As a result, experiences have been mobilised to transform livelihood models, sustainable agricultural production, adjust irrigation planning, develop urban and transport infrastructure in the Mekong River Delta to adapt to climate change. So far, 20 development partners have supported Mekong River Delta⁶.

⁶⁾ According to statistics of the World Bank and development partners, the total investment support from development partners for the MDR programs and projects is about USD 2.5 billion.



6. Overall assessment, limitations and causes, and challenges

After more than three years of implementing Resolution, it can be confirmed that the Mekong River Delta has witnessed significant changes in the nature-based and sustainable direction; people's livelihood has been gradually improved; the Mekong River Delta development picture has been increasingly seen with many bright colours:

- The development space shaped with transport infrastructure connection and regional linkage has been progressing, changing the Mekong River Delta outlook. A number of mechanisms and policies has been reviewed and supplemented. The Masterplan for the Mekong River Delta' sustainable development is being urgently completed. The effectiveness of zoning and the nature-based production transformation has been proven through the record saline-drought in 2019-2020, thereby transforming challenges into opportunities for development and minimising losses for production and business. For example, the rice production area loss in the recent saline-drought was just about 10% of the saline-drought in 2015-2016.

- The region has maintained a high level in GDP growth, with 2018 and 2019 recording impressive growth rate of about 7,3%. The economic restructuring has gain positive results, especially in agriculture, affirming the correctness of the nature-based development orientation. People have actively adapted to the impacts of

climate change, live with and consider floods and saltwater, brackish water as resources for economic development with reasonable zoning on the basis of water resources allocation of the whole region.

- The cultural and non-material life has been gradually improved, traditional cultural values of the region have been gradually conserved, developed and effectively exploited to serve people in the Mekong River Delta, in the country as well as international tourists.

- Diseases have been monitored, controlled and tend to decrease; the rate of rural households having hygienic toilets in the Mekong River Delta in 2019 reached 62%, an increase of 6.7% compared to 2017.

The above-mentioned achievements are attributed to the close attention and instruction of the Party, the National Assembly, the Government, the Prime Minister, the active participation of ministries, sectors and localities; the consensus and positive response of people and enterprises in the region in particular and the whole country in general, and the effective participation and support of the international community. In particular, the Government and the Prime Minister often closely instruct and facilitate the implementation of the Resolution with effective solutions.

That reality once again affirms the strategic vision of the Party and the State on the Mekong River Delta sustainable development, in accordance with national and international development

context and trends, especially facing the great challenges of climate change. The implementation of the Resolution has been built on the results of science and technology programmes and projects that have been implemented in recent years. At the same time, it strongly affirms the political determination of the Government of Viet Nam to promote sustainable development in the Mekong River Delta, contributing to global effort against climate change on the basis of combining innovation, indigenous knowledge, scientific and technology achievements in the world, the robust development and aspirations of people in the country and the Mekong River Delta to transform challenges into new development opportunities.

Limitations and causes

- *First*, over the past three years, the Government and the Prime Minister have closely instructed the ministries and the localities to promulgate, supplement and improve a number of mechanisms and policies for Mekong River Delta. However, these mechanisms and policies require time to take effect and at the same time must be consistent with the country general context. The regional coordination institution has just been formed and will take time to assist the Government and the Prime Minister to effectively coordinate the implementation of inter-disciplinary and inter-regional tasks, especially in proposing large-scale and influential projects to create impetus for socio-economic development such as infrastructure, transportation, etc.

- *Second*, the Resolution No.120/NQ-CP was issued after the 5-year medium-term public investment plan for the period 2016-2020 had been approved by the National Assembly. As a result, resources for implementing the Resolution have been taken into consideration although they still have not met the actual needs yet. Most inter-regional, inter-sectoral, large-scale works and projects aimed at changing fundamentally the picture of the Mekong River Delta climate resilient and sustainable development have been still slow in implementation. Mechanisms on attracting investments from the private sector and the society still have faced many difficulties and have not been able to make a breakthrough yet, particularly due to impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic, to focus resources on developing programmes and projects to drive large-scale transformation.

- *Third*, the Law on Planning was enacted with new requirements and contents, leading to some difficulties in reviewing and formulating master plans, especially the Mekong River Delta Master Plan that integrates sectoral and local planning. The nature-based development mindset in line with three eco-economic regions has slowly been deployed, investments in infrastructure development have still remained slow due to the absence of the Mekong River Delta Master Plan. Infrastructure projects still lack synchronous connection and multi-purposes to create a driving force for developing markets for agricultural

products such as rice, fruit, and seafood to take full advantages of the region.

- *Fourth*, scientific research, basic survey, and database have just recently been focused so have not provided enough scientific basis and support for the planning and policy-making process. The region strengths in terms of agriculture, tourism, and sea have not yet been made clear to propose effective solutions, programmes and projects to promote agricultural economy, marine economy, tourism, and processing industry as well as synchronous

agricultural economy in terms of market, high technology, and enhancement of the quality, value and competitiveness of goods.

Challenges

- Climate change and natural disasters have been happening faster and more complicated, and continue to be unpredictable due to the volatility and extreme characteristics, especially short-term impacts. In the context that global efforts to respond to climate change, especially reduction of greenhouse gas

emission, have not yet met the expectation under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change as well as the Paris Agreement, the Mekong River Delta will continue to face many adverse impacts in the near future.

- The exploitation and use of water resources upstream, especially the development of hydro-power projects on the Mekong River mainstream, has been increasingly complicated while the sub-regional coordination mechanism has shown shortcomings and difficulties,

leading to low efficiency. The lack of sand, alluvial and water is expected to exacerbate seriously, negatively impacting the Mekong River Delta development.

- Resolution No.120/NQ-CP has just been implemented for more than three years and only at the beginning stage while the objectives, visions and tasks in the Resolution are strategic and long-term. Therefore, it takes a long time and resources to fully implement the set out enormous workload.



II. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ENHANCING SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF MEKONG RIVER DELTA IN 2021-2025 PERIOD WITH A VISION TO 2030

The nature-based development orientation continues to be the pillar for sustainable development policies in the Mekong River Delta.

1. Regarding institutional and policy mechanisms

Promoting the role of the Regional Coordination Council, especially in proposing inter-disciplinary holistic solutions for regional connection, key programmes and projects as the driving force to promote the Mekong River Delta sustainable development.

Reviewing, supplementing and improving the system of mechanisms and policies specified in the Resolution and the overall Action Programme, especially the mechanism for resource mobilisation through public-private partnership, land concentration for large-scale transformation, flexible planning of rice-growing areas in order to be proactive in restructuring production in accordance with natural conditions each year.

Urgently issuing the Mekong River Delta Master Plan for the period of 2021-2030 with a vision to 2050 as a basis for implementing the Mekong River Delta socio-economic development plan; synchronously implementing tasks and

solutions to develop the local provinces and cities in accordance with the resolutions of the Party and the State⁷.

2. Prioritising resource allocation to implement investment projects on infrastructure, transport, irrigation, riverbank and coastal erosion prevention for production, stabilisation of local people life, especially multi-purpose and regional connection projects

Urgently supplementing capital to implement the Mekong River Delta Development Policy Operation (DPO) under the allocated amount for specific tasks and projects, including projects of regional connection, inter-regional impacts and driving force for rapid and sustainable socio-economic development. Supplementing investment capital for the Mekong River Delta sustainable development through financial institutions and credit institutions including the Viet Nam Environment Protection Fund.

Investing in multi-purpose infrastructure projects, with regional and inter-regional connection in terms of irrigation, transport, economic activities, promoting economic restructuring, trade development, creating value chains for products of the Mekong River Delta.

Implementing programmes and projects approved by the Prime Minister: Overall Programme for sustainable and climate-smart agricultural development in the Mekong River Delta to 2030 with a Vision to 2045, the Irrigation modernisation scheme

for sustainable agricultural development in ecological sub-regions of the Mekong River Delta, the Scheme for riverbank and coastal erosion prevention and control to 2030, the Scheme on safe water supply in the Mekong River Delta, the Restructuring plan for the agricultural sector in the period of 2021-2025, etc., specifically:

- Transport: focusing resources on upgrading the road system in the region as well as connecting with Ho Chi Minh City and the Southeast for economic connection along the North-South and the West-East corridors. Developing and upgrading key national roads in the region including the Trung Luong - My Thuan - Can Tho expressway, the My Thuan 2 bridge, upgrading the Quan Lo - Phung Hiep route, upgrading the National Highway 53 from Tra Vinh - Long Toan, the National Highway 57 from Mo Cay to Vinh Long, the National Highway 30 from Cao Lanh - Hong Ngu, upgrading the road surface of Quan Lo - Phung Hiep, bypass of the National Highway 1 through Ca Mau city, expanding the National Highway 1 in Hau Giang, Soc Trang etc.

Focusing on the development of inland waterway transport system, logistics, improving transportation capacity of key waterway and road systems in deeply inundated and coastal sub-regions, main connecting corridors and other specific projects under the Decision No.68/QD-TTg dated January 15, 2018 of the Prime Minister approving the revised Mekong River Delta Construction Planning to 2030 with a vision to 2050.

- Irrigation: focusing on projects for salinity control, fresh water supply for agricultural production (suitable water transfer facilities between regions; irrigation systems that actively control salinity for sustainable agriculture restructuring in three production regions); fresh water storage system, domestic water supply, household water storage for people in the saline intrusion areas; addressing riverbank erosion and strengthening sea dikes. In 2021, focusing on completing the following projects: the Cai Lon - Cai Be irrigation system project, phase 1, the Northern and Southern Ben Tre irrigation system projects, phase 1, the irrigation system for sub-region II, III and V of Ca Mau province, the Tha La project and the Tra Su sewer gate.

- Construction and urban development: investing in building climate resilient, smart green and low emission urban infrastructure in the Mekong River Delta; implementing water supply and drainage projects, including the Safe water supply project, the Cai Be water supply project and the transmission pipeline system...

- Power system: continuing to invest in and upgrade the rural power network according to the Decision No.1740/QD-TTg dated December 13, 2018 with 3,944 km of medium voltage transmission line, 4,488 transformer stations, 892 km of low voltage transmission line, supplying electricity to 21,976 households and 2,727 pumping stations for irrigation of 968,900 ha.

⁷⁾ Resolution No.59-NQ/TW dated August 5, 2020 of the Politburo on construction and development of Can Tho city to 2030, with a vision to 2045; Resolution No.109/NQ-UBTVQH14 on establishing Phu Quoc city and wards under Phu Quoc city, Kien Giang province, etc.

3. Strengthening basic investigation, monitoring, forecasting, and completing database system

Strengthening investigation and assessment of land resources; investigating, evaluating and developing water storage solutions based on natural trends of each sub-region. Improving the Mekong River Delta Integrated Data Centre, building and updating the Mekong River Delta database system for climate change adaptation, connecting with the database of the Mekong River Commission and other countries in the Mekong river basin.

Investing in increasing the number of monitoring stations for hydro-meteorology, environment, water resources, landslide, land subsidence, saline intrusion to provide information, data, forecast analysis for the Mekong River Delta Integrated Data Centre to develop strategies, planning, policies for development and other socio-economic activities in the region. Strengthening capacity of hydro-meteorological forecasting, natural disasters and extreme weather event early warning. Developing the system of monitoring, forecasting and early

warning of changes in water resources for the upstream and the entire basin, and riverbank and in coastal subsidence and erosion.

Continuing to investigate and search for underground water sources, especially deep-lying aquifers for domestic water supply in areas with frequent saline intrusion; developing groundwater exploitation facilities to be ready to respond to saline intrusion when necessary. Proactively and closely monitoring water exploitation and use in the basin, collecting information and data on the basin situation from many other sources (from projects, with remote sensing technology, etc.).

4. Promoting large-scale transformation, speeding up rational restructuring

a) Agriculture

Developing agriculture in three sub-regions (upper delta, midlands and coastal areas), taking into consideration agricultural ecosystems in each sub-region:

- Upper delta area: developing diverse agriculture, capable of adapting to extreme floods; this is the key area for modern and sustainable production of rice and catfish, having the role of regulating and absorbing floods for the region;

- Midlands area: developing typical fruit production as the largest fruit production centre in the region and the country; developing concentrated rice production areas, freshwater aquaculture,

vegetables, industrial crops and brackish water aquaculture;

- Coastal area: developing agriculture-based mainly on saline and brackish water, promoting fishery strengths; conducting saline-fresh water rotation in accordance with specific seasonal conditions; focusing on developing an ecological and organic agro-forestry system, combining with eco-tourism.

Shifting the strategic pillars to seafood-fruit-rice; increasing the production value of aquatic products and fruits, decreasing the production of rice. Promoting land concentration to form large-scale estates, organising farming households into new-type cooperatives linked with enterprises. Developing technical support centres for specialised farming areas, processing industrial zones and clusters, logistics service centres, and cold chains for market connection.

b) Industry and commerce

Taking advantage of strengths, pervasiveness and development of the Ho Chi Minh City region to strongly promote industry to create a driving force for regional development; forming specialised industrial zones and clusters in line with key regions and strengths of local areas in the region; focusing on the development of processing and supporting industries to increase the value of agricultural products; promoting clean and renewable energy. Taking advantage of the connection with Ho Chi Minh City and Cambodia to promote trade and services.



c) Eco-tourism

Developing agricultural eco-system as a foundation for tourism development, associated with coastal mangrove forest protection and development and biodiversity conservation; developing fruit garden tourism, etc. Attracting investment to develop supporting services. Strengthening vocational tourism service training, contributing to sustainable career transition for rural workers.

5. Promoting science, technology and international cooperation

Promoting scientific research, developing, transferring and applying technology, especially achievements of the fourth industrial revolution to agricultural production, industry and services gearing towards the development of the digital economy, and the digital transformation based on potential and strengths of the region. Soon approving and implementing the science and technology programme for responding to climate change for the sustainable development of Mekong River Delta in the period of 2021-2025.

Proactively proposing, establishing and leading new cooperation frameworks to effectively mobilise investment, technology and knowledge support from development partners; sustainable exploitation and use of water resources, especially in Mekong sub-regions to ensure benefits of Viet Nam. Prioritising the promotion of cooperation activities on water resources within the framework of Mekong-Lancang cooperation to

reach an agreement with China on data and information sharing, especially information about the operation of hydro-power dams and the discharge of water to downstream, ensuring the minimum flow of rivers at an appropriate level.

6. Human resource training and development

Strengthening high-quality human resource training programmes to meet the trends of regional and international investment shift.

Promoting career transition and job creation for agricultural and rural workers in the direction of specialisation and professionalisation, supporting farmers to become real agricultural workers, gradually moving agricultural workers to the service sector, thus enabling people to participate actively, acting as the centre of production and livelihood transformation process, meeting the demand of economic development in the region.

On the basis of the above-mentioned directions, I would like to propose ministries, sectors and localities to review, identify and propose a list of multi-purpose and inter-regional works and projects to be prioritised for budget allocation in the period 2021-2025./.



MR. NGUYỄN CHÍ DŨNG

Minister of Planning and Investment

REPORT ON REGIONAL PLANNING, REGIONAL COORDINATION COUNCIL AND RESOURCES MOBILIZATION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF MEKONG RIVER DELTA

Regarding the implementation of the Resolution No.120/NQ-CP on climate resilient and sustainable development of the Mekong River Delta, the Decision No.417/QĐ-TTg dated April 13, 2019 of the Government on the Overall Action Plan for the implementation of the Resolution No.120/NQ-CP and the Directive No.23/CT-TTg dated September 5, 2019 promoting the implementation of Resolution No. 120/NQ-CP, based on the assigned tasks, the Ministry of Planning and Investment would like to report specifically as follows:

I. DEVELOPING PLANNING AND ORGANISING TERRITORIAL SPACE

Developing and organising the implementation of the Master plan on climate resilient and sustainable development of Mekong River Delta to 2030 with a vision to 2050 on the

basis of integrating the approved sectoral and local development plans in accordance with the planning laws.

- Regarding the development of the Mekong River Delta Master plan for the 2021-2030 period with a vision to 2050: on July 31, 2020, the Prime Minister issued Decision No.1163/QĐ-TTg approving the task of developing the Master plan. Implementing the approved task, the Ministry of Planning and Investment has coordinated with planning consultants (Haskoning DHV & GIZ), relevant ministries, agencies and localities to develop the draft planning report, the strategic environmental assessment report of the Master plan and other related documents; organised the consultation according to the planning laws and regulations, and completed planning documents integrating consulted comments and inputs.

The Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (MONRE) on January 28, 2021, organised appraisal of the Strategic environmental assessment report of the Master plan. The appraisal board has unanimously approved the report subject to revision and supplementation for improvement.

The Ministry of Planning and Investment on February 5, 2021, issued the Submission No.663/TTr-BKHDT on the appraisal of

the Master plan to the Regional Planning Appraisal Council. Currently, the Ministry of Planning and Investment is conducting the appraisal procedures of the Master plan in accordance with the laws.

- Regarding the development of plannings for cities and provinces in the Mekong River Delta:

Implementing the Law on Planning, the Resolution No.11/NQ-CP dated February

5, 2018 of the Government on the implementation of the Law on Planning, all 13 Mekong River Delta provinces and cities have submitted for approval the task of provincial planning for the 2021-2030 period with a vision to 2050 and are completing procedures to develop their planning. According to the approved plan, it is expected that by the end of 2022, all 13 Mekong River Delta provinces and cities will complete their planning.

II. REVIEWING, IMPROVING AND SUPPLEMENTING MECHANISMS AND POLICIES

1. Implementing task of reviewing and evaluating the pilot regional coordination mechanism under the Decision No.593/QĐ-TTg dated April 6, 2016

The Ministry of Planning and Investment issued Document No.3975/BKHDT-KTDPLT dated June 11,



2019 reporting to the Prime Minister on the assessment of advantages and limitations of the Regulations on piloting the linkage of socio-economic development in the Mekong River Delta in the period of 2016-2020 promulgated together with Decision No.593/QD-TTg dated April 6, 2016 of the Prime Minister. At the same time, Ministry of Planning and Investment proposed a number of directions to amend Decision No.593/QD-TTg in order full tap potential and strengths, and develop the Mekong River Delta sustainably, including the proposal to establish a Regional Coordination Council for the Mekong River Delta.

2. Establishing Regional Coordination Council

Implementing the Government Resolution No.120/NQ-CP dated November 17, 2017 and the Directive No.23/CT-TTg dated September 5, 2019 of the Prime Minister, the Ministry of Planning and Investment has developed and submitted to the Prime Minister to issue the Decision No.825/QD-TTg dated June 12, 2020 on the establishment and promulgation of the Operational Regulations of the Mekong River Delta Regional Coordination Council for the period of 2020 - 2025.

3. Mobilising resources, encouraging participation of all economic actors and developing incentive policies for private investment

The Ministry of Planning and Investment has carried out a study on “Prioritised mechanisms and policies to encourage and mobilise private investment in the Mekong River Delta” in four main areas: (i) Renewable energy and energy efficiency; (ii) Environmental infrastructure and engineering; (iii) Agriculture and aquaculture; and (iv) Food processing and related transportation (logistics) services.

The specific objectives of the study include: (i) To identify the optimal method to collect, analyse and present data on current and planned private investment in the Mekong River Delta; (ii) To review private investment in the Mekong River Delta in the period of 2016-2020; (iii) To identify private investment in sectoral and local plans, and policy expectations for the period of 2021-2025; (iv) To develop policies to encourage private investment in the Mekong River Delta; (v) To develop a list of prioritised projects for private investment in the Mekong River Delta for the periods of 2016-2020 and 2021-2025.

The Ministry of Planning and Investment has completed the task of reviewing and studying mechanisms and policies to encourage private investment in the Mekong River Delta, with results including: (i) Report on prioritised mechanisms and policies to encourage private investment in the Mekong River Delta, and (ii) List of projects proposed for private investment.

This information has been used as important input in the process of developing the Mekong River Delta Master plan.

III. MOBILISING AND MANAGING FINANCIAL RESOURCES, DEVELOPING AND MOBILISING RESOURCES

Resources have been allocated to implement programmes and projects in the Mekong River Delta, accelerating the implementation progress and investment efficiency; and a proposal of additional USD 2 billion for the period of 2021-2025 has been studied to complete investment programmes and projects appraised and approved by relevant state agencies in accordance with the tasks under Decision No.417/QD-TTg dated April 13, 2019. The remaining will be prioritized for new investment in intra-regional and inter-regional projects in transportation, agriculture, water supply, irrigation, climate change adaptation... according to a specific list of projects approved by relevant state agencies in line with the Mekong River Delta Master plan for the period of 2021-2030 with a vision to 2050.

1. Developing mechanisms for prioritising state budget allocation for Mekong River Delta in 2021-2025

Under the Prime Minister’s Decision No.26/QD-TTg dated September 14, 2020 elaborating a number of articles of the Resolution No.973/2020/UBTVQH14 dated July 8, 2020 of the



Standing Committee of the National Assembly on principles, criteria and norms for allocating public investment from the state budget in the period of 2021-2025, a mechanism has been developed for localities in the Mekong River Delta to give some regional criteria higher scores than other localities.

In addition, the Ministry of Planning and Investment has coordinated with the World Bank to study and propose a loan of USD 1.05 billion for Development Policy Operation (DPO) for the Mekong River Delta Programme in 2021-2025 in order to mobilise resources for the

region focusing on completing and reforming policies and mechanisms associated with infrastructure investment as instructed by the Prime Minister in the Directive No.23/CT-TTg dated September 5, 2019.

The proposal and allocation of the additional USD 2 billion should comply with provisions of the Law on Public Investment No.39/2019/QH14, the Law on State Budget and meet principles, criteria and norms of additional investment from the state budget in the period of 2021-2025.



Therefore, the Ministry of Planning and Investment has proposed and supplemented funding from the DPO project for specific tasks, programmes and projects, including, inter-regional connection, impact projects to promote rapid and sustainable socio-economic development (not included in the targeted additional fund for localities and allocated according to sectors), thus ensuring priority given to the region, within the medium-term public investment plan for 2021-2025, complying with provisions of the Law on Public Investment No.39/2019/QH14, and the State Budget Law. During the implementation, the allocation of funds is required to meet principles, criteria and norms for allocation of investment from the state budget in the period of 2021-2025.

a) Progress of preparation for DPO Programme

- The programme is under the policy framework using IBRD fund of the World Bank (and funds of some other donors if the mobilisation is successful). The implementation is expected to be in the form of budget support lending and disbursement according to the national financial mechanism. Based on Submission No.6880/TTr-BKHDT dated October 16, 2020 of the Ministry of Planning and Investment, the Prime Minister has issued Decision No.1832/QD-TTg dated November 18, 2020 promulgating the Action framework for mechanism, policy reforms for Mekong River Delta.

- The Ministry of Planning and Investment is continuing to discuss and work with relevant agencies and the World Bank to finalise contents and the Programme documents, thereby completing the approval procedures and receiving loans from the World Bank in accordance with regulations.

b) Mobilising other funding sources outside World Bank

- According to the Ministry of Finance, the World Bank IBRD funding is not sufficiently concessional for budget support. To increase the preferential rate of foreign capital for the Programme, the Ministry of Planning and Investment has been working, discussing and encouraging a number of development partners to provide ODA loans and grants. Up to now, the French Development Agency (AFD) and the State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SECO) of Switzerland have considered financing the Programme together with the World Bank.

The Ministry of Planning and Investment will discuss and work with the World Bank to prepare the Programme and mobilise potential donors to provide ODA loans and grants for it.

2. Developing list of prioritised investment projects using state budget for Mekong River Delta in 2016-2020 and 2021-2025

For the targeted additional capital under Article 5.2b of the Resolution No.973/2020/UBTVQH14 dated July 8, 2020 of the Standing

Committee of the National Assembly on principles, criteria and norms for allocation of public investment from the state budget in the period 2021-2025, the localities in the Mekong River Delta are expected to receive VND 175,946 billion.

For investment support for important regional linkage projects in accordance with Article 5.2b of the Resolution No.973/2020/UBTVQH14, each locality in the Mekong River Delta

has proposed to receive support from the central state budget for 01 regional linkage project with an amount of VND 16,750 billion for the period of 2021-2025. Currently, the Ministry of Planning and Investment is coordinating with the localities to synthesise the medium-term public investment plan for the period of 2021-2025 to report to the Prime Minister for consideration.



IV. OTHER TASKS

1. Addressing bottlenecks, speeding up disbursement, and ensuring the efficient use of medium-term public investment

The Ministry of Planning and Investment has reviewed the allocation and disbursement of public investment projects in the Mekong River Delta, reviewed and adjusted the medium-term public investment plan for domestic resources and ODA for the period of 2016-2020.

Regarding the mechanisms and policies to promote disbursement of public investment projects, the Government has issued Resolution No.84/NQ-CP dated May 29, 2020 on main tasks and solutions to accelerate the implementation progress and disbursement of the public investment in 2020, including comprehensive groups of solutions, and assigned specific tasks to relevant ministries and agencies. During the implementation, the Ministry of Planning and Investment has also reviewed to identify and remove bottlenecks for localities, including ones in the Mekong River Delta.

2. Reviewing Plan implementing Conclusion No.28-KL/TW dated August 14, 2012 of Politburo on directions, tasks and solutions for socio-economic development and ensuring national security and defence in Mekong River Delta to 2020

The Prime Minister issued Decision No.2270/QD-TTg dated November 21, 2013 on the

implementation plan of the Politburo Conclusion No.28-KL/TW dated August 14, 2012 on directions, tasks and solutions for socio-economic development and ensuring national security and defence in the Mekong River Delta to 2020, under which the Ministry of Planning and Investment is assigned with the following tasks with the implementation progress as follows:

- For developing the inter-regional coordination mechanism for the Mekong River Delta in 2013-2020, the task has completed with the Prime Minister issued Decision No.593/QD-TTg dated April 6, 2016;

- For developing a specific development model for Phu Quoc island, Kien Giang province, the task has completed with the Prime Minister Decision No.80/2013/QD-TTg dated December 27, 2013;

- For developing a number of mechanisms and policies for socio-economic development in the Mekong River Delta for the period of 2015-2020, the task has been cancelled because the Prime Minister has instructed not to develop specific mechanisms and policies for each region;

- For reviewing and adjusting master plans for socio-economic development of the region, master plan for socio-economic development of the key economic region of the Mekong River Delta in the period of 2015-2020, these tasks are being implemented by localities and the Ministry of Planning and Investment./.



MR. NGUYỄN XUÂN CƯỜNG

Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development

REPORT ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF RESOLUTION No.120/NQ-CP IN AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

Following the direction of the Government and the Prime Minister, the Party Committee of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development issued the Resolution No. 418/NQ-BCSD dated December 22, 2017 guiding the implementation of the Resolution No.120/NQ-CP. The Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development promulgated Action Plan No.816/QD-BNN-KH dated March 7, 2018 and the Decision No.1864/QD-BNN-KH dated May 22, 2019 to replace the Decision No. 816 approving the Action plan to implement the Resolution. The Action plan identified seven main groups of tasks and solutions, and assigned specific tasks to lead agencies, including: (1) Reviewing, improving and supplementing the mechanism and policy system; (2) Updating and systematising inter-sectoral data, strengthening baseline survey; (3)

Developing planning and organising territorial space; (4) Developing an appropriate economic structure for climate change adaptation; (5) Investing in and developing infrastructure; (6) Researching, selecting and breeding high-quality agricultural varieties adapting to climate change; and (7) Developing and mobilising resources.

In recent years, the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development has prioritised the implementation of four key areas: (1) Developing the Master programme on the sustainable and climate-smart agricultural development linked with developing new rural areas in Mekong River Delta; (2) Developing irrigation in the Mekong River Delta; (3) Preventing and controlling river and coastal erosion, and natural disasters; and (4) Studying, selecting and breeding plants and aquatic species adapting to climate change in the region.

Up to now, most of the tasks assigned to the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development by the Prime Minister have basically been completed. Some regular activities are still being implemented by agencies. Following are main achievements:

1. On developing Master programme on sustainable and climate-smart agricultural development linked with developing new rural areas in Mekong River Delta

The Ministry has developed and submitted to the Prime Minister for approval of the Master programme on sustainable and climate-smart agricultural development in the Mekong River Delta under the Decision No.324/QD-TTg dated March 2, 2020. In order to implement the Programme, the Ministry has issued the Action plan under the Decision No.2025/QD-BNN-KH dated

June 4, 2020. The Master programme and the Action plan to implement the Decision No.324/QD-TTg were launched at the Conference reviewing droughts and salt water intrusion in 2019-2020 on June 20, 2020 in Long An province. Currently, the assigned agencies are actively implementing activities.

2. Developing irrigation in Mekong River Delta

The task of developing irrigation in the Mekong River Delta includes developing an Irrigation Master plan and an Irrigation modernisation programme for the Mekong River Delta.

- The implementation results of the Irrigation Master plan for the Mekong River Delta will be integrated into the Master plan on irrigation and disaster prevention and control which is being implemented.



- Regarding the Irrigation modernisation programme in the Mekong River Delta, the Prime Minister approved it under the Decision No.633/QD-TTg dated May 12, 2020. Then Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development issued the Decision No.2314/QD-BNN-TL dated June 22, 2020 assigning implementation tasks under this programme. Currently, the Ministry has assigned the Water Resources Directorate to implement the following tasks: (i) Annually monitoring, forecasting water sources and developing water use plans in ecological sub-regions; monitoring and forecasting water quality in irrigation systems; (ii) Preparing for conducting surveys and assessing the current status of irrigation systems; (iii) Improving databases and developing

online maps; and (iv) Reviewing and adjusting operational procedures for the South Mang Thit, Quan Lo - Phung Hiep and Cai Lon - Cai Be irrigation systems.

3. Preventing and controlling river and coastal erosion, and natural disasters

a) Developing Scheme on riverbank and coastal erosion prevention

The Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development has submitted the Scheme on riverbank and coastal erosion prevention to 2030, which was approved by the Prime Minister under the Decision No.957/QD-TTg dated July 6, 2020. On July 28, 2020, the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development issued the Document No.4986/BNN-PCTT guiding and urging localities, including

provinces and cities in the Mekong River Delta, to implement it.

b) Investing in urgent projects to overcome landslides; addressing landslide areas having direct and serious impacts on concentrated residential areas and essential infrastructure works

Since 2018, the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development has cooperated with other ministries and agencies to submit to the Government, the Prime Minister and the National Assembly to support localities in the Mekong River Delta with VND 6,622 billion from the central budget and official development assistance (ODA) to address riverbank and coastal erosion, contributing to stabilising local people's life in riverside and coastal areas, specifically:

- VND 3,040 billion for 60.1km from the Central budget reserve in 2018 and 2019;

- VND 1,628 billion to cover 34.3km from the reserve for the medium-term public investment plan for 2016-2020 (VND 10 trillion by reducing the planned capital for national important projects); and

- VND 1,954 billion to cover 62.5km from ODA capital.

In addition, the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development is cooperating with the Ministry of Planning and Investment and related agencies to submit to the Prime Minister on the use of VND 2,000 billion from the World Bank IDA capital to assist provinces in the Mekong River Delta to urgently address erosion in riverbank and coastal areas.



According to local reports, it is necessary to continue to address 76 erosion areas along riverbanks and coastline with a length of 140 km and a total investment of about VND 8,143 billion.

c) Updating and systemising data on riverbank and coastal erosion and natural disaster prevention, specifically

- Carrying out the assessment of the current status and addressing of riverbank and coastal erosion in the Mekong River Delta; the current status of people in areas of erosion risk on the main rivers of Tien and Hau; investigating and developing the current database of dikes and embankments in the Mekong River Delta; and

- Continuing to develop and update the WebGIS map of riverbank and coastal erosion in the Mekong River Delta, which has been integrated into the national reporting information system for the Government and the Prime Minister administration.

d) Communicating implementation of Resolution No.120/NQ-CP in natural disaster prevention and control sector, specifically

- Launching the documentary film "Coastal erosion and the role of mangrove forests, floodplain protection in natural disaster prevention and control, climate change adaptation in the Mekong River Delta".

- Developing the documentary film "Raising community awareness on mangrove forest development and

coastal protection in some provinces in the Mekong River Delta"; setting up five radio spots, distributing 1,500 notebooks communicating on drought and saltwater intrusion prevention to children and publishing many newspaper articles to raise the public awareness on planting and protecting mangrove forests, wetlands, sharing effective solutions and models for mangrove forest, and wetland protection and management for replication.

4. Studying, selecting and breeding plants and aquatic species adapting to climate change

The Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development has focused on instructing research institutes to study, select and breed many varieties of plants, animals and aquatic species of high economic value, high quality adapting to climate change for agricultural production in the Mekong River Delta such as: mangosteen, grapefruit, orange, mango, tiger shrimp, white leg shrimp and catfish, with the total cost of about VND 200 billion, specifically:

- Rice: total rice cultivation area in the Mekong River Delta is 4.19 million ha, accounting for 54.3% of the country area. Currently, the cultivation area of new certified rice varieties accounts for 65%. It is expected to increase to over 75% by 2020, 90% by 2025 and 100% by 2030. Since 2000, the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development has recognised the ratio of certified rice varieties, equivalent to approximately 70% (of which, the certified varieties provided by companies and seed centres account for

about 75% and farm breeding system and seed exchange, about 25%).

- Fruit trees: the Mekong River Delta currently has about 335,400ha of fruit tree plantation, accounting for 36.3% of the country area, including major varieties such as dragon fruit, mango, orange, grapefruit, rambutan, longan, durian, pineapple, etc., many of which have high yield, high quality, have adapted to the Mekong River Delta conditions and been put into production to increase the export value and turnover. However, the number of elite fruit trees and gardens is very small, which is not enough to meet the need of mass production. Currently, Viet Nam has recognised only 30 official fruit tree varieties (orange DT2001, late longan HTM-2, early ripe orange CS1, hylocereus polyrhizus/red flesh dragon fruit TL4, avocado TA1, pineapple MD2, etc.) and 38 varieties for trial production (pineapple H180, Thanh Ha-1 guava, pineapple hybrid LD13, apple 05, etc.). The dragon fruit varieties LD1 and LD5 selected and bred by Viet Nam have been grown on an area of 16,500ha, accounting for over 40% of the country total dragon fruit growing area. The yellow flesh longan, main variety resistant to the witches' broom disease, accounts for 12% of the country longan cultivation area.

In 2019, the Southern Fruit Institute recognised two varieties of *hylocereus undatus* (white-flesh dragon fruit) LD17 and LD18 (resistant to brown spots and early flowering); one hybrid longan variety LD19 (thick flesh, resistant to the witches' broom disease). The institute

also introduced the salt-resistant grafted green grapefruit variety that can tolerate salinity of 6-8‰ and salt-resistant grafted mango variety that can tolerate salinity of up to 10‰.

- Aquatic varieties:

+ Catfish: the current catfish growing area has reached 6,000 ha, producing 1.4 million tonnes (in 2019) with seedling demand of about 3-4 billion. Catfish varieties are mainly produced domestically and sufficient in quantity, but only about 40-45% of which can meet the required quality while the remaining 55-60% have not been verified in terms of quality due to not being able to control catfish parents. In 2019, the whole region has 230 catfish seedling production facilities, about 4,000 breeding households with 3,500ha, mainly concentrated in Dong Thap, An Giang and Tien Giang provinces, and Can Tho city, producing nearly 4 billion seedlings of which 3 billion meet the quality standard, satisfying 75% of the demand.

+ Brackish water shrimp: the brackish water shrimp area in the Mekong River Delta reaches about 669,000 ha, accounting for 92.9% of the country total area. The whole region has 1,278 shrimp seedling production facilities, meeting 48.3% of the demand and the remaining is supplied from the Southern Central provinces. In 2019, the Mekong River Delta produced about 16 billion seedlings, meeting 45% of the demand, and the remainder, imported from other regions.

- The Prime Minister signed the Decision No.703/QD-TTg dated May 28, 2020 approving the Programme on studying and producing seedlings for the restructuring of the agriculture sector in the period of 2021-2030. On that basis, the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development continues to strengthen the research and production capacity of agricultural, forestry, livestock and aquatic seedlings towards the direction of the modern industry to provide seedlings sufficient in quality and quantity and adaptive to climate change; contribute to the successful restructuring of the agricultural sector towards increasing the added value and the sustainable development, with three main products of rice, fruit trees and fisheries (catfish, brackish water shrimp). For the three main products, the objective is to find the best sets of varieties by 2025 and control domestic seedlings of high quality, yield

and efficiency to adapt to climate change and by 2030.

5. Developing programmes, schemes and plans to make fisheries spearheading economic sector

The Ministry has instructed relevant authorities and localities to effectively implement current policies, at the same time issued specific programmes, schemes and plans as a direction for effective development of the fishery sector, specifically:

- Implementing the National action plan on developing the shrimp industry, issued under the Prime Minister Decision No.79/QD-TTg dated January 18, 2018, promoting the development of giant river prawn farming with stable, efficient and sustainable yield and quality, growing white-leg shrimp towards high-tech farming, large-scale organic black tiger shrimp (shrimp-rice-forest),

concentrating in such advantageous areas as Bac Lieu, Ca Mau, Kien Giang, Soc Trang, Ben Tre and Tra Vinh provinces. The Ministry has also supported Bac Lieu province to invest in a high-tech agricultural area to develop Bac Lieu shrimp using the 10% contingency fund of the Ministry for the 2016-2020 period. So far the project has been approved by the Ministry and is scheduled to start in 2021.

- The Ministry has approved and implemented the Scheme on production of high-quality 3-grade catfish seedlings in the Mekong River Delta under the Decision No.987/QD-BNN-TCTS dated March 20, 2018, focusing on An Giang and Dong Thap provinces. The implementation results are as follows:

+ An Giang province has encouraged, connected stakeholders and developed a chain of 3-grade catfish on voluntarily basis, including:

Grade 1: the supplier of catfish parents is the Aquaculture Research Institute No. 2;

Grade 2: the producer of catfish seedlings is An Giang Aquatic Breeding Centre and four associated seedling production facilities; and

Grade 3: AFA seedling production sub-association (30 members in hatchery areas in Thoai Son, Chau Thanh and Chau Phu districts with the total area of 200 ha and production capacity of 300 million seedlings/year).

The Chau Phu seedling production sub-association (16 members in Chau Phu district nursery area with the total area of 36 ha and production capacity of 50 million seedlings/year);

The Phu Thuan seedling production sub-association (eight members in the nursery area in Phu Thuan commune, Thoai Son district with the total area of 15



ha and production capacity of 20 million seedlings/year).

Seedlings in the chain are supplied to the companies of IDI, Nam Viet, Cuu Long, Loc Kim Chi, Vinh Hoan, Bien Dong etc. on the principle of purchase price agreement.

- At the same time, the Ministry has supported An Giang province to invest in infrastructure for catfish seedling production in An Giang province with the 10% contingency fund of the Ministry for the 2016-2020 period. The project is now in the preparation stage.

- Besides, An Giang Provincial People's Committee has called enterprises to invest in developing seedling production area in the province, specifically:

+ Area No.01 in Vinh Hoa commune, Tan Chau town: pursuant to the Decision No.1043/QD-UBND dated April 4, 2017 of the An Giang Provincial

People's Committee, the Viet Nam-Australia Joint Stock Company has developed a concentrated nursery area of 100ha with the company capital. The company has selected about 3,500 catfish parents for seedling production and built 18 membrane houses (200m²/house) to produce high-tech seedlings. The company was expected to supply seedlings to market in the fourth quarter of 2020.

+ Area No.02 in Binh Phu district: pursuant to the Decision No.168/QD-UBND dated January 24, 2019 of the An Giang Provincial People's Committee, the Nam Viet Binh Phu Aquaculture Limited Company has built 450 ha (on a total area of 600 ha) of high-tech agriculture area for aquaculture with the company capital. The company plans to apply the Israeli seedling production technology, membrane house technology, waste water and sludge treatment

technology, vaccines, etc. to its seedling production.

+ Area No.03 in Vinh Hoa commune, Tan Chau town: pursuant to the Decision No.819/QD-UBND of the Giang Provincial People's Committee dated April 12, 2019, the Vinh Hoan Joint Stock Company has constructed the system of nursery ponds, parent breeding, water supply and drainage, production area, warehouse, etc. on an area of 48.3 ha for the production of seedlings and it was expected to be completed by the end of 2020 with the company capital.

+ Area No.04 in My Phu commune, Chau Phu district: pursuant to the Decision No.2577/QD-UBND dated October 17, 2018 of the An Giang Provincial People's Committee, the Loc Kim Chi PT Co., Ltd. is conducting geological and topological surveys to produce the feasibility study report for the construction of high-tech commercial seedling production and farming complex with an area of 350 ha, using the company owned capital.

- The Ministry has instructed the implementation of the project on regenerating and supplementing aquatic seedlings in some major river and lake basins for the period of 2017-2020 (under the Decision No.239/QD-TCTS-KHTC dated March 6, 2017). The project will release red tail catfish, notopteridae (knifefish), catlocarpio siamensis, pangasius krempfi into the Vam Nao river basin linked with the Tien and Hau rivers to regenerate aquatic resources and increase the value of fishing and create

native varieties in the area.

- The Ministry has instructed the Directorate of Fishery, the Directorate of Water Resources and other agencies to collect information, evaluate and develop regular reports (monthly/quarterly) on impacts of saline intrusion in the Mekong River Delta as the basis for guiding production, including aquaculture production.

6. Sustainable forest management

To manage the existing natural forest area, and at the same time invest in reforestation and planting new mangrove and coastal protective forests in the Mekong River Delta, the Ministry has focused on guiding the implementation of the following tasks:

- Developing the Project on management and development of coastal and riverside protective mangrove forests together with developing ecological livelihoods associated with forests: the Ministry assigns the Viet Nam Forest Directorate to develop the Scheme "Coastal forest protection and development responding to climate change in 2021-2025 with a vision to 2030", including the Mekong River Delta, submitted to the Prime Minister in the fourth quarter of 2020.

- Instructing to strictly control the conversion of natural forest use in accordance with the Directive No.13-CT/TW dated January 12, 2017 of the Party Central Committee and the provisions of the Resolution No.71/NQ-CP dated August 8, 2017 of the



Government on the Action programme to implement the Directive 13-CT/TW and regulations of the Law on Forestry.

- Synchronously implementing solutions identified in the Target programme on sustainable forestry development in the period of 2016-2020 approved by the Prime Minister under the Decision No.886/QD-TTg dated June 6, 2017, and the Target programme to respond to climate change and green growth for the period of 2016-2020, focusing on restoring and developing coastal forest ecosystems.

7. Reviewing and developing mechanisms and policies

- The Ministry has focused on developing and submitting to relevant authorities for synchronous promulgation of policies and legal documents including five Laws, six Decrees of the Government, three Decisions of the Prime Minister and many relevant legal documents.

- Coordinating with the Ministry of Planning and Investment to implement the assigned tasks under the Directive No.23/CT-TTg dated September 5, 2019 of the Prime Minister on enhancing the implementation of the Resolution No.120/NQ-CP to improve the reform action programme framework, policies and mechanisms for the loan of USD 1.05 billion to invest in infrastructure for the Mekong River Delta.

8. Status of public investment in 2016-2020

a) Public investment in the period of 2016-2020 and the capital investment portion of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development in the Mekong River Delta

The total investment capital for 2016-2020 was about VND 28,200 billion, accounting for 29% of the total budget of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, of which:

VND 861 billion from the State budget; VND 17,766 billion from ODA; VND 5,877 billion from Government bonds; VND 2,500 billion from the emergency capital for addressing riverbank erosion; and VND 400 billion from the Ministry's public investment reserve for the period 2016-2020.

b) Major and landmark works and projects of the Ministry in the medium-term period of 2016-2020

- From ODA: the Mekong River Delta integrated climate resilience and sustainable livelihoods project - WB9 (VND 8,577 billion from WB loan); the Ben Tre JICA3 water management project (VND 6,191 billion); the VNSat sustainable agriculture transformation project (VND 6,472 billion);

- From Government bonds: the Cai Lon - Cai Be irrigation system project, phase 1 (VND 3,309.5 billion); the Northern Ben Tre irrigation system project, phase

1 (VND 2,123 billion); the Southern Ben Tre irrigation system (VND 215.4 billion); the irrigation system of sub-regions II, III, V Ca Mau (VND 500 billion); the Ninh Quoi boat lock sewer project in Bac Lieu province (VND 400 billion); the Tha La project, the Tra Su sewer (VND 232 billion); the May Phop - Nga Hau canal dredging project in Vinh Long and Tra Vinh (VND 458 billion); the Xuan Hoa sewer pumping station project in Tien Giang and Long An (VND 250 billion);

- From state budget: the irrigation system of sub-region III - Southern Ca Mau, Tran Van Thoi, Cai Nuoc (VND 198.88 billion); the Tam Vu Lo irrigation system for aquaculture, Cau Ngang district, Tra Vinh province (VND 140 billion); the Western Long Xuyen bypass irrigation system for aquaculture, Long Xuyen city, An Giang province (VND 100.6 billion); and the irrigation system for aquaculture in Cao Lanh district, Chau Thanh, Dong Thap province (VND 94.9 billion).



c) Completed projects

From government bonds:

(1) The May Phop - Nga Hau canal dredging project in Vinh Long and Tra Vinh (VND 458 billion);

(2) The Xuan Hoa sewer pumping station project in Tien Giang and Long An (VND 250 billion);

(3) The Ninh Quoi boat lock sewer project, Bac Lieu (VND 400 billion).

From state budget:

(1) Sub-region III - Southern Ca Mau irrigation system, Tran Van Thoi district, Cai Nuoc (VND 198.88 billion);

(2) The irrigation system for Tam Vu Lo aquaculture production, Cau Ngang district, Tra Vinh province (VND 140 billion);

(3) The irrigation system for aquaculture in Cao Lanh district, Chau Thanh, Dong Thap province (VND 94.9 billion);

(4) The Western of Long Xuyen bypass irrigation system for aquaculture, Long Xuyen city, An Giang province (VND 100.6 billion);

(5) The irrigation system for aquaculture in Tan Duyet, Ca Mau (VND 202 billion);

(6) Upgrading and expanding the Binh Dai fishing port in Ben Tre province (VND 120 billion);

(7) Upgrading and expanding the Tran De fishing port in Soc Trang province (VND 120 billion);

(8) Upgrading the Tac Cau fishing port in Kien Giang province

(VND 98 billion); and

(9) Upgrading and expanding the Ganh Hao fishing port in Bac Lieu province (VND 120 billion).

From ODA:

(1) The VnSAT sustainable agricultural transformation project (VND 6,472 billion), implementation-completion time: 2016-2020.

d) Projects to be completed in 2021

From government bonds:

(1) The Cai Lon-Cai Be irrigation system project, phase 1 (VND 3,309.5 billion);

(2) The North Ben Tre irrigation system phase 1 (VND 2,123 billion);

(3) The Ca Mau sub-region II, III and V irrigation system (VND 500 billion);

(4) The Tha La project, the Tra Su sewer gate (VND 232 billion); and

(5) The Southern Ben Tre irrigation system (VND 215.4 billion).

e) Projects to be completed after 2021

From ODA:

(1) The integrated climate resilience and sustainable livelihood project in the Mekong River Delta - WB9 (VND 8,577 billion), timeline: 2016-2022; and

(2) The Ben Tre JICA3 water management project (VND 6,191 billion), timeline: 2019-2024.

9. Incoming tasks

(1) Continuing to implement the assigned tasks under Decision No.417/QD-TTg approving the overall action plan to implement the

Resolution No.120 to meet the targeted quality and progress.

(2) Implementing the Prime Minister Decision No.324/QD-TTg dated March 2, 2020 approving the Master programme for sustainable and climate-smart agricultural development in Mekong River Delta to 2030 with a vision to 2045; the Scheme on irrigation modernisation for sustainable agricultural transformation and development in the Mekong River Delta ecological sub-regions under the Decision No.633/QD -TTg on May 12, 2020; the Scheme for riverbank and coastal erosion prevention and control to 2030 under the Decision No.957/QD-TTg, dated July 6, 2020.

(3) Prioritising to allocate resources, especially funds for investment projects in infrastructure, irrigation, riverbank and coastal erosion prevention and control, etc. for agricultural production, stabilisation of the Mekong River Delta people life in the period of 2021-2025. Accordingly, projects will be divided into three following groups for investment:

- Group 1: projects on controlling salinity and providing freshwater for agricultural production. This group has two targets, including: (1) investment in rational inter-region water transfer facilities; and (2) investment in completing, linking irrigation systems to actively control salinity for sustainable agricultural transformation in 3 production areas;

- Group 2: projects on fresh water storage, domestic water supply, and

household water storage for people in areas of saline intrusion; and

- Group 3: projects on addressing riverbank erosion and consolidating sea dikes.

The total investment demand for the region is about VND 41,257 billion, from which, after reviewing priorities, the investment by the Ministry of about VND 30,000 billion in 2021-2025 has been proposed.

(4) Implementing the Decision No.255/QD-TTg dated February 25, 2021 of the Prime Minister approving the restructuring plan for agricultural sector in the period of 2021-2025, including the Mekong River Delta.

(5) Implementing national and sectoral master plans, the Forestry master plan, Master plan on fishery resource protection and exploitation, the Irrigation and disaster prevention master plan, the Fishing port system master plan, anchoring and sheltering areas for fishing boats, including the Mekong River Delta.

(6) Continuing to study, select, breed and develop potential and advantageous varieties of plants, animals and aquatic species in the Mekong River Delta to meet the market demand and adapt to climate change. At the same time, to implement the Prime Minister Decision No.703/QD-TTg dated May 28, 2020 approving the Seedling programme for 2021-2030, focusing on investment in researching and breeding key varieties (fishery, fruits, rice, etc.) for the Mekong River Delta./.



MR. NGUYỄN VĂN THẾ

Minister of Transport

REPORT ON TRANSPORT INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT IN MEKONG RIVER DELTA

The Government Resolution No.120/NQ-CP on the climate resilient and sustainable development of the Mekong River Delta has envisaged both an orientation and a goal for regional development in general and for transport infrastructure development in particular. The Resolution identified specific tasks of developing the regional transport infrastructure system planning and investing in the transport infrastructure system development for the Ministry of Transport. The Ministry of Transport would like to report on the implementation of the assigned tasks as follows:

I. PLANNING

Immediately after the Resolution was issued, the Ministry of Transport has instructed its agencies to review, evaluate to adjust the transport sector planning. According to the assessment, specialised planning has basically met the demand

of socio-economic development, ensuring national defense and security and climate change adaptation, especially in vulnerable areas such as the Mekong River Delta. In addition, some planning shortcomings have also been identified such as lack of attention to the connection of transport modals, slow progress of investment projects compared with the objectives set out in the planning.

Implementing the Law on Planning, the Ministry of Transport has developed a national transport planning for the period of 2021-2030 with a vision to 2050 for all five areas. Up to now, all the five areas have basically completed their end-of-term reports, collected comments and inputs from all localities, organisations and ministries. For the Mekong River Delta, the Ministry of Transport has also organised a workshop to take comments from provinces and cities in this region. These final documents are currently

being completed and submitted to the State Appraisal Council in the second quarter of 2021. This Master planning has basically addressed shortcomings, limitations and demonstrated fully and clearly the viewpoint on synchronisation, modernisation, multi-objectiveness, climate change and sea level rise adaptation, especially water transport development to take advantage of river networks, connecting transport modals and creating regional linkage, especially between the Mekong River Delta with Ho Chi Minh City and the Southeastern provinces.

II. INVESTING IN TRANSPORT INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT

Over the past few years, thanks to the attention of the National Assembly and the Government, many important investment projects on transport infrastructure have been completed in Mekong River Delta, creating a driving force for socio-economic development and contributing to strengthening the security and defense of the region. Despite having been prioritised in terms of budget allocation (total funding allocated for investment in regional transport infrastructure in the 2011-2015 period accounted for about 14.51% of the whole country and about 16.15% in the 2016-2020 period), due to its low starting point and a high investment rate (for addressing the issues of divided terrains and weak geology), the region transport infrastructure has not met the demand of socio-economic development and climate change adaptation yet.

1. Investment in regional transport infrastructure

In the 2016-2021 period, the Ministry of Transport invested in 31 projects and works with a total capital of about VND 88,963 billion; among which, 14 projects have upgraded and newly built a total of 281 km of national highways, such major bridges as Co Chien, Cao Lanh, Vam Cong, Hoa Trung, My Loi, etc.; completed 46.5 km of navigation canals, phase 1, for large vessels to enter the Hau river, dredged 28 km of Cho Gao canal route, phase 1, with a total investment capital of VND 41,474 billion; 14 ongoing projects include: 720 km of national expressways and highways, the My Thuan 2 bridge, the Rach Mieu 2 bridge, the Dai Ngai bridge, large tonnage navigation canals for large vessels to enter the Hau river and the Cho Gao canal route with a total capital of VND 40,494 billion, projects are going to be implemented with a total investment of about VND 6,995 billion.

Roads: the National Highway (NH) 1 has basically been upgraded and expanded, the entire 4-land N2 route from Cao Lanh to Rach Soi, including two especially major bridges, has been put into operation; some route and major bridges on the eastern coastal corridor such as NH 50, NH 60, the My Loi bridge, and the Co Chien bridge have been upgraded; the expressway section from Trung Luong to My Thuan has been open to traffic, the My Thuan 2 bridge and My Thuan - Can Tho section are being invested in, some critical national roads (NH53, 57, 30, etc.) are being upgraded.

Inland waterways: investments have been made to upgrade six main waterways connecting Ho Chi Minh City and the Southeastern region with the Mekong River Delta to meet the passageway standard¹; and the Cho Gao canal has been upgraded for 800-1,000 tonne ships to take advantage of tides.

Marine transport: investments have been made to complete 12 seaports, 40 harbours, 7.6 km of wharves, the design capacity of harbour in the region reached 31 million tonnes/year.² The completion and operation of canals for large vessels entering the Hau river have improved the efficiency of ports to receive ships of 20,000 tons and developed the next berths

as planned. New container shipping routes have been formed near shore for 500-1,000 TEU ships.

Aviation: investments have been made to develop four airports, including two international and two domestic, with a total designed capacity of 7.6 million passengers/year.³

2. Evaluation

Projects invested in and put into operation have been effective as momentum and important projects contributing to socio-economic development, ensuring national defense and security. Investment has also been focused on climate change and sea level rise adaptation, ensuring stability and sustainability.

¹ Cua Tieu - Cambodia, Dinh An gate through Tay Chau, Saigon - Ca Mau via Xa No canal, Saigon Kien Luong via Lap Vo canal, Saigon - Ca Mau - coastal route, Saigon - Kien Luong - via Dong Thap Muoi and Long Xuyen Quadrangle;

² So far, the actual total volume of goods going through ports in 2020 was 22.9 million tonnes.

³ Can Tho international airport has a capacity of three million passengers/year, in 2019 it accommodated 1.34 million passengers; the Phu Quoc international airport has a capacity of 4.0 million passengers/year, in 2019 it accommodated 3.7 million passengers; the Rach Gia airport has a capacity of 0.3 million passengers/year, in 2019 it accommodated 0.033 million passengers; the Ca Mau airport has a capacity of 0.3 million passengers/ year, in 2019 it accommodated 0.037 million passengers.



In addition to the achievements, the transport infrastructure of the Mekong River Delta has not yet made a breakthrough to meet the demand of regional and inter-regional connection, especially between the Mekong River Delta and the Southeastern region. The highway system has not been formed while some national highways have surfaces of a low quality and the scale of some sections remain limited. The local waterway system has been invested in passage separation but remains limited at bridge clearance, so has not yet fully been exploited. Logistics have been underdeveloped. In terms of sea routes, ports in the region have been invested in but passageway for large vessels to enter the Hau river have not been completed. No major seaports have been developed for the whole region. Airports have been put into planning and four airports have been built, however, the operation has been under the designed capacity due to infrequent flights. The Ca Mau and Rach Gia airports have not been upgraded. The railway connecting to Ho Chi Minh City has been planned but massive resources are required to construct.

III. ORIENTATIONS AND PLANS FOR TRANSPORT DEVELOPMENT

1. Directions

- The transport infrastructure has been identified as a breakthrough to be prioritised with resources to fundamentally enhance the competitiveness of the Mekong River Delta in particular and the

country in general;

- Five specialised planning should be developed to ensure synchronous connection; the transport infrastructure system should be invested in, taking into account climate change adaptation, using resources efficiently and applying science and technology achievements; promoting and efficiently exploiting regional strengths for waterway transportation.

- All resources should be mobilised and allocated for important projects with spreading effects for regional and inter-regional connection such as the North - South roads connecting the Mekong River Delta with the Southeast, the Chau Doc - Can Tho - Soc Trang route, An Huu - Cao Lanh route, My An - Cao Lanh route, passageway for large ships to enter the Hau river, phase 2, main waterway routes; research should be conducted to call for investment in the railway route from Ho Chi Minh City to Can Tho.

2. Specific plans for each sector

a) Road transport

- Concentrating on completing key projects currently being developed in the region such as the Trung Luong - My Thuan - Can Tho expressway, the My Thuan 2 bridge, upgrading the National Highway 53, the Tra Vinh - Long Toan section, the National Highway 57, Mo Cay to Vinh Long section, the National Highway 30, Cao Lanh - Hong Ngu section, upgrading the road surface for Quan Lo - Phung Hiep route, bypass of the National Highway 1 through Ca Mau, expanding the National

Highway 1 in Hau Giang, Soc Trang...

- Prioritising resources in the medium-term plan for the 2021-2025 period to invest in the highways connecting the Mekong River Delta with Ho Chi Minh City and Southeastern provinces, such as the Can Tho - Ca Mau, My An - Cao Lanh, An Huu - Cao Lanh, Chau Doc - Can Tho - Soc Trang routes, upgrade a number of sections on the route N2 from Cao Lanh - Rach Soi to ensure compliance with expressway standards in operation; with the objective of completing about 300km of expressways in the region by 2025.

- Prioritising investment in special and major bridges such as Rach Mieu 2, Dai Ngai and upgrade a number of national roads that are congestion points in the region.

- Study to complete the entire highway network in the region by 2030, fundamentally upgrade the national road system.

b) Maritime transport

- Implementing the project for large tonnage vessels to enter the Hau river in the completion stage to accommodate ships of 10,000 tonnes full-load, 20,000 tonnes off-load to enter ports in Can Tho (Cai Cui, Hoang Dieu wharves); coordinate with EVN to dredge a section of shared passageway to the port tank of the Coastal central thermal power plant (Tra Vinh) for ships of 30,000 tonnes; efficiently exploiting and forming container transportation routes to connect the Mekong River Delta with seaports in

the Southeastern region (Cat Lai, Cai Mep - Thi Vai).

- Dredging and maintaining standardised passageway to the seaports of Group 6.

- Urgently completing the planning of the main port in the Mekong River Delta (Tran De in Soc Trang province), coordinating with localities to call for investment to soon commence the construction in order to export directly, reducing transit costs.

c) Inland waterways

- Dredging to ensure the standard for passageways of large flow; investing in the Cho Gao canal - phase 2 to remove bottlenecks on the waterway route connecting the Mekong River Delta with Ho Chi Minh City;

- Urgently completing investment procedures for the project on the development of waterways corridors and logistics in the Southern region using loans from the World Bank;

- Investing in raising the bridge clearance height on important waterway routes to exploit passageways meeting the standards;

- Reviewing and investing in projects to ensure the connection of inland waterways with maritime and road transportation modals to reduce logistic costs;

- Making efforts to ensure that waterway routes will be upgraded in accordance with the passageway and bridge clearance standards by 2030.

d) Aviation

- Can Tho international airport: the Ministry of Transport continues to coordinate with Can Tho city to work with airline carriers to study and propose policies and mechanisms to encourage airline carriers to open new routes connecting the Can Tho international airport with cities domestically and internationally, becoming the central city of the Mekong River Delta while reducing the load for the heavily overloaded Tan Son Nhat international airport.

- The Phu Quoc international airport: in 2021-2025, the parking space and a new terminal of a capacity of 6 million passengers/year will be constructed and expanded, increasing the total capacity of the airport to 10 million passengers/year; the planning will be adjusted and expanded to accommodate the new runway No.2.

- The Rach Gia and Ca Mau airports: currently, Bamboo Airways has opened a direct flight route from Hanoi to Rach Gia, and planned to open a route from Hanoi to Ca Mau. The Ministry of Transport will coordinate with the People's Committee of Ca Mau and Kien Giang provinces to study and adjust the planning of Ca Mau and Rach Gia Airports as the basis for investment and development.

- By 2030, all airports in the region will be basically upgraded to meet the transportation demand and the planning approved by the Prime Minister.

e) Railways

The Ministry of Transport is preparing the pre-feasibility study for Ho Chi Minh City - Can Tho railway route and will coordinate with localities to call for off-budget financing to strengthen the connection between Ho Chi Minh City with the Mekong River Delta provinces.



4. Capital required for implementation in 2021-2025

The Ministry of Transport has prepared a medium-term public investment plan for the period of 2021-2025 with the total capital investment need of about VND 573,466 billion for the whole country transport infrastructure. For the Mekong River Delta alone, the Ministry has prepared to finance 37 new projects in four sectors (i.e, road, maritime, inland waterways and aviation) with a total investment of about VND 182,713 billion; the capital needed to complete 14 transitional projects is VND 16,110 billion (the total investment is VND 58,254 billion). Thus, the total demand for state budget for infrastructure investment in the Mekong River Delta in the 2021-2025 period is about VND 198,823 billion. However, this amount seems to exceed the affordability. In the context of current difficulties in mobilising resources, the Ministry of Transport has proposed the Government providing at least VND

57,346 billion (equivalent to 22.9% of the least estimation of the budget for the transport sector, about VND 250,000 billion) to invest in regional momentum projects, including:

- Roads: funding for the Can Tho - Ca Mau, the My An - Cao Lanh, the An Huu - Cao Lanh, the Chau Doc - Can Tho - Soc Trang highways, the Rach Mieu 2 and Dai Ngai bridges and upgrading a number of important national highways...

- Maritime transport: investing to complete the project for large tonnage vessels to enter the Hau river.

- Waterways: investing in phase 2 of Cho Gao canal route, the project on developing waterways corridors and logistics in the South, and the project to improve bridge clearance height on the Mekong River Delta waterways.

After the state budget is allocated by the National Assembly and the Government for the period of 2021-2025, the Ministry of Transport will coordinate with relevant

ministries and localities to review, prioritise and select urgent and important projects in order to focus investment resources, step by step completing transport infrastructure of the region according to the approved planning. Resources will be concentrated to invest in projects of regional linkage (vertical and horizontal highways), works integrated with advanced solutions to improve the resilience to climate change and sea level rise to be submitted to the Government and the National Assembly for consideration and approval.

IV. SOLUTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Solutions

a) *Developing and implementing planning and strategies for transport sector*

- Speeding up the development of planning for five transport sub-sectors ensuring feasibility and suitability with actual conditions and climate change adaptation.

- Strengthen the state management of the transport development planning, focusing on supervision, inspection of the implementation and strictly handling violations of the planning.

b) *Completing system of legal documents and development policies*

- Formulating, reviewing, amending and supplementing relevant laws and regulations and timely promulgating legal documents; removing overlapping contents in the laws related to resource management and mobilisation, investment in transport infrastructure, land and transportation.

- Reforming institutions and policies to create a transparent and open legal framework, reform administrative procedures to facilitate and remove difficulties and barriers, motivating and encouraging all economic sectors to invest in the development, management and exploitation of transport infrastructure. Promoting the application of technological



achievements and modernisation in transport infrastructure management and transportation.

c) Improving mechanisms and policies on mobilising and encouraging investment, rationally allocating capital for development of transport infrastructure

- Improving the effectiveness and efficiency of the management and use of public investment capital:

+ Restructuring public investment and mobilising all resources in order to create a breakthrough in the development of transport infrastructure system, focusing on key breakthrough projects with great

spreading effects, creating connection between modals of transportation in key economic regions and international gateways.

+ Appropriately allocating investment capital to transport sub-sectors corresponding to the transportation market share in order to successfully perform the task of the transport market restructuring, bring into play advantages of each modal of transportation, increase market share of railway, sea and inland waterways, especially on main transportation corridors; reduce transportation costs and develop sustainably.

+ Continuing to coordinate closely with localities to speed up the progress of projects, site clearance work; excelling the tasks of inspection, supervision, address issues related to the progress and quality of projects.

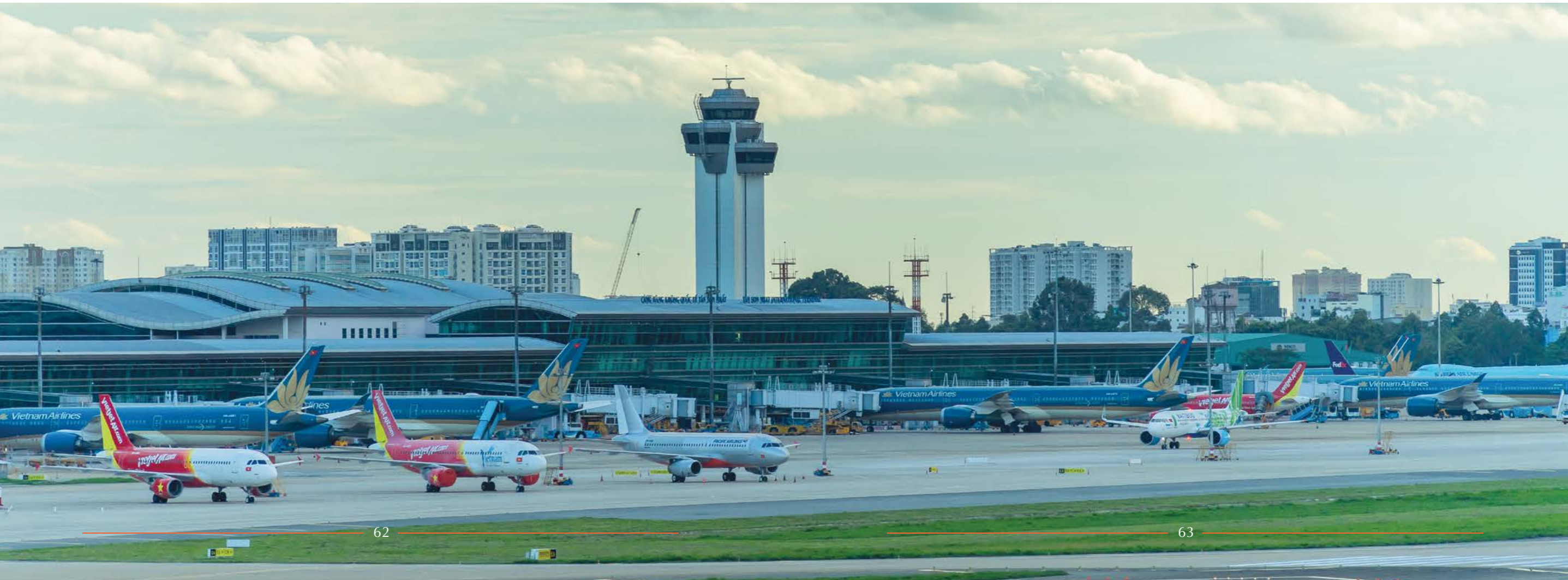
- Encouraging, attracting all resources to develop transport infrastructure, including domestic and foreign resources; paying special attention to the stronger participation of localities in the mobilisation of resources for transport infrastructure development.

d) Solutions on transportation connection

- Studying and implementing mechanisms and policies to encourage

investment in improving infrastructure, promote connection between modals of road and waterways transportation connecting with inland waterways ports, seaports and airports.

- Focusing on administrative procedure reforms; improving the service quality of inland waterways to reduce pressure on roads, especially inter-regional and international transportation. Creating an equal business environment to encourage all economic sectors to participate in transportation services; renewing means of transportation, technology, equipment and services towards modernisation and environmental friendliness.



- Prioritising the development of container, multi-modal transportation and logistics services to properly regulate transportation modals. Innovate loading and unloading technology at transportation hubs, build and develop logistic service centres in the region.

e) Other solutions

- Enhancing and improving the efficiency of international cooperation: promulgating specific mechanisms and policies to promote cooperation with other countries and international financial institutions to attract more external capital sources, paying special attention to foreign direct investment to develop transport infrastructure, attracting foreign partners to invest in transport infrastructure development, support the development of human resources, science and technology, policy making process and market expansion.

- Improving the quality of human resources; consolidating and improving the apparatus capacity in making investment decisions, managing and implementing functions of investors, state owner in transport infrastructure projects; apply information technology and modern management methods to improve the productivity and efficiency in construction, management and exploitation of transport infrastructure.

2. Recommendations

In order to implement investment plans, programmes and projects in the region, meeting the requirements of climate resilient and sustainable development of

the Mekong Delta, ensuring synchronous connection with Ho Chi Minh City, Southeastern provinces, the Ministry of Transport would like to propose to the Government, the Prime Minister and ministries the following:

- Prioritising the allocation of public investment capital for the period of 2021-2025 for the Ministry of Transport to implement regional key projects such as highways system, major bridges, and congestion points on roads, maritime transports and inland waterways.

- Ministries and agencies coordinate and support the Ministry of Transport in reviewing, evaluating and advising relevant authorities for approval of investment policies for Group A projects, and other nationally important projects for the Ministry of Transport to implement accordingly.

Recommendations for localities:

- To coordinate with the Ministry of Transport in reviewing and improving the 05 national planning for the period of 2021 - 2030 with a vision to 2050 to be submitted to the Prime Minister for approval.

- In the context of limited resources, localities are requested to share and coordinate with the Ministry of Transport in reviewing and selecting important, urgent projects in accordance with the criteria and the assigned budget./.



MR. NGUYỄN THANH NGHỊ

Deputy Minister of Construction

REPORT ON IMPLEMENTATION OF RESOLUTION No. 120/NQ-CP OF MINISTRY OF CONSTRUCTION

Regarding the implementation results of the Resolution No.120/NQ-CP of the Government on climate resilient and sustainable development of the Mekong River Delta, the Ministry of Construction would like to report the following:

I. IMPLEMENTATION OF RESOLUTION No.120/NQ-CP

In order to implement Resolution No. 120/NQ-CP dated November 17, 2017 of the Government on climate resilient and sustainable development of Mekong River Delta, the Decision No. 825/QD-TTg dated June 12, 2020 of the Prime Minister on the establishment and promulgation of the operation regulation of the Mekong River Delta Coordination Council for the 2020 - 2025 period, the Ministry of Construction issued the Decision No. 1122/QD-BXD dated August 24, 2020 on the establishment of the Mekong River Delta

Coordination Team for the period of 2020-2025 to advise the Ministry on effective implementation of the Resolution, the Decision No. 417/QD-TTg and the Directive No. 23/CT-TTg. The Ministry on December 25, 2019, submitted a report on the implementation of Resolution No. 120/NQ-CP in Document No.3006/BXD-QHKT.Upto now, a number of tasks continue to be implemented with specific results as follows:

- The Decision No. 1337/QD-BXD was issued on October 16, 2020 to establish the Programme Coordination Committee for building residential clusters and houses in floodplain areas in the Mekong River Delta.

- The Workshop Orientation for the development of urban and rural systems in the Mekong River Delta was organised on December 10, 2020 in cooperation with GIZ in Can Tho city in order to consult with experts on the climate resilient and

sustainable development of cities and rural areas in the Mekong River Delta; and the seminar Moc Bai economic zone - Model selection and development orientation was coordinated for organisation in Tay Ninh province on December 11, 2020.

- In addition, a number of other tasks related to climate resilient and sustainable development of the Mekong River Delta have been implemented by the Ministry of Construction as follows: advising the Prime Minister on the overall adjustment of the master plan of My Tho city, Tien Giang province (the Document No. 3545/BXD-QHKT dated July 23, 2020); formulating planning of the Tan My new urban area and a new urban area in the North of Ben Luc district, Long An province (the Document No. 912/BXD-QHKT dated March 4, 2020); organising the appraisal of the adjusted construction planning up to 2030 of Phu Quoc island; and instructing the Can Tho People's Committee on the

review and adjustment of Can Tho master plan until 2030 with a vision to 2050 (the Document No. 2882/BXD-QHKT dated August 11, 2020).

II. IMPLEMENTATION RESULTS OF ASSIGNED TASKS UNDER DECISION No.417/QD-TTg AND DIRECTIVE No.23/CT-TTg

1. Reviewing and completing mechanisms and policies on developing urban areas and rural population areas in accordance with specific natural conditions of each region and ecological sub-region adapting to climate change and sea level rises

This group of tasks has been implemented in a timely manner as follows:

- A scheme on adjustment of the construction planning of the Mekong River Delta was completed and submitted to the

Prime Minister for approval as under the Decision No. 68/QD-TTg dated January 15, 2018. Climate change response has been integrated into the scheme.

- The Circular No.01/2018/TT-BXD was issued on January 5, 2018, regulating green growth urban area norms; the Scheme on green growth urban development was studied and prepared; the Orientation of the master plan for the development of the Viet Nam urban system and the National urban development programme for the period of 2020-2030 were adjusted.

- The Ministry has taken lead, and coordinated with relevant ministries and agencies in studying, developing and submitting to the Prime Minister for promulgation the regional infrastructure plannings, including the planning on water supply in the Mekong Delta region to 2030 with a vision to 2050 (under the Decision No. 2140/QD-TTg dated November 8, 2016); the planning on

construction of solid waste treatment zones in the Mekong River Delta key economic zones until 2020 (under the Decision No. 1873/QD-TTg dated October 11, 2010 of the Prime Minister); and the planning on drainage for the key economic zones in Mekong River Delta until 2020 (under the Decision No. 2066/QD-TTg dated November 12, 2010 of the Prime Minister).

- The Ministry has also advised the Government to promulgate the Decree No. 72/2019/ND-CP dated August 30, 2019 on amending and supplementing a number of articles of the Decree No. 37/2010/ND-CP dated April 7, 2010 on formulation, appraisal, approval and management of urban planning and the Decree No. 44/2015/ND-CP dated May 6, 2015 detailing a number of contents of construction planning to ensure alignment with Law on Planning.



2. Investing in and upgrading water supply and drainage systems

a) Water supply

The Planning on water supply in the Mekong River Delta until 2030, with a vision to 2050 has been developed and appraised by the Ministry of Construction, approved by the Prime Minister under the Decision No. 2140/QD-TTg dated November 08, 2016.

To meet the urgent requirements on water sources and quality for clean water supply, the Ministry of Construction has taken in the proposals of the provinces of Tien Giang, Long An and Ben Tre to study and report to the Prime Minister for approval on partial adjustment of the water supply planning in the Mekong River Delta until 2030 with a vision to 2050 as under the Decision No. 287/QD-TTg dated March 2, 2021.

The implementation of the planning has achieved the following results:

Total capacity of urban domestic water plants in the Mekong River Delta has reached about 1.32 million cubic metres per day and night. The average rate of urban residents having access to clean water in the region has reached about 89.6% (increase by 1.5% compared to 2017). The regional average of clean water loss was 22.5% (4% higher than the national average). In the Mekong River Delta, three provinces/cities (Ben Tre, Kien Giang provinces and Can Tho city) have established and approved provincial water supply plans as the basis for management and implementation of

investment projects.

- Preparing implementation of project on safe water supply in Mekong River Delta, water supply plan for Hau river southwestern region

The Ministry of Construction has cooperated with the World Bank to research water supply plans for seven provinces and cities in the southwestern region of the Hau River (i.e, Can Tho, Hau Giang, Soc Trang, Bac Lieu, Ca Mau, Kien Giang, An Giang). The Ministry, on June 12, 2020, issued the Document No. 60/BC-BXD, seeking the Prime Minister permission on immediate investments in improving and upgrading capacity of water supply plants, pipeline networks, and service quality at a suitable scale for each local area, especially those areas suffering from special water scarcity and strongly affected by climate change, sea level rise, and saline intrusion (i.e, Ca Mau, Kien Giang, Soc Trang and Bac Lieu provinces). For the next stage, investments will be made to build regional clean water transmission pipeline after calculating and clarifying feasibility of finance, technology, management and investment mechanisms and the engagement of the private sector. The Prime Minister has agreed with the proposal of the Ministry of Construction in the Document No. 6511/VPCP-QHQT dated August 7, 2020.

- Project Cai Be raw water pumping station and transmission pipeline system proposed by People's Committees of Tien Giang, Long An and Ben Tre provinces.

The Ministry has collaborated with the Ministry of Planning and Investment, the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, the Viet Nam Water Supply and Sewerage Association and the Water Resources University to do preliminary research on the project proposal "Cai Be raw water pumping station and transmission pipeline system". The Ministry of Construction on October 12, 2020, consolidated comments and reported to the Prime Minister in the Document No. 4946/BXD-HTKT.

The Government Office, on December 1, 2020, issued the Document No. 389/TB-VPCP announcing the conclusion of Deputy Prime Minister Trinh Dinh Dung, assigning the Ministry of Construction to coordinate with relevant ministries, agencies and the People's Committees of Tien Giang, Long An, Ben Tre provinces to urgently organise the appraisal and partial adjustment of the water supply planning for the Mekong Delta region to 2030 with a vision to 2050 for the contents related to the proposed project of Cai Be raw water pumping station and transmission pipeline system.

b) Wastewater treatment

- During 2016-2020, the Ministry of Construction presided over and coordinated with GIZ to implement the Urban drainage and flood control programme to respond to climate change (FPP), mainly focusing on providing technical assistance to relevant provinces and ministries, supporting drainage planning, implementation and construction of technical systems related

to flood management in three Mekong River Delta urban areas, namely Ca Mau city (Ca Mau province), Rach Gia (Kien Giang province) and Long Xuyen (An Giang province). New content added to the planning includes taking climate change factors, flooding models, land subsidence, sustainable drainage models, decentralised wastewater treatment into account, and developing three pilots of sustainable drainage system (SuDS) in these three cities; estimating operation and maintenance costs of drainage infrastructure against flooding and developing a drainage service price roadmap for localities.

- Up to now, five specialised plannings on urban drainage in the Mekong River Delta have been approved, including: the Water drainage planning for Can Tho until 2030 with a vision to 2050 (under the Decision No. 3672/QD-UBND dated November 29, 2016); the Ground elevation and surface water drainage planning of Can Tho until 2030 with a vision to 2050 (under the Decision No. 3182/QD-UBND dated December 5, 2018); the Drainage planning of Long Xuyen city until 2035 with a vision to 2050 (under the Decision No. 3134/QD-UBND dated December 26, 2019); the Water drainage planning for Ca Mau city until 2025 with a vision to 2050 (under the Decision No. 470/QD-UBND dated March 24, 2020); and the Water drainage planning of Rach Gia city, Kien Giang province until 2025 (under the Decision No. 1699/QD-UBND dated July 17, 2020).

The above urban drainage plannings have taken into account the factors of climate change and identified rainwater drainage basins as well as the solutions for drainage system planning to drain rainwater and minimise urban inundation.

3. Researching new materials to replace freshwater sand used for construction to enhance drainage capacity in climate change context

The Ministry of Construction has submitted and received the Prime Minister approval on the project of “Development of construction materials for the construction of sea and island projects until 2025” (under the Decision No. 126/QD-TTg dated January 25, 2019), studying and proposing mechanisms and policies to promote the development, production and

use of building materials for coastal and island constructions.

The Ministry has carried out research to complete a system of standards and regulations on the use of ash and slag as backfill materials, limiting the exploitation of sand from the river bed for levelling, ensuring the natural resources conservation and environmental protection. Up to now, more than 20 standards and technical instructions on the use of ash, slag, gypsum as raw materials for production of construction materials (cement additives; concrete and mortar additives; concrete bricks) and used in construction works (soil reinforcement for roads, levelling and mine rehabilitation) have been issued, basically meeting the requirement of promoting the use of ash and slag as construction materials.



4. Proposing solutions for urban and rural development to adapt to climate change, clean water supply for the whole region, including the promotion of social ownership, attraction of investment resources outside the State budget; substitution of ash and slag and alternative construction materials for river-bed sand and gravel

Regarding solutions for urban and rural development in the Mekong River Delta to adapt to climate change, the Ministry of Construction has researched the development of urban areas in Viet Nam to respond to climate change for the 2013-2020 period (the Scheme 2623). Under the Scheme, four programmes (Programmes 1, 3, 4 and 5) are related to the Mekong River Delta with the following details:

- Programme 1: developing database and urban risk warning map system (Urban and climate atlas). So far, one province (Long An) has developed flood, flash flood and landslide maps; two provinces (Ca Mau and Kien Giang) have developed climate zoning atlas and provincial maps; one municipality (Ca Mau city) has built Urban - climate atlas. Some other cities are also building digital elevation and hydro-hydraulic models...

For this programme, the Ministry of Construction has approved two projects, including: (1) Developing guidance framework for the development of Urban-climate Atlas for Vietnamese cities with a pilot for Ca Mau city, Ca Mau province; (2) Studying the development of a guiding framework for assessing climate change impacts on urban areas and developing

action plans for urban areas to respond to climate change, piloted in nine cities, including Ca Mau city in the Mekong River Delta.

- Programme 3: supplementing and integrating climate change into provincial construction planning and urban planning.

Regarding the provincial construction planning: five localities (i.e, Can Tho City, and Soc Trang, Bac Lieu, Ca Mau, Long An provinces) have actively reviewed and integrated climate change responses into plannings, and the formulation, appraisal and approval of urban development plannings and programmes.

Regarding urban construction planning, the Ministry of Construction has directly implemented two projects, including “Reviewing general planning of cities in the Mekong River Delta, proposing climate change and sea level rise responses in the adjustment of urban master plans” (the study covers 13 cities of Vinh Long, Tra Vinh, Hau Giang, An Giang, Long An, Tien Giang, Ben Tre, Dong Thap, Soc Trang, Kien Giang, Bac Lieu, Can Tho and Ca Mau). The task has been completed and accepted by the Ministry. Soc Trang city has integrated climate change response into urban planning as a outcome of the task.

- Programme 4: developing action plans and technical guidance on climate change responses, up to now, all 13 localities in the Mekong Delta have approved their action plans to respond to climate change and sea level rise; and proposing solutions in related fields through policies, mechanisms, specific projects, tasks and

solutions. Some localities are updating their action plans to respond to climate change and sea level rise.

- Programme 5: coordinating with international organisations to conduct scientific research on urban development to respond to climate change and pilot the implementation of projects on developing eco and green urban areas: the review results show that all 13 localities in the Mekong Delta region have been actively mobilising the support from international organisations to implement climate change response projects. The Ministry of Construction has implemented two projects meeting two specific assigned programmes, including urban upgrading project in the Mekong River Delta (the provinces of Tien Giang, Ca Mau, Tra Vinh, Dong Thap and Kien Giang, and Can Tho city).

At the same time, the Ministry of Construction is conducting task “Research the development of key tasks under the pilot programme on developing smart urban areas in Mekong River Delta”.

5. Promoting credit mechanisms and policies to support housing for poor and ethnic minority households; Programme of building residential clusters and houses in flooded areas (under Directive No.23/CT-TTg)

Under the Programme to build residential clusters and housing in floodplain areas in the Mekong River Delta (under the Prime Minister Decision No.173/2001/QD-TTg dated November 6, 2001 on socio-economic

development in the Mekong Delta region in the 2001-2005 period and the Decision No.714/QD-TTg dated June 14, 2018 approving, adjusting and supplementing a number of mechanisms and policies under the Programme of building residential clusters and houses in floodplain areas in Mekong River Delta in the period of 2018-2020), during 2018 - 2020, 44,811 households in the provinces of An Giang, Dong Thap, Vinh Long, Tien Giang, Hau Giang and Can Tho city have been benefited from a total estimated investment capital of VND 3,457.19 billion (specifically, 7,066 households in An Giang province with total investment of VND 1,186.08 billion; 6,120 households in Dong Thap province, VND 1,075.58 billion; 4,900 households in Hau Giang province, VND 284.79 billion; 16,027 households in Tien Giang province, VND 252.80 billion; 10,236 households in Vinh Long province, VND 261.03 billion; and 462 households in Can Tho city, VND 53.33 billion).

The programme has completed the construction of 863 residential clusters and 119 surrounding embankments to ensure that 191,000 households with nearly 1 million people in floodplain areas in the Mekong River Delta will live safely and stably and to step by step develop sustainably in the existing clusters and embankments with synchronous technical and social infrastructure systems, and mitigate risks of floods and landslides and develop spacious and civilised residential areas suitable to the social development trend./.



MR. HUỖNH THÀNH ĐẠT

Minister of Science and Technology

SPEECH BY MINISTER OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF RESOLUTION NO.120/NQ-CP

*His Excellency Mr. Nguyễn Xuân Phúc,
Prime Minister of Viet Nam,*

*Distinguished Chairs of the Conference,
Ladies and gentlemen,*

First of all, the Ministry of Science and Technology would like to express its high consensus on the content of reports of ministries, agencies, localities and international organizations on the implementation of the Resolution No.120/NQ-CP. At this Conference, the Ministry of Science and Technology would like to contribute some following comments:

1. Implementing assigned tasks

The Ministry of Science and Technology was assigned to implement three main tasks under the Resolution No.120/NQ-CP. Over the past three years, the Ministry of Science and Technology

has mobilized many Vietnamese and foreign scientists to carry out scientific and technological tasks as requested by the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment, the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development and localities in the Mekong River Delta. The tasks have been comprehensively implemented, including developing a database, drought and saline intrusion forecasting and monitoring technology, and proposing specific solutions in response to saline intrusion such as changing structure of plants and animals, farming process and cropping schedule, etc. At the same time, scientific evidences have gradually been provided to support overall Mekong River Delta climate resilient and sustainable development solutions and policy system review on supporting the application and transfer of scientific and technological achievements.

2. Solutions to be implemented in 2021 and following years

Fully aware of its role and responsibility for climate resilient and sustainable development of the Mekong River Delta, the Ministry of Science and Technology will continue to coordinate with other ministries, agencies and localities to effectively implement the Science and Technology Program on Responding to Climate Change, Managing Natural Resources and Environment for the

Sustainable Development of the Mekong River Delta in 2021-2025 approved by the Prime Minister. Accordingly, the effective implementation of practical science and technology tasks will be focused for the region socio-economic development in the context of severer climate change impacts.

With that spirit, the Ministry of Science and Technology would like to propose a number of specific solutions to enhance the research, development and application of

science and technology, innovation for the sustainable development of Mekong River Delta, as follows:

First, invest in installing a modern, smart salinity monitoring system to quickly get accurate information for forecasting, and to promptly implement response measures appropriate for each period, each point in time, especially in response to impacts of extreme weather conditions in the region.

Second, apply and replicate crop structure transformation models, especially in the area with limited water resources, frequent droughts, water shortages and saline intrusion towards developing diversified agriculture (fisheries - fruit trees - rice) to meet the demand of the domestic and export markets.

Third, propose scientific and technological solutions to ensure long-term availability of water sources, supply fresh water actively and reasonably in areas with water shortages, especially coastal areas (such as installing a modern, efficient salt water treatment system; developing surface water and rainwater storage system at different scales, etc.).

Fourth, put into practice successful results of scientific and technological tasks on coastal and riverbank erosion prevention solutions under the Science and Technology Program for Sustainable Development of the Southwestern region'. The program continues conducting research on inter-regional scientific and technological solutions, focusing on

ensuring safety of irrigation infrastructure in the Mekong River Delta under prolonged saline conditions.

Fifth, we propose Can Tho city to consider the establishment of a Technology Transfer, Reception and Research Center to promote the reception, research, development and application of scientific and technological advances and innovation for the Mekong River Delta socio-economic development, focusing on the field of agriculture and rural development.

Sixth, the State should invest heavily in universities and research institutes in the region (Can Tho University, An Giang University, Mekong River Delta Rice Institute, etc.) to utilize their strengths and to accompany enterprises as the center for science and technology application and innovation activities. This linkage will create synergy and bring positive impacts on the region socio-economic development.

The Ministry of Science and Technology will work closely with Can Tho city and relevant agencies and units in establishing and operating this Center.

These are some points the Ministry of Science and Technology wishes to contribute to the Conference.

Good health to the Prime Minister, the Deputy Prime Ministers; distinguished leaders and all of you.

Thank you!





MR. LÊ QUANG MẠNH

Secretary of Can Tho city party Committee

SPEECH BY SECRETARY OF CAN THO CITY PARTY COMMITTEE

*His Excellency Mr. Nguyễn Xuân Phúc,
Prime Minister of Viet Nam,*

*Leaders, former leaders of Party and
State,*

*Leaders of ministries, central and local
agencies,*

Distinguished guests,

Ladies and gentlemen,

It is a great honour for Can Tho city to be selected by the Government as the host venue for the Third Conference on Climate Resilient and Sustainable Development of Mekong River Delta of Viet Nam. The conference reflects the great attention of the Government, the Prime Minister, who initiated and has actively instructed the implementation of solutions to promote the Mekong River Delta development. First of all, on behalf of the Can Tho Party and People's Committees, I would like to give the utmost gratitude to H.E. Prime Minister Nguyễn Xuân Phúc, members of the Politburo, members of the Party Central Committee and Deputy Prime Ministers.

I warmly welcome all of you and extend you the best wishes.

The issuance of the Resolution No.120/NQ-CP has become a major breakthrough and a guideline for shaping the Mekong River Delta development with a long-term vision. The implementation process of the Resolution No.120/NQ-CP has achieved many positive results though it is necessary to conduct a review to have more specific and effective solutions. Can Tho city highly agrees with the reports presented by the Ministers; from its local practical perspective, on behalf of the Party Committee, the People's Council and People's Committee of Can Tho, I wish to report on the implementation results and make some proposals for the Mekong River Delta to develop more substantially in the coming time.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Based on the assigned tasks under the Resolution No.120/NQ-CP, Can Tho city has developed and issued its Action Plan

No.84/KH-UBND dated May 9, 2018, clearly defining goals, specific directions and tasks for all levels and sectors. Since then, the results have been positive and comprehensive, and I would like to highlight the following:

First, on dissemination, communication and propaganda

As soon as the Resolution No.120/NQ-CP was issued, the dissemination was conducted rigorously and earnestly across the city. Communication and propaganda were promoted on local mass media to raise the awareness for the local authorities at all levels and people to understand accurately challenges and the climate resilient and sustainable development of Mekong River Delta.

Second, on regional development planning and linkage

In order to have a framework and a common direction for cooperation and linkage among localities in the region,

Can Tho has closely collaborated with the Ministry of Planning and Investment and other Ministries, central agencies and provinces in the region to develop the Mekong River Delta Master Plan for the period of 2021-2030 with a vision to 2050, using an integrated method. Based on potential and advantages of the region, the Master Plan with an overall vision will help each province and city determine its orientation in the organic connection with other provinces; providing a basis for developing provincial planning, designing policies, strategies, plans and investment projects; contributing to strengthening the linkage and collaboration with other localities to promote the efficiency and synergy of the region.

Third, on economic restructuring

The city has accelerated the transformation of the growth model associated with the restructuring of its economy towards green growth and sustainable development. The economic



structure has shifted towards service - industry - hi-tech agriculture. By the end of 2020, the proportion of agriculture, forestry and fishery sector had accounted for about 10% of the city GRDP structure; the industry and construction sectors, about 33%; the service and product tax sector, 57%.

In addition, the new rural area development program has created solidarity and consensus among local people, becoming a vibrant movement in rural areas, linked with urban areas; many activities have been efficient, bringing positive results, gradually bridging the living standard gap between urban and rural areas. By the end of 2019, the city had completed the task of developing the

new rural areas with 100% of communes and districts having met the new rural area standards, having completed the objectives of the City Party Congress Resolution one year ahead the planned schedule.

Fourth, on proactive adaptation to climate change

In urban areas, characterised with relatively low terrain in the city center, over the past years, under the impacts of climate change and sea level rise, along with ring dykes for agricultural production, the city has seen negative impacts of high tide. Previously, inundation had only happened to some downtown roads, but now most of the inner area of Ninh Kieu district and some neighboring districts

have deeply been flooded. This has significantly impacted life and activities of people and damaged property. With the goal of sustainable urban development, reducing vulnerability caused by flooding in the city center, Can Tho has concentrated resources, including ODA loans, to invest in works and projects on urban upgrading to protect the city center, improving city landscapes, and building reservoirs and important landslide prevention embankments.

In rural areas, the irrigation network has gradually been developed and upgraded, including water-regulating works for proactive irrigation for rice cultivation, aquaculture, and fruit production; upgrading the river and canal

embankment system, making important contributions to developing agricultural and rural development.

Fifth, on integration of climate change adaptation measures

The City has integrated the principles of climate resilient and sustainable development in line with the spirit of the Resolution No.120/NQ-CP into its strategies, policies and plans. Accordingly, the city has planned to improve its resilience towards multi-functional infrastructure solutions to meet its infrastructure objectives such as transport, flood prevention embankments and lakes, and to minimize flooding and environmental impacts at the same time.



Ladies and gentlemen,

In order to further promote the effective implementation of the Resolution No.120/NQ-CP in the coming time, along with the directions and solutions mentioned by ministries, Can Tho city would like to emphasize some limitations, causes and recommendations on following four specific topics:

First, the Mekong River Delta Master plan for the period of 2021-2030 with a vision to 2050 should be soon considered and approved by the Government in order to provide basis for developing and implementing regional linkage programs, plans, projects and activities.

Second, the finding of ways to major markets abroad for the region key agricultural and fishery products as mentioned in the Resolution No.120/NQ-CP has not been satisfactory enough. The main reason is that the Mekong River Delta has not had a transportation route directly connected to international markets.

- In terms of aviation transportation, the Can Tho International Airport has not yet had cargo terminals and aviation logistics zone. Though under the Decree No.05/2021/ND-CP dated January 25, 2021 of the Government on airport management and operation, it belongs to the authority of the Airports Corporation of Viet Nam (ACV), AVC has not had any investment plans in this item yet. Meanwhile, private aviation companies are eager to invest because of a significant need for direct transport of goods from the Can Tho International Airport to

other countries.

- In terms of marinetime transportation, the Cai Cui International Port in Can Tho currently has a capacity of receiving 20,000 ton ships but cargo has not been cleared via the port yet as ships of over 7,000 tons cannot enter the Hau river due to an incomplete investment plan on the Hau river ship passageway. Consequently, 90% of rice of the country, 70% of fruits and 65% of aquaculture products for export from the Mekong River Delta have to be transported hundreds of kilometers by road to international ports in the East, resulting increased costs and a reduced competitiveness.

Therefore, Can Tho city proposes the development of consistent and comprehensive solutions for building an international seaport for the Mekong River Delta. In the short term, focus should be given on renovating the Hau river to maintain the passageway for 20,000 ton ships to enter the Can Tho port.

Third, in terms of budget support loan for the Mekong River Delta sustainable development

The Prime Minister's Directive No.23/CT-TTg has instructed to the supplement of USD 2 billion in the period of 2021-2025 to complete regional investment programs and projects. Therefore, Can Tho city supports the proposal of the Ministry of Planning and Investment on budget support program for the sustainable development of Mekong River Delta with the financial mechanism to grant 100% foreign loans.

According to the program's design, projects selected by the Regional Coordination Council must be regional linkage projects for the multi-provincial development, so they cannot be under the province expenditures to be applied with the on-lending mechanism under the Law on Public Debt Management and Decree No.56/2020/ND-CP. Moreover, in the context that budget revenues of localities in the region are not sufficient for expenditure, the debt ceiling has exceeded or nearly exceeded, it would not be feasible for localities making their own investments while the increase of debt burden for the future would be a concern.

Therefore, it is recommended to identify regional linkage works and projects and put them under the central budget expenditure tasks, and propose to the Prime Minister to approve budget grants.

Fourth, developing clean energy

According to the Planning of O Mon Energy Center has four gas-fired thermal power plants in Can Tho city. Currently, investments for three plants have been approved, specifically: O Mon I has become operational, O Mon IV is under the preparation for international procurement and O Mon II will be built in two years. However, the investors of gas pipelines from Lot B to O Mon (PVN joint venture and MITSUI OIL), have not actively implemented the project since they are waiting for the underwriting contract downstream. This, on the contrary, will make investors downstream hesitate in organizing bidding invitation,

prolonging the project preparation process. Therefore, the city proposes the Prime Minister to instruct the Commission for the Management of State Capital at Enterprises, PVN and EVN to agree on the implementation plan.

The electricity demand in Mekong River Delta provinces has been growing rapidly, forecasted at 8-10% per year over the next decade, higher than the expected GDP growth rate (about 6%). Some studies and database affirm that the Mekong River Delta has good solar radiation, favourable wind speed, especially in the East coast; and a large amount of biomass available with a location in a concentrated agriculture region, therefore, Can Tho city proposes to consider and supplement wind power and solar power planning in the Power Development Planning 8 (PDP8), to produce hydrogen to meet the domestic and export needs since many investors have shown their interest in the industry though the planned capacity has been exceeded and there has been no bases for approval.

Ladies and gentlemen,

This is the report of Can Tho city assessing three years of implementation of the Government Resolution No.120/NQ-CP.

Again, on behalf of the Party and people of Can Tho city, I like to wish the Prime Minister and all distinguished guests good health, happiness and success. I wish the conference a great success.

Thank you!



MS. CAROLYN TURK

*World Bank Country Director for Viet Nam
On behalf of Development Partners' Mekong River
Delta Working Group*

REPORT ON THE SUPPORT FROM DEVELOPMENT PARTNERS ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF RESOLUTION No.120/NQ-CP

*His Excellency Prime Minister Nguyễn
Xuân Phúc,*

*His Excellency Deputy Prime Minister
Trương Hòa Bình,*

*Ministers and leaders of central
Ministries and agencies,*

*Provincial Party Secretaries and Chairs
of Ho Chi Minh City, Can Tho city and
Mekong River Delta provinces,*

*Ambassadors, Development Partners,
representatives of the diplomatic corps,*

*Distinguished guests, Ladies and
Gentlemen,*

Good morning,

First of all, on behalf of the Development Partners' Mekong Delta Working Group, I would like to express our sincere appreciation to the government for the strong leadership and commitment to promoting sustainable development and enhancing the climate resilience of Mekong River Delta. The Government's

Resolution No. 120/NQ-CP issued in November 2017 was truly a groundbreaking milestone, marking a departure from the orthodox climate defense approach to steering towards an "actively living with nature" paradigm. It acknowledged that the impact of climate change with rising sea level, greater weather variability, and salinization have become the Delta's new normal. It provided an authoritative foundation for transforming the region's development - from a small household farm and provincial perspective to an inter-provincial, delta-wide and transboundary one; from a short-term sectoral perspective to a long-term, multi-sectoral and integrated approach.

Looking back at more than three years of implementation, we would like to congratulate the whole Government of Viet Nam for all the accomplishments so far. Speeches and reports by Deputy Prime

Minister Trương Hòa Bình, Ministers and provincial leaders at the Conference this morning have given clear evidence of the positive changes witnessed on many important fronts, including policy and institutional reforms, and spatially referenced and integrated actions in selected priority sectors.

As your Development Partners, we are strongly committed to the Mekong River Delta and the implementation of Resolution No. 120/NQ-CP. During the period 2015-2020, we mobilized approximately US 2.2 billion for research and investment activities in the region, most of which aligned well with the Resolution No. 120/NQ-CP. In partnership with government authorities at all levels, innovative pilots and large infrastructure investments have been implemented to bolster climate resilience, natural resources management and sustainability while fostering growth for people, rural areas, cities, provinces and the region. Importantly, new perspectives, new evidence, new knowledge and relevant international experiences and expertise have been brought to the Mekong River Delta for addressing its very complex challenges. Some highlights of our partnership include the preparation of the Mekong River Delta Master Plan, establishment of the Regional Coordination Council, launch of the Agricultural Transformation Program, upgrading the monitoring, data and decision support systems for the whole region, and updating spatially-based strategies for the Mekong River Delta in key sectors such

as agriculture and water, transport and connectivity, urban and construction, and sustainable energy development.

Looking ahead, we stand ready to mobilize further knowledge and financing to fulfill the visions and goals of Resolution No. 120/NQ-CP. These resources will support central and provincial authorities and other stakeholders to mitigate risks and seize opportunities created by climate change, shifting demographics, emerging domestic and international markets, technological advancements, and the Mekong river basin regional geopolitics. We would like to use this opportunity to convey some points that we (DPs) consider to be important for your consideration as you continue to deliver on this extremely important agenda going forward.

First, it is imperative to ensure effective and efficient vertical and horizontal coordination. Successful implementation of Resolution No. 120/NQ-CP and its associated policies and programs requires bringing together stakeholders' interests to define common development goals and objectives for the Delta, identify investment priorities, and allocate responsibilities and share risks and benefits. Better coordination among the Delta provinces and cities, across central ministries, between central and provincial authorities and at the planning-finance-governance nexus will strengthen integrated planning, efficiency in budget execution, mobilization of financing, advocacy for policy changes and competitiveness. It

is also important that the Government continues the proactive and constructive engagement with other Mekong riparian countries for enhanced cooperation. We appreciate the Government's bold step in establishing the Mekong River Delta Regional Coordination Council – the first coordination body at the regional level in Viet Nam, and we look forward to its effective operationalization. We envision that, as an illustration, a potential Council's sub-committee on flood management in the Upper Delta could coordinate an effort to restore more than 9 billion m³ of lost flood absorption and aquatic habitat in the Long Xuyen Quadrangle and Plain of Reeds floodplains. Up to 60,000 hectares of flood-based agriculture area

could be phased in today with enabling value chain investments that would help transition intensive rice to flood-based agricultural systems which are up to four times more profitable, break pest-cycles, reduce pesticide use, and enable a further 96,000 hectares of dry season rice to shift to clean production.

Second, the Government should be commended for undertaking the tremendous and complex task of preparing the Mekong River Delta Regional Master Plan 2021-2030 – another “first-ever” of its kind in the country. Moving from planning to action, in our view, will be even more of an exceptional challenge. It is critical that a strong implementation action plan that requires “whole-of-state” effort is put

in place. This includes clear guidance and consensus on roles and responsibilities of all key stakeholders, strategic and pragmatic prioritization of investments, timely and adequate financial allocation with consideration of cost burden sharing among stakeholder groups, and a feedback mechanism for continuous reflection, assessment, evaluation, updating and revision of the Master Plan. Let us initiate our support to this process of Regional Master Plan implementation and further delivering on the Resolution No. 120/NQ-CP by proposing and calling for your cooperation in organizing the Mekong River Delta Forum 2021 following the approval of the Master Plan.

Third, sustainability must remain at the heart of the Mekong River Delta growth strategy. Being one of the most fertile river deltas in the world and playing a critical role in ensuring Viet Nam's sustainable socio-economic successes, the region should continue to promote efficient use of its natural endowments including the flood plains, brackish and saline water, solar and wind energy; sustainably manage the environment and natural resources such as fertile sediment, sand, mangrove forest, fisheries and biodiversity; systematically address the urgent issues of coastal and riverbank erosion and land subsidence; support inclusive and green economic growth and nurture human development. This shift in development approach



could be enabled through considering and adopting nature-based and climate-smart solutions; embracing the digital transformation that enables better disaster preparedness and response, and evidence-based decision making; as well as making no-regret investments in integrated water resources management, transport and urban/rural infrastructures that enhance climate resilience of the people and their livelihoods, improve agricultural production systems, value chains and regional connectivity. We envision, as an illustration, that climate and environment risks will be mainstreamed into at least 60% of public investment decisions in the Delta by 2025. For example, one holistic nature-based solution is to integrate mangroves into the existing aquaculture landscape the sea dykes using tested and scalable technologies. With forward looking land management, the area of mangroves along vulnerable eroding coastlines can be expanded by up to 50,000 hectares over the next 10 to 20 years, helping to preserve the coastal biodiversity and fishery, and reduce disaster risks, ground water extraction and land subsidence while maintaining and even increasing current production of shrimp that could be certified as clean/organic products of the famous Mekong River Delta.

Fourth, financing for investments is vital and should be based on the principles of long-term planning, efficiency, transparency and accountability. It is

important to establish an overarching financing platform that brings together public and private resources, and allocate the resources to priority climate-smart investments; provide an enabling regulatory framework for financial partnerships among provinces and mechanisms for scaling up private finance; and establish a simplified and efficient budget allocation and execution system with robust and effective fiscal incentives for promoting regional investments.

Prime Minister Phúc, Ladies and Gentlemen,

The Mekong River Delta has been a showcase of the Government of Viet Nam's transformative thinking and approach to development. With great expectations comes great responsibility to make it a reality and a success, not only for the nearly 20 million people of the region, but for the whole country as an inspiration and a role model region. We share with you the recognition of the tremendous challenges being faced as the implementation of Resolution No. 120/NQ-CP continues. As Development Partners, we stand committed to continue working with you, through our strong partnership, for a climate resilient, prosperous, and sustainable Mekong River Delta.

Thank you!



MR. ĐỖ THANH BÌNH

Secretary of Kien Giang Provincial Party Committee

SPEECH BY SECRETARY OF KIEN GIANG PROVINCIAL PARTY COMMITTEE

*His Excellency Mr. Nguyễn Xuân Phúc,
Prime Minister of Viet Nam,*

*Ministers, leaders of ministries,
departments and agencies at central
level, experts, scientists, national and
international organizations,*

Leaders of provinces and cities,

Ladies and gentlemen,

Today, I am much honored to attend the Third Conference on Climate Resilient and Sustainable Development of Mekong River Delta of Viet Nam. This is an opportunity for the Mekong River Delta localities to evaluate the implementation results of eight "core and key" tasks assigned by the Government, which are decisive for sustainable, "safe and prosperous" development for the Southwestern region. On behalf of leaders of Kien Giang province, I would like to extend my wish of good health to the Prime Minister and distinguished guests, and my wish of great success to the Conference.

Ladies and gentlemen,

In 2005, in the book "The South-West entering the 21st century", former Prime Minister Võ Văn Kiệt wrote about "the Moral Philosophy for the Mekong River Delta Development" to review 30 years of implementing the development orientation for this region. He emphasized that "We need to focus on investment, to compensate for the limited investment in the past, to timely invest in three breakthroughs in transport and irrigation infrastructure, and people's knowledge. We need to be highly determined so that after 2015 at the latest, the Mekong River Delta will have favorable conditions to take off to flourish and prosper". For him, this is not only a task but also an orientation for the Mekong River Delta sustainable development. In fact, over the past decade, the development of the region has always been closely linked with those "three breakthroughs". However, unusual climate change and sea level rise impacts

and negative consequences of excessive human impacts on nature have been direct threats to the goal of “to flourish and prosper” of the Land Nine Dragons.

Since 2010, the Mekong River Delta has been facing the risk of increasing impacts of extreme and unpredictable climate change; land subsidence, riverbank and coastal erosion, saline intrusion, fresh water shortage, which have become more and more severe, negatively affecting the whole region. Most seriously, during the saline-drought in the dry season of 2015-2016, salinity penetrated up to 90km deep into the coastal provinces/cities in the region, directly affecting 300,000 ha. In that situation, the Government Resolution No.120/NQ-CP was issued with timely policies, marking a historic breakthrough in the way of thinking, strategic direction and aspiration for the “sustainable, safe and prosperous” development of the Mekong River Delta by 2100.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Kien Giang is a province in the downstream of the Hau river, adjacent to the sea, and directly affected by the West Sea tidal regime, making Kien Giang one of the provinces vulnerable to climate change. Since 2015, climate change in Kien Giang province has no longer been just a forecast or scenario, but manifested in the form of saline intrusion, freshwater shortage in the dry season and severe weather in coastal areas and islands in the rainy season. Coastal erosion has become serious, many coastal protective forest belts have been washed away by sea waves...

To implement the Government Resolution No.120/NQ-CP, Kien Giang province has developed an implementation plan of 23 specific tasks and solutions with a view of becoming a strong development province in the region by 2050. After three years of

implementation, strong transformations have been made not only in the way of thinking but also in concrete actions of all levels, agencies and local areas in the province, inspiring the business community and people to promote innovation in production and to proactively adapt to climate change. The consistent view of “respecting rules of the nature, putting people at the center, changing production models to suit conditions of each region” has been thoroughly perceived and implemented, producing initial results. The implementation of the provincial Agriculture restructuring Project in accordance with the Resolution No.120/NQ-CP has brought practical results, including: (1) in the period 2017-2020, the province changed the crop structure in response to climate change for about 24,866 ha, of which 19,154 ha of coastal two-season rice was converted to a shrimp-rice model with an added value of 35%; (2) the rice

production area has been reduced though thanks to improved seed quality, science and technology application, improved infrastructure, the province has been able to maintain its rice output of 4.5 million tons (by 2020), exceeding the plan by 4.9%, contributing to food security, in which high quality rice accounts for over 80%; (3) the fishery output has reached 836,000 tons, an increase of 110% compared with the plan; (4) many new models and initiatives have been developed, gradually creating sustainable livelihoods for people in the new context, such as: high quality main-season rice combined with giant freshwater shrimp farming; converting ineffective rice-growing area to shrimp-rice model with an increase of 28.4% in terms of area and 50.6% in terms of output; developing 2-stage shrimp farming model of very high value and average profit of over VND 34 million/model, equivalent to VND 280 million/ha.



Despite extremely difficult conditions due to impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic, saline-droughts, the value obtained per hectare of cultivated land in 2020 reached VND 100 million/year (an increase of VND 22 million/ha compared to 2015), the value of aquaculture per hectare of water surface reached VND 130 million/year, increasing by 35% over 2017. People's incomes have increased from VND 50 million/ha to VND 100-130 million/ha. As a result, the average growth rate of agriculture-forestry-fishery production value in the period of 2017-2020 of the province has reached 3.33%/year.

In addition to non-structural measures, the inter-regional, multi-purpose structural measures, limiting adverse impacts of climate change is one of the strategic directions under the Resolution No.120/NQ-CP. The typical

Cai Lon - Cai Be Irrigation System Project is considered as the largest irrigation project ever, not only in the country but also in Southeast Asia.

Despite different viewpoints, the inauguration of the first phase of the Project on November 9, 2019, with the determination and instructions of the Government and the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development in speeding up the construction progress, the Cai Be sluice has been put into operation, contributing to protecting production of about 20,000 ha in Kien Giang province without needing to build 134 temporary dams in the dry season; this helps to control salt and fresh water, not only for Kien Giang province but also for a part of Hau Giang province. Along with the sluice system being developed and the two newly developed water reservoirs, Kien Giang has been gradually be able

to control water sources for irrigation for production and daily life. In late December 2020, the 51km long Lo Te - Rach Soi route project was completed and put into operation, helping shorten travel and transportation time between localities in the region by 30-60 minutes.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Although many positive results have been achieved with spreading effects, over the past three years of implementing the Resolution, Kien Giang has found many difficulties and challenges, including:

1. *The regional linkage mechanism still shows shortcomings.* The Regional Coordination Council has been established with a Deputy Prime Minister as the Chairman. However, as the Regional Coordination Council has not yet been mentioned in legal documents, it will be very difficult to implement Council's policies.

2. *The investment in climate change adaptation infrastructure remains still limited* and has not met urgent requirements in the current period and the coming time. No real breakthrough mechanisms and policies have been in place to attract off-budget resources. We have initially solved the "adaptation" issue though the "activeness" is still facing too many difficulties ahead; riverbank and coastal erosion remains urgent but has only been addressed locally without an overall solution linked with relocation of people along rivers and coastal areas.

3. *Transport infrastructure remains a "bottleneck" in the region development.* Logistic services for exporting agricultural - aquatic products in the region are still very limited without any recognized logistics center in place.



4. *The Mekong River Delta still needs specific mechanisms and policies, especially on land, capital, science and technology, to promote the development of large-scale agricultural commodity production; especially in terms of land, capital, science and technology, etc. because since the region agricultural production has its own characteristics compared to other economic regions in the country.*

5. *The application level of information technology remains low, especially for people in the region, to access climate change scenarios, natural disaster prevention and control, updating information on environment, water sources, etc. for agricultural and fishery production is still very low, especially for people in the region.*

Ladies and gentlemen,

Initial achievements in the implementation of the Resolution No.120/NQ-CP is attributed to the instructions of the Party, the National Assembly, the Government and the Prime Minister; along with the strong involvement of ministries, agencies and localities; the enthusiasm of experts and scientists; the support and consensus of people and enterprises.

In the coming period (2021-2025), Kien Giang province is determined to continue to implement the Resolution No.120/NQ-CP more effectively, focusing on promoting economic restructuring, especially

in marine, agricultural and services economies.

From the local perspective, in the context of increasingly complex climate change, I would like to suggest and recommend the following solutions:

First, continue to improve the institution for the Mekong River Delta climate resilient and sustainable development, especially to concretize relevant legal provisions on such issues as the Regional Coordination Council, specific mechanisms and policies on mobilize resources, encouraging the development of a large-scaled agricultural economy...

Second, we need to continue to accompany and coordinate more closely to effectively implement policies under the Resolution No.120/NQ-CP, for which I would like to emphasize the central role of ministries and central agencies in completing the planning, schemes, programs and projects mentioned in the Resolution No.120/NQ-CP along with the contributions and suggestions of scientists and international organizations for the region sustainable development.

Third, each locality needs to define more clearly the key sectors and areas in regional linkage, especially in agriculture, forestry and fishery, natural resources and environment, transport to optimize the strengths, bring into full play potential of localities in the region, ensuring production efficiency in terms of quantity, quality and output; pay attention to closely and harmoniously combining economic

growth with addressing social problems and protecting the environment.

Fourth, increase investment in infrastructure development, especially transport infrastructure, irrigation and logistics services, to meet the development requirements in the region.

In order to improve the efficiency of the Cai Lon - Cai Be irrigation system, it is recommended that the Government continues to invest in phase 2, including: upgrading the ring dyke along the Cai Lon - Cai Be river; dredging the canal system to lead water to the West of the Hau river and Ca Mau peninsula, to ensure efficient control of water sources for production and daily life for a part of Ca Mau, Hau Giang and Bac Lieu provinces as well as their peripheral areas. Along with that, it is recommended that the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development coordinates and supports localities in the project area to agree on the sluice system operation plan; develop and implement appropriate production model conversion plans - this is the key factor for determining the success of this "historic" irrigation project.

I propose that the Government and the Ministry of Transport pay attention to and soon implement the planned vertical and horizontal highways in the region, so that by 2025, the region will have had an additional 200 km of highways and priority needs to be given to Can Tho - Soc Trang, Ha Tien - Rach Gia and Bac Lieu, etc.

Currently, the erosion of the western coast is being addressed by Kien Giang and Ca Mau provinces. Along with that, the system of salt-fresh water control sluice gates on coastal dykes is also being developed. Therefore, it is recommended that the Government considers investing in coastal roads and dykes to promote the dual goals of "preventing erosion and building coastal roads for the purpose of national defense and security along the western coast".

To mobilize resources to respond to climate change, it is recommended that the Government and the Prime Minister continue to pay attention to and supplement capital to support local agencies in the region or through the regional coordination mechanism.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Three years is not a long period, but it is long enough to be able to evaluate the effectiveness of the issued policies. With results gained from the increased awareness, changed way of thinking and action, Kien Giang province believes that the Resolution No.120/NQ-CP will continue to be a handbook for the Mekong River Delta in the next stage of development in a "nature-based - proactive - adaptive" manner.

Once again, I would like to thank the Prime Minister, leaders of ministries, departments and agencies at central level; leaders of provinces and cities, all delegates and guests.

I wish all of you good health and the Conference a great success!



MR. NGUYỄN THANH BÌNH

Chairman of An Giang Provincial People's Committee

SPEECH BY CHAIRMAN OF AN GIANG PROVINCIAL PEOPLE'S COMMITTEE

*His Excellency Mr. Nguyễn Xuân Phúc,
Prime Minister of Viet Nam,*

*Leaders of ministries, departments
and agencies, experts, scientists, and
international organizations,*

Leaders of provinces and cities,

Ladies and gentlemen,

An Giang is a province of the agricultural production tradition. For its economic development, An Giang has been relying on agricultural development as the platform of the province economy with more than 80% of land used for agricultural production (equivalent to 297,000 ha) and more than 65% of the population working in rural areas. In agricultural production, rice and freshwater aquatic products, particularly catfish, have always held an important position, contributing to over 95% of the province export turnover.

However, similar to other provinces and cities in the Mekong River Delta, An Giang has been facing increasing impacts

of natural disasters and climate change, reflected clearly through increased temperature, droughts, record high tide and riverbank erosion which have been more and more complicated. Climate change has affected all sectors and areas in the province, especially agriculture, water resources, construction, urban, tourism and people's well-being.

Before the Government Resolution No.120/NQ-CP dated November 17, 2017 entered into force, climate change response activities in An Giang province in particular and in provinces and cities in the Mekong River Delta in general had been locally, limited by administrative boundaries, lacking linkage and synchronization. Investments in climate change response had been mainly structural measures such as landslide resistant embankments, dams, and reservoirs.

Since the issuance of the Resolution No.120/NQ-CP of the Government, responses to climate change in An Giang have been more synchronous, concentrated, bringing many positive results. Overall solutions in planning, spatial organization, economic structure, regional linkage and resource mobilization for the entire Mekong River Delta in general and An Giang province in particular have been implemented in a synchronous and strategic way. The outstanding results after three years of implementing the Resolution No.120/NQ-CP in An Giang province are as follows:

Firstly, on regional linkage

An Giang and other provinces and cities in the Mekong River Delta have initially developed a database on socio-economic development for the whole region. In addition, An Giang province has signed a cooperation agreement with Kien Giang province on water resources management. Currently, An Giang province and other localities have been actively implementing the action plan to implement the assigned tasks on linking socio-economic development in the Mekong River Delta.

Many regional linkage projects have been implemented between An Giang, Kien Giang, Can Tho and Dong Thap, such as: (1) the 955A provincial road project completed in 2020, connecting An Giang and Kien Giang to contribute to developing tourism infrastructure and ensuring border security; (2) the Irrigation system project in Long Xuyen quadrangle

and the project to strengthen the resilience to landslides in the area between Tien and Hau river; (3) the project for upgrading and improving Vinh Te canal expected to be completed and put into operation in 2021, contributing to waterways transport between An Giang and Kien Giang; (4) the 945 provincial road project connecting An Giang and Kien Giang; (5) the preparation for deploying the road project for regional linkage for section from Tan Chau town to Chau Doc city connected with Kien Giang and Dong Thap (N1), etc.

Second, on integrating climate change into socio-economic development planning

In order to implement the tasks assigned by the Government, the province has quickly integrated the viewpoints, objectives and tasks set out in the Resolution No.120/NQ-CP into important documents developed by the province, such as: the provincial planning for the period of 2021-2030 with a vision to 2050; the Document of the 11th provincial Party Congress; five-year socio-economic development plan for the period of 2021-2025, etc.

Third, on transforming, restructuring, enhancing climate change adaptation in agricultural production

In the 2017-2020 period, An Giang province shifted from production of rice to vegetables, crops and fruit trees with a total area of over 25,00 ha, of which vegetables accounted for 9,265 ha; crops, 9,262 ha; and fruit trees, over 7,000 ha. As planned, 4,917 ha of land

for rice production would be changed to aquaculture by 2020, an increase of 902 ha compared to the current status. The shift was aimed at the implementation of a concentrated high-tech aquaculture project.

Fourth, on planning, relocation of people, integrated with climate-smart urban development

The planned schemes, programs and projects have all integrated climate change responses into development orientation for each urban type. The province has reviewed, revised and supplemented the Master Plan for development of urban,

rural population and relocation of people, gradually relocating houses along rivers, canals and ditches of a high risk of erosion.

Six riverbank protection embankments with the length of 6,430 m have been developed and upgraded. 153 km of dykes, flood control canals have been upgraded and repaired under the target program on climate change response and green growth and projects with climate change response objectives.

The project on overall planning of Long Xuyen city to 2035, integrated with impacts of climate change, has been approved by the Provincial

People's Committee under the Decision No. 2575/QD-UBND dated October 24, 2019. In July 2020, the Prime Minister decided to recognize Long Xuyen as a city of Grade I.

The above-mentioned results have contributed to stabilizing and improving people's lives, ensuring political security and social order and safety, and attracting large domestic and foreign investors to An Giang province.

In addition to the achieved results, during the implementation process, An Giang Province has recognized a number of limitations as follows:

- An adequate and specific mechanism and policy system has not been in place yet for the Mekong River Delta provinces and cities to cooperate.

- Enterprises and people have faced difficulties in shifting to a larger-scale production due to the quota of land use transfer.

- The need for capital to respond to climate change is significant though provincial public investment capital remains limited while it is difficult to attract private investments in climate change.



In order to promote the achieved results in the coming time, and to continue to effectively implement the Resolution No.120/NQ-CP on the Mekong River Delta climate resilient and sustainable development, An Giang province wishes to make following suggestions and recommendations:

First, in terms of mechanisms and policies

- Continue to develop and improve the system of regulations and policies on climate change responses.

- Approve and issue the Mekong River Delta Master Plan for the period of 2021-2030 with a vision to 2050 as the basis for provinces to develop provincial planning and implement regional linkage activities.

- Promulgate specific mechanisms and policies for developing the Mekong River Delta, strengthen and improve the efficiency of regional linkage.

Second, structural measures

- The Highway 91 with a length of 91km (from Long Xuyen city to Tinh Bien international border gate, An Giang province) going through An Giang province is a road of grade IV in plain area. After being used for 20 years, it has degraded seriously with frequent traffic accidents and jams. This is the only route for transporting military equipment to districts, towns and cities on the border with Cambodia. Therefore, An Giang province would like to propose that the Government consider and soon

deploy Chau Doc - Can Tho - Soc Trang expressway project to connect provinces in the region, with priority given to section from Tinh Bien border gate to Long Xuyen city in phase 1 in 2021-2025 with the total length of about 72 km.

- The Ministry of Transport gives instructions to related agencies to implement the project on building the route connecting National Highway 91 and the bypass of Long Xuyen city to reduce traffic via the center of Long Xuyen city (An Giang province has completed the site clearance work, handed over to the project owner).

- The Ministry of Planning and Investment and other ministries and agencies consider and support in terms of capital to implement the project "Building a system of fresh water reservoirs together with irrigation infrastructure for production linkage in Long Xuyen quadrangle". This is a multi-purpose regional linkage project for natural disaster prevention and agriculture restructuring and new rural area development for the two provinces of An Giang and Kien Giang.

This is the report of An Giang province on the implementation of the Government's Resolution No.120/NQ-CP on Mekong River Delta's climate resilient and sustainable development.

Thank you!



MR. LÊ QUÂN

Chairman of Ca Mau Provincial People's Committee

SPEECH BY CHAIRMAN OF CA MAU PROVINCIAL PEOPLE'S COMMITTEE

His Excellency Mr. Nguyễn Xuân Phúc, Prime Minister of Viet Nam ,

Ministers, leaders of ministries, and agencies at central level,

Leaders of Ho Chi Minh City and 13 provinces and cities in Mekong River Delta,

Distinguished guests,

Ladies and gentlemen,

I would like to make this speech on behalf of Ca Mau province leaders. First, I agree with the report presented by the Minister of Natural Resources and Environment evaluating the implementation of the Government Resolution No.120/NQ-CP and reports of ministries and agencies at central level, as well as comments made by provincial leaders. I strongly agree with the Prime Minister viewpoints and instructions to do research to propose breakthrough mechanisms and policies with the spirit of "keeping land, keeping water and keeping people". The

Resolution No.120/NQ-CP with guiding viewpoints and breakthrough solutions shows a vision and aspiration for rapid, sustainable and "nature-based" development of the Mekong River Delta.

Three issues emphasized by Resolution No.120/NQ-CP are also three great challenges for Ca Mau province in its development process of: keeping land, keeping water and keeping people. These are three significant and important issues both literally and figuratively. For Ca Mau province, to put it simply, keeping land means to prevent landslides, avoid losing land along rivers and coastal areas; keeping water means to effectively manage water resources for production and people's daily life; keeping people means to protect the people's life and development, limit migration to other places. With such awareness, from the perspective of Ca Mau province, I would like to report on the issues of "keeping

land, keeping water and keeping people” as follows:

First, on keeping land

Ca Mau province has a coastline of 254 km, of which about 150 km have severely eroded with the yearly average speed of 20 - 50 m. Each year, Ca Mau loses about 450 ha of land due to erosion. Besides, river bank erosion has also been a major problem for Ca Mau province, similarly to many provinces and cities in the Mekong River Delta. Keeping land in Ca Mau means keeping forests. With sea level rise and climate change, drastic reduction of alluvium, coastal forests of Ca Mau are rapidly decreasing. There are no more coastal forests along dykes of the West Sea. The previously known image of “land and forest can expand themselves” has no longer been relevant.

Over the past 10 years, with the active support from ministries and central agencies and efforts of Ca Mau province, we have built more than 50 km of coastal protection embankments. This is a great

achievement but has not been sufficient compared to the actual need. Only about 30% of the coastal line with serious and very serious erosion has been embanked, meaning only 20% of the total length can be protected. With the current resources and progress, Ca Mau province can only complete coastal protection in the next 40 years. The current biggest difficulty in coastal protection is the lack of investment resources; meanwhile, the current legal regulations strictly manage coastal areas and we have not got mechanisms and policies to mobilize and attract investment resources.

To keep land, Ca Mau province is changing its approach to adapt to climate change. Instead of being passive or relying on hard solutions of bulding dykes, Ca Mau province has approached coastal economic development together with the system of “soft dykes and embankments”, to develop renewable energy projects, coastal aquaculture, create wave prevention layers, sedimentation areas and re-generate mangrove forests. For

example, wind power projects contribute to preventing wave and wind; coastal solar power projects with soft embankment systems for wave prevention contribute to creating sedimentation zones and marine farming water areas. Instead of deforestation for economic development, these projects will help preserve land and re-plant mangrove forests. Currently, many enterprises have paid attention to this approach to set up projects, especially along the West coast of Ca Mau province. Thereby, Ca Mau province will be able to reduce the pressure of public investment in coastal dykes and embankments.

However, the current problem lies with investment licensing procedure due to forest boundary markers. In fact, forests have already been destroyed by sea waves; but in official documents, the boundary markers still show these forests. Therefore, Ca Mau province suggests that the Government, ministries and agencies properly assess the current forest status and increase the authority and autonomy of localities.

Second, keeping water

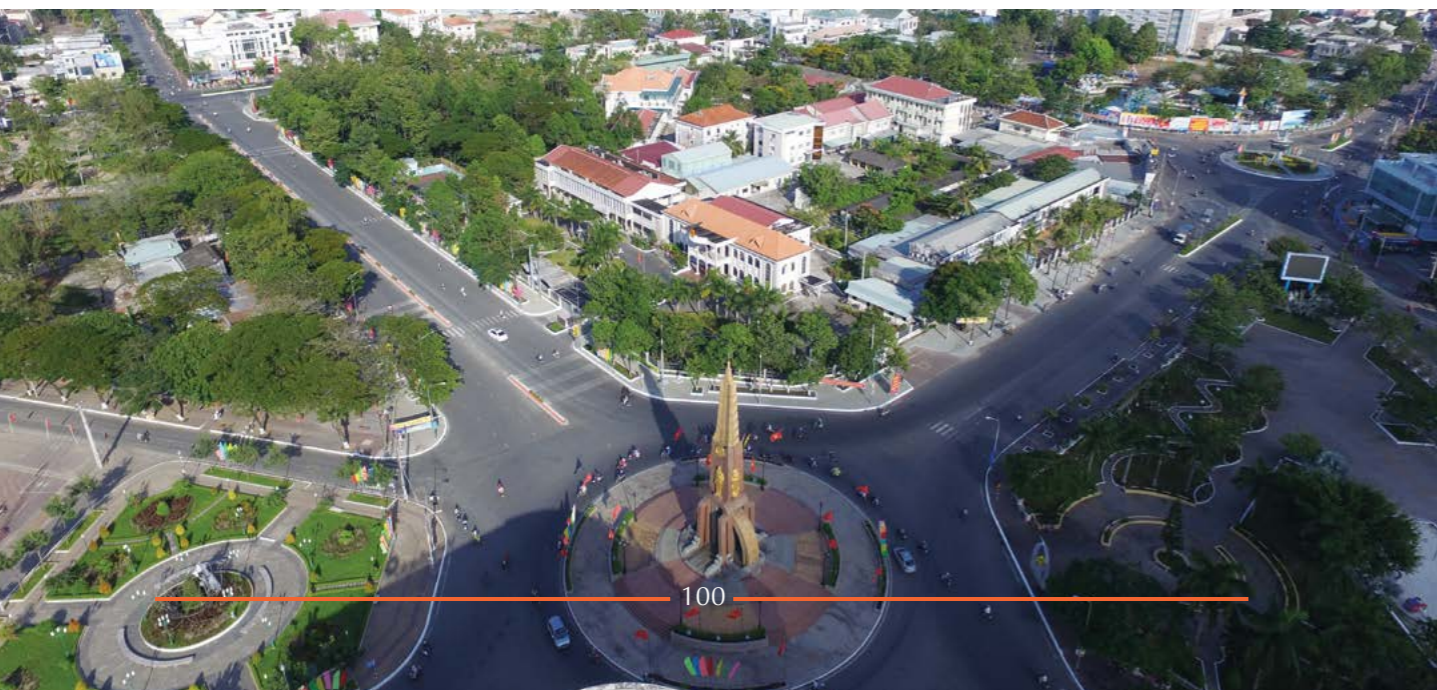
Ca Mau is a coastal province, the fresh water source for production is mainly from rain water; the average annual rainfall is about 2,350 mm, the highest level is 2,800 mm. If measures are taken to efficiently manage rainwater sources and use water economically, rainwater will be sufficient for production and daily life. However, due to the lack of appropriate solutions, the surplus of fresh water leading to inundation in the rainy season and the shortage

of rainwater causing subsidence in the dry season have become increasingly complicated. In addition, due to the lack of structural measures, high tide causes flooding in urban and residential areas, seriously damaging production. Therefore, without comprehensive and scientific research and evaluation implemented soon to define an overall strategic direction, identify short-term solutions, long-term synchronous solutions, along with new breakthrough mechanisms and policies to solve the above-mentioned issues, the production, urban and residential areas of Ca Mau province will continue to face difficulties with higher frequency and severity.

Third, keeping people

Ca Mau has about 1.2 million people of whom nearly 700,000 are in the labour force. However, about 200,000 people (accounting for nearly a third of the province workforce) are working in other provinces, mainly in Ho Chi Minh City, Binh Duong, and Dong Nai.

The biggest reason is the lack of many quality jobs with good incomes in Ca Mau; the poor infrastructure, especially the logistics infrastructure; the low quality of human resources, and difficulty to attract investment to Ca Mau in recent years. Currently more than 50% of the workforce work in the agricultural sector. While aquaculture, especially ecological aquaculture is seasonal and does not use much labor. Many rural areas of Ca Mau face the situation of having fewer local young workers.



Ca Mau has recognized that keeping people must be synchronous with developing human resources, attracting investment and improving the quality of jobs and social security. Following are two prioritized directions:

First, proactively adapting to the labour migration while not many good jobs are created locally, . Improving the quality of general education, strengthening vocational training should be given with more priority. This will help young people in Ca Mau get a better job and higher incomes when working in other provinces.

Second, continuing to improve the business environment, attract investment, promote start-ups and agricultural restructuring towards application of information technology, etc. Helping enterprises develop to create jobs locally and to keep people.

From this context, I wish to suggest that, besides the efforts of the Mekong River Delta localities, the Government, the Prime Minister, ministries and central agencies should continue to pay more attention to and support localities to deal with the

above-mentioned important issues. For Ca Mau province, I have the following suggestions and recommendations:

I suggest that the Prime Minister instructs the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development and the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment to study and provide guidance for solving difficulties in the implementation of the Land Law and the Forestry Law. Specifically, protective forests already eroded and no longer categorized as forests still have to comply with regulations on land management, forest protection management, therefore, it is difficult to implement investment projects. At the same time, it is recommended to propose specific policies such as allowing enterprises to use part of the eroded land after constructing external wave-break embankments, attracting enterprises to invest in socio-economic development projects such as renewable energy, port fishing ports, fishery infrastructure services, coastal population relocation associated with anti-erosion and coastal protection embankments.

For sections of coastline which cannot attract enterprises' investment, central budget or ODA allocated by the Government should be mobilized to complete the system of dikes and embankments to protect the coast of the whole Mekong River Delta (the province will not have to borrow on an on-lending basis as this loan will not directly bring profits to the local provinces and loan limits are not enough to do so).

- We propose that the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development supports the province to implement the pilot on models for agricultural restructuring and re-arrangement of agricultural production in Tran Van Thoi district freshwater area to adapt to climate change. The goal of the project is to pilot the planning and investment in building a system of large-scale freshwater reservoirs, renovating and upgrading the existing river and canal system to improve water storage capacity for the community; converting part of rice land to fish ponds to increase water storage capacity per household size; shifting crops and animals, and improving farming processes towards water saving...

- At the same time, saline - brackish water regulation for production and the prevention of high tide and sea level rise, we suggest that the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development evaluates the effectiveness of the Cai Lon-Cai Be Irrigation System Project, phase 1; thereby to develop water regulating sluices in combination with traffic bridges in major river estuaries such as Ganh Hao and Song Doc.

- We propose that the Government, ministries and central agencies pay attention to and support investment in a synchronous transport system (highways, coastal roads, airports, seaports, etc.) to attract investment, create more jobs, contribute to socio-economic development, and limit the labour migration.

- We propose that the Government allows to separate part of the Ca Mau National Park for tourism development and population stabilisation as this area has no longer had forests and people have also been living here for decades.

Thank you very much and I wish the Prime Minister and all of you good health./.





MR. LÊ TIẾN CHÂU

Secretary of Hau Giang Provincial Party Committee

SPEECH BY SECRETARY OF HAU GIANG PROVINCIAL PARTY COMMITTEE

*His Excellency Mr. Nguyễn Xuân Phúc,
Prime Minister of Viet Nam,*

*His Excellency Deputy Prime Minister,
Leaders of ministries, central agencies and
leaders of provinces and cities in Mekong
River Delta,*

*Distinguished guests,
Ladies and gentlemen,*

The climate resilient and sustainable development of the Mekong River Delta has received great attention from the Party, the National Assembly and the Government in terms of investment along with support from the international community. As a result, the Mekong River Delta has achieved many important results in socio-economic development in the past five years, and along with the region achievements, Hau Giang province has achieved a number of important results in the implementation of the Resolution No.120/NQ-CP as follows:

First, implementation is synchronous at all levels, in all sectors, political organizations and communities in the province in different forms.

Second, the average GRDP growth rate is 5.26%/year, the economic transition towards industrialization has been accelerated. The province has issued policies to attract investment in such specific sectors as tourism, agriculture and rural development; promote sustainable climate smart agriculture development; provide support to small- and medium-sized enterprises; and promote innovation and start-ups, etc. Up to now, the above policies have been spread widely among local people.

Third, the agricultural and rural development sector has been prioritized by the province leaders with the direction of increasing the application of science, technology, mechanization and building

the value chain of agricultural products (mainly rice, sugar cane, aquatic products, fruit trees), forming large-scale concentrated production areas, specializing in the cultivation of key agricultural products (squash fish, rice, pineapple, mango, custard apple, etc.); focusing on developing green industry and processing industry; and developing renewable energy, particularly solar energy...

Fourth, many policies and solutions have been implemented on agricultural restructuring such as restructuring crops and animal production, applying new farming techniques to reduce costs and

increase economic efficiency, developing cooperative economy, cooperatives... The province has developed and certified many OCOP products. The province outstanding achievement is to reach the goal of building new rural areas early. 32/51 of communes have met the new rural standards in the province, exceeding the Resolution targets, accounting for 62.7% of the total number of communes, contributing to changing the image of rural areas.

Fifth, the works and projects to create motivation and linkage have been implemented, investment has been made in infrastructure such as upgrading salinity



prevention sea dykes associated with rural transport and water regulation in the flood season; ensuring water security; strengthening solid waste management and investing in solid waste treatment facilities, investing in wastewater collection and treatment systems... Social security has been paid attention to, jobs are improved, and people's livelihoods are gradually transformed towards sustainable direction.

However, during the implementation of the Resolution No.120/NQ-CP, Hau Giang has recognized a number of difficulties and limitations, specifically:

- Most of the tasks and projects under Resolution No.120/NQ-CP requires significant amount of investment while the local budget is not enough to cover. The implementation of main tasks and

solutions is often integrated into the tasks of sectors, provincial socio-economic development schemes, programs and the projects, tasks under the National Targeted Programs with support from the central budget.

- The linkage among localities in the region for socio-economic development and for inter-regional problem addressing has not been in-depth enough. The linkage in the agricultural sector is still limited (updating, monitoring information; information on production, output, policies and market demand for agricultural products of provinces in the Mekong River Delta have not been regularly and promptly shared to coordinate in the implementation of solutions and measures to promote production development,

and at the same time to solve difficulties and problems in product quality and regulations, technical processes, supply-demand balance...).

- Subsidence and landslide problems have been paid attention to though the situation remains complicated. Climate change, natural disasters and saltwater intrusion in the Mekong River Delta have occurred faster than forecasted and are unpredictable; response to climate change is generally passive. The Mekong River Delta is facing challenges from the exploitation and use of water upstream, especially hydropower projects on the mainstream of the Mekong River.

- The infrastructure is not synchronous and does not match with the region's potential, advantages and development

requirements; mechanisms to attract private investment remain lacking; the innovation, science and technology application to production has been slow...

- Resolution No.120/NQ-CP is a breakthrough in transforming the way of thinking while ministries and central agencies have not yet issued specific guidance for localities to implement the tasks and solutions under their responsibility for implementing the Resolution. Therefore, provincial departments and agencies are still confused in the implementation and incapable of proposing and advising in developing long-term plans, tasks and projects with radical solutions, technology application and climate change adaptation.



Based on the experience of implementing the Resolution over the past three years, Hau Giang province would like to propose to the Prime Minister, ministries and central agencies as follows:

- General recommendations for the Mekong River Delta:

(1) We suggest that the Government considers and promulgates policies on land concentration to create conditions for enlarging the scale of household production in the Mekong River Delta; at the same time, research, develop and transfer green technologies in the agricultural sector.

(2) To approve the Mekong River Delta Master Plan as the basis for localities to develop the provincial master plans; at the same time, to speed up progress in the projects of the Can Tho - Ca Mau expressway, the Chau Doc - Can Tho expressway and the Ha Tien - Rach Gia - Bac Lieu expressway, etc.

(3) Climate change causes landslides in many places while costs to address are very high. Thus, it is necessary to study and identify the exact causes of river bank and coastal erosion in order to determine structural and non-structural measures suitable for investment. We propose that investment to be made in a specialized meteo-hydrological monitoring system in the Mekong River Delta for natural disaster forecasting and early warning.

(4) It is necessary to re-organize production towards establishing a linkage network for aquatic seedling production

with specialization for each stage (supplying broodstock - juvenile fish - fingerlings) to create safe and high quality fingerlings, balance production output and fingerling demand, for the development of aquaculture in the Mekong River Delta.

(5) To increase investments in education for the Mekong River Delta to train high quality human resources for developing modern agriculture.

- We would like to propose to the Prime Minister, Ministries and central agencies to pay attention and support Hau Giang province with the following issues:

(1) Invest in transport infrastructure projects for regional connection

+ Road Project connecting Vi Thanh city - Can Tho city, phase 2 (the National Highways 61C)

This is the road connecting Vi Thanh city with Can Tho city with the length of 45 km; at the same time linking with National Highways 61, National Highways 61B with National Highways 1. This is the route passing through the vast agricultural, forestry and fishery economic regions of the West of Hau river. This investment will create a breakthrough in infrastructure to facilitate economic development in the region.

The project aims at upgrading and expanding the National Highways 61C, grade III road with 4 lanes with the length of 47.5km. The total investment is VND 4,528 billion (VND 978 billion in Can Tho city, VND 3,550 billion in Hau Giang province).

+ The 925B provincial road project

The 925B provincial road is one of the most important provincial roads connecting to Ke Sach district, Soc Trang province, passing Vi Thuy, Phung Hiep, Chau Thanh and Vi Thanh city, with the length of 57km, grade IV. Hau Giang province proposes this project to be included into regional linkage project portfolio with the total capital of about VND 1,300 billion.

(2) Supplement Hau Giang Hi-Tech Application Agricultural Zone Investment and Development Project

The Prime Minister approved the task of general planning of Hau Giang Hi-Tech Application Agricultural Zone in 2013 with the scale of 5,200 ha, with key production types including high-quality rice, freshwater seafood, livestock production, fungi and micro-biological products, and fruit trees. At present, detailed plans are being implemented and projects are being developed. As the high-tech sector is relatively new, so the implementation is facing many difficulties, especially in terms of investment for improving the infrastructure. Therefore, to create favorable conditions to attract investment, we propose the Central Government to include this project in regional linkage project portfolio.

(3) In order to control saline water intrusion, to create stable production conditions for production models, we suggest to add the following items to the

Cai Lon - Cai Be Irrigation System Project phase 2, with the total estimated budget of VND 1,041.8 billion, specifically: (1) Dredging the Ba Lien - Nuoc Duc - Ca Dia - Tra Ban canal with the beginning point in Xa No River and the end point in Quan Lo Phung Hiep canal with the length of 36.4 km and the estimated total investment of VND 125 billion; (2) Dredging the Hau Giang 3 canal with the beginning point in the Nuoc Trong river and the end point in the Lai Hieu canal, with 43 km in length and the estimated total investment of VND 129.8 billion; (3) Dredging KH9 canal, with the beginning point in the Ba Voi river and the end point in Truong Long A commune, with 32km in length and estimated total investment of VND 118 billion; (4) Dredging the Nuoc Duc - Lai Hieu canal with the beginning point in Nga Ba Nuoc Trong and the end point in Nga Bay with the length of 84.7km and estimated total investment of VND 537 billion; (5) Dredging the Xa No axis canal, with the beginning point in Cai Tu river (adjacent to Kien Giang), the end point in Nhon Nghia A commune, with 38 km in length and estimated total investment of VND 132 billion.

These are remarks of Hau Giang province, I wish the Prime Minister and all distinguished guests good health and great success to the conference.

Thank you!



PROF. DR. ĐÀO XUÂN HỌC

*Chairman of Viet Nam Water Resources
Development Association*

REMARKS ON MEKONG RIVER DELTA PLANNING

The Mekong River Delta planning is very important for the development orientation and the linkage promotion among ministries, agencies and localities in infrastructure development and more efficient natural resource use. This very broad issue has been implemented for the first time in the Mekong River Delta, so the participation of many experts from different sectors is essential. I would like to thank the Ministry of Planning and Investment for its learning attitude.

Since this topic is very broad, I would like to comment only on issues related to climate change adaptation, water and natural disaster management in the Mekong River Delta planning.

I am grateful for the careful preparation of sufficient materials in a very short time, especially for gathering and explaining opinions of ministries, agencies and scientists. However, I suggest that

all the consensus and non-consensus comments and inputs should be gathered and explained so that we have a multi-dimensional viewpoint before making a decision on a very important issue.

I basically agree with the reported assessment on challenges of the Mekong River Delta in the context of climate change and development. However, more information should be supplemented to provide a clearer and broader picture of the Mekong River Delta. Major challenges, both revealed and still hidden from the sea, the upstream and within the region, to be solved are summarised below:

(1) Sea level rise and natural disasters from the sea, such as typhoons and storm surge; (2) Urban flooding due to tide and heavy rains; (3) Flooding in residential clusters: 2,078km out of total 13,347km of residential routes have been flooded

and the trend keeps increasing; (4) Water supply insufficient in both quantity and quality, unstable salt and fresh water boundary, leading to uncertain production; (5) Inefficient ring dike system (20,000km) with low sustainability, resulting in inability to exploit advantages of floods, and increasing potential risks; (6) Land subsidence (about 5-7 times faster than sea level rise) due to excessive groundwater extraction in urban areas and coastal aquaculture areas; (7) River, canal and coastal erosion due to the lack of alluvia from upstream and the increased demand for sand mining; and (8) Other risks and extremes from upstream needing careful attention and recommendations when occurring.

All the above mentioned issues should be studied and resolved in the overall picture of the Mekong River Delta and should not be addressed separately for each city, each area and should be addressed in the context of continued land subsidence, which cannot immediately be resolved; continuously rising extreme flooding; reduced alluvia and the extreme low flow of water lower and dependent heavily on the management regime of upstream countries; increasing heavy rain and rising sea tide; and natural disasters from the sea and other potential risks from upstream. All must be addressed in a comprehensive manner with the vision to 2050.

The contents and solutions put forward in the planning report are incomplete in my opinion and some issues need to be

further discussed with scientists from different areas, especially the irrigation area:

1. The Government requires solutions on the prevention of impacts of typhoons grade 12-13 for people in the Mekong River Delta. However, the planning report has not proposed any solution, especially solutions for coastal residential planning or at least recommendations for coastal residential planning in the near future. According to our calculation, if typhoons of grade 12-13 hit the Mekong River Delta, both forests and current sea dikes will be unable to survive, the water level will rise by 50cm penetrating the mainland by 10-13 km. This will greatly affect the life and property of coastal people.

2. The report proposes anti-inundation solutions for cities through small ring dikes and pumping station systems, i.e. dikes and water drainage pumping will be set up in flooding areas. This is a small ring dike solution (polders will be formed as a result) that the Dutch applied a few hundred to 1,000 years ago, our father also applied it in the Red River Delta under the Ly and Tran dynasties. But now in the Netherlands, only traces remain for sightseeing and tourism and the system in the Red River Delta can only be seen in history books.

The Mekong River Delta is currently in the following situation: the land subsides by an average of 2.5cm per year (it will be 25cm in 10 years) due to groundwater extraction, not yet taking into account land subsidence due to construction,

infrastructure, new alluvia land, which cannot be resolved in the next 10 years, even according to this planning report, the situation will not be improved in the next few decades (specifically in the section on water supply for aquaculture). By 2030, the sea level will rise by 7.5cm compared to 2021, so the aggregated impacts of land subsidence and sea level rise in the next 10 years will be 32.5cm (not to mention the decreased average flow in flood season making the tidal flow stronger, increasing tidal transmission speed and tidal peak in the mainland). Heavy flooding and extreme heavy rains will continue to increase (for example, the ground elevation of Can Tho area is 0.5-1.0m, the water level in Can Tho is 2.13m in 2020, the year without major floods, and was 2.15m in 2011, the year with major floods, so the impacts of both land subsidence and sea level rise will be 32.5 cm in the next 10 years).

If we plan and find separate flood prevention solutions for each city, the inevitable flood prevention solution is to build dyke for each district or each ward, with sewers (the smaller the area surrounded by ring dikes is, the higher the total length of dikes in the city will get and the number of sluices will increase but the sluice scale will get smaller and vice versa), rainwater pumping stations must be arranged. In fact, in 2013, the flood prevention irrigation planning for Can Tho city, Vinh Long and Ca Mau provinces was also approved by the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, with the total protected area of 66,800ha, divided into 39 sections, protected with 500km of dikes and 47 pumping stations. The local flood prevention planning for Long Xuyen and Ca Mau city has also been implemented by the Ministry of Construction. The cities of Tien Giang, Chau Doc, Sa Dec, Long An will be

implemented in the coming time (Tien Giang was severely flooded in 2011 and it has proposed to implement the flood planning).

But if we look at the overall Mekong River Delta picture, this solution is wrong and unacceptable at the moment. The dyke ringed areas will block water flows and occupy flood and tide storage space, making the water level around the dyke area higher, plus the pumped-out rainwater, leading to higher water levels outside dykes. All cities already suffer from inundation, after 13 cities have been protected by ring dikes, 161 other already inundated towns will be flooded even more seriously, can we protect them? Surely, we must protect them, continue to build and upgrade ring dykes, to build sluices and use pumps. Then villages, hamlets and many fruit growing areas also need to be protected, the domino effect of building and upgrading dykes will occur.

According to our calculations, to combat floods similar to the ones in 2000, with the land elevation and infrastructure like in 2011, the comprehensive flood prevention dyke length will increase by about 20,000km, with an investment of VND 170,000 billion and about 31,000ha of land. Thus, if taking into account the aggregated effects of land subsidence and sea level rise, to prevent such floods as the flood in 2000, the total ring dyke length will have to be increased by 67,000km by 2030 with an increased investment capital of about VND 500,000 billion and 90,000 ha of land.

In particular, more than 2,000km out of total 13,000 km of residential routes have been flooded with fast-flowing floodwater, creating the danger to people, but we do not have any solution, if we apply the flood prevention method mentioned in the report (up to now due to land subsidence and subsidence in the middle of the



residential cluster, the length of flooded residential clusters may have increased significantly compared to 2011). Regarding the protection of residential clusters already and to be flooded, the report has not mentioned the situation and solutions.

The Prime Minister has given instructions reflected in Resolution No.120/NQ-CP, on actively co-living with floods and salt water intrusion. Co-living with floods to exploit their benefits but must be in an active position. We actively lead floodwater into the fields, control flood heights so that floods cannot damage infrastructure and people wealth, cause inundation to residential clusters and threaten people lives. In terms of investment costs, it is much cheaper than building dykes locally. For example, Can Tho City flood prevention and urban landscape improvement project funded by the World Bank with USD 250 million, of which, flood prevention accounted for over USD 100 million (mainly for Ninh Kieu and Binh Thuy districts). If taking the option

of actively co-living with floods, all cities, towns, hamlets and residential clusters on the right bank of the Hau river will not be flooded with only USD 100-150 million.

3. The planning report has proposed solutions on domestic and industrial water supply for some areas. However, the extracted groundwater is mainly used for aquaculture. So if we do not have a solution on supplying fresh water to aquaculture areas, it seems impossible to stop groundwater extraction in aquaculture fields. Therefore, to limit groundwater extraction, we need to pay attention to proactive freshwater supply for coastal production areas (or at least ensuring enough fresh water to dilute during dry years) and it must be considered as an urgent task.

The irrigation modernisation scheme in the Mekong River Delta approved under the Decision No.633/QD-TTg dated May 12, 2020, contains some very specific and relevant contents for the Mekong River Delta development such as “separating water supply and drainage canals for aquaculture purposes”.

Over the past years, brackish water aquaculture farmers in the Mekong River Delta have experienced wonderful harvest in a favourable year or even in two or three consecutive years but they could suddenly go bankrupt in just only one year of too much rain or serious droughts when water becomes too salty and brackish shrimps will die or cannot grow. Fresh water for rice production is taken directly from irrigation canals. The combining use of canals for both sewage and drainage water causes water contamination and epidemics, leading to mass death of shrimps. To address this situation, people exploit groundwater for aquaculture areas, and excessive groundwater extraction is the main cause of land subsidence and its consequences are unpredictable. If we have separate water supply and drainage canals, and if water supply canals do not come from behind rice fields, aquaculture will become semi-industrial and very sustainable.

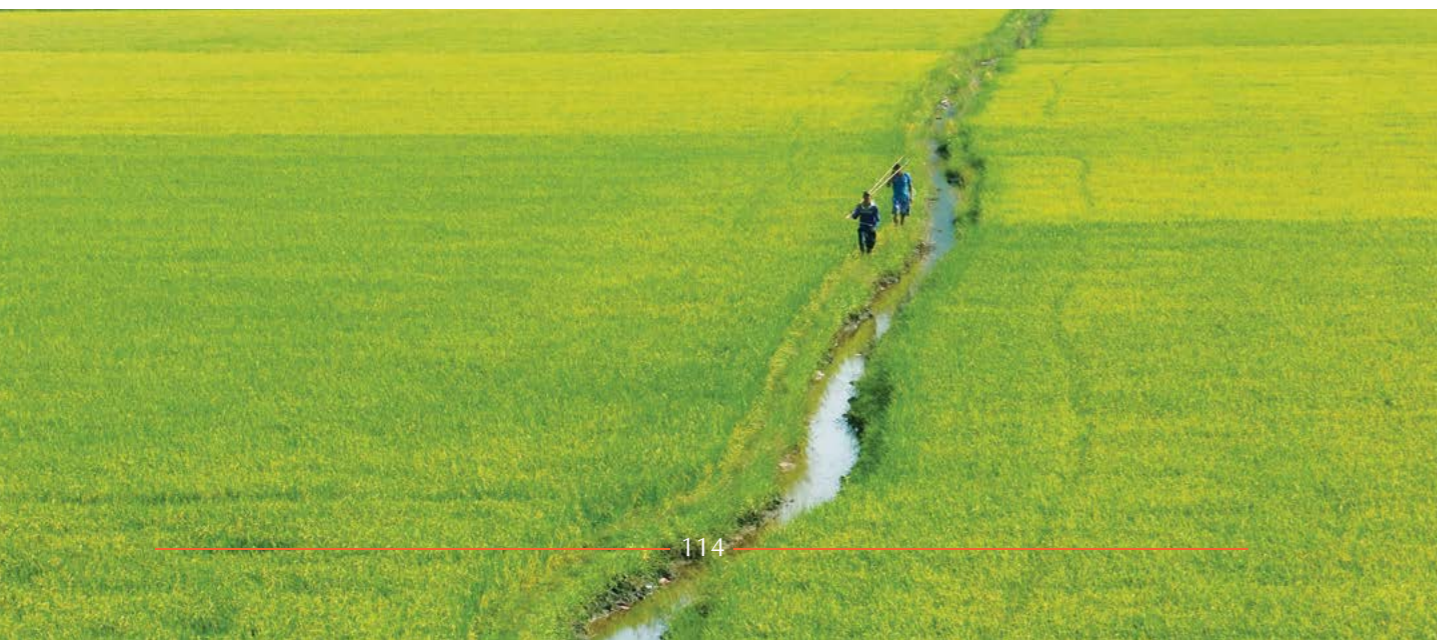
4. It is impossible to separate freshwater and brackish water zones without structural measures. The natural rules of freshwater and brackish water distribution change in terms of both space and time and they are never suitable for the needs of cultivation, crops and livestock. The freshwater area may always be freshwater when it is narrowed down, but brackish water area is completely different, the boundary of brackish water changes every year, every season and every month. In such conditions, it is not easy to prohibit people to exploit groundwater for diluting salty water for aquaculture.

The Prime Minister stated in the 2019 Mekong River Delta Conference “when I mention the nature-based method, it does not mean that we depend on nature. It means, we need to study the rules of nature to actively adapt to and do not go against them but make adjustments and proactively overcome its limitations to serve human beings”.

However, if this issue has not been resolved, it will harm aquaculture farmers in boundary areas, but will not lead to waste in investment. Therefore, if budget for investment is not yet available, the current state of aquaculture will still be unstable and dependent on nature as currently.

5. Regarding the problem of river bank and coastal erosion, and lowering the river bed, erosion in the Mekong River Delta is becoming increasingly severe, mainly due to: (1) the shortage of alluvia from upstream, due to sand being retained in upstream reservoirs; (2) the shortage of sand due to the increased sand mining in the middle-stream and downstream; (3) the changed river flow regime, losing the natural rules already existing for a long time, depending on the operation of hydro-power lakes; and (4) the young delta land not solid in the structure.

The shortage of sand mud in the downstream of rivers in the world during the developing period seems to be an inevitable rule. During the developing period with the increased electricity demand, hydro-power reservoirs are built for electricity generation and the reservoirs



retain sand and mud but the demand for sand for levelling the ground and for construction also increases, leading to a severer shortage of sand and mud in the downstream of rivers and coastal areas. Viet Nam in general and the Mekong River Delta, in particular, are not exceptional.

We are in the developing period, the need for sand in construction, in levelling for urban areas, industrial parks and residential houses has never been larger than before. But it is the right need for development and if there is demand, there is supply even when the price of sand is higher. Therefore, we need to think of solutions, policies and mechanisms to actively adapt to and reduce the need for sand mining in the Mekong River through such measures as the building of ecological cities and villages.

We understand that the shortage of sand mud due to sediment coming from upstream and changes of flow regime

is very difficult to overcome. However, it is still necessary to request upstream countries to have a reasonable operation and sand discharge process with the support of the Mekong River Commission.

6. Other risks and extreme events which need to be paid attention to include the consideration of setting up facilities by Cambodia in Tonleshap River to manage water level in the Great Lake as reported. So a backup scenario should be developed in case this happens.

I have some comments as follows:

First, I disagree with the approach of building dykes to prevent flood and tide in small areas in each city and then pumping rainwater into the surrounding area. This will lead to higher water level outside the dykes and the domino effect in the Mekong River Delta will occur non-stop over time. At the same time, in existing residential clusters to be flooded, fast water flows

will pose a danger to people and we do not have any solutions to overcome. In the years of major floods, road and technical infrastructure are damaged, then the road elevation will be increased after many years is an inevitable rule. Building dykes locally will surely be a great waste of investment and land but at the same time unsustainable.

Second, if we separate fresh water and brackish water zones without a management strip, the boundary always changing with space and time will inevitably make production unsustainable in the brackish water area, and people life will be difficult. However, with limited investment, we haven't been able to build the system of regulation and control facilities, without wasting investment, so I have no further comments on this issue.

Third, in terms of natural disasters, recommendations, especially the ones

related to planning coastal residential areas should be given.

Fourth, it is necessary to apply solutions on fresh water supply (at least for diluting salt water) and separate drainage system for brackish water aquaculture areas. By separating water supply and drainage canals, aquaculture will develop sustainably. Otherwise, water will be contaminated, spreading diseases and leading to unsustainable production, making people life very difficult. Or people will inevitably continue to exploit groundwater and it's not easy for the Government to prevent people from doing so.

Fifth, proactive measures should be taken to minimise the impacts of sediment shortage from upstream and the increasing need for sand exploitation downstream by building multi-purpose ecological lakes, ecological cities and villages./.





PROF. DR. VÕ TÒNG XUÂN

Rector of South Can Tho University

REMARKS ON IMPLEMENTATION RESULTS OF RESOLUTION No.120/NQ-CP

His Excellency Prime Minister Nguyễn Xuân Phúc,

Chairs of the Conference,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I strongly agree with the reports presented by the Ministers and ministry Leaders. Due to limited time, I would like to briefly present to the Conference what I have seen over the past three years since the issuance of the Government Resolution No.120/NQ-CP on climate resilient and sustainable development of the Mekong River Delta. Over the past time, I have met many farmers, and wherever I have gone to, farmers told me that the Government had shown its talent in removing bottlenecks and poverty for farmers. Since for a quite long time, although we grow a lot of rice, incomes had remained still marginal. Since the Resolution No.120/NQ-CP was issued, the transformation, although having been in existence for some time, has become more active over the past three years.

First, in coastal salty zones, the shrimp-rice area has increased considerably. In the past, when we focused on rice production to ensure food security, shrimp farming was mainly spontaneous. Now it is clear that many provinces have used their local budget to help farmers further develop the shrimp-rice system, i.e. during the rainy season, rice cultivation is very an ideal choice and when the rain stops and salt water rises, shrimp farming brings four or five times more benefits compared with rice production (according to statistic figures from the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development reviewing the shrimp-rice programme in Bac Lieu province in 2020, about 219,900ha have now been the shrimp-rice area).

However, in developing this model, we have still seen the spontaneity without any connection among involved parties in applying shrimp-rice techniques, especially in disease prevention, resulting in reduced incomes of shrimp farmers.

Currently, we are helping a Dutch-funded project to cooperate with a number of coastal provinces to apply the best shrimp-rice techniques to promote this model. This is the result of the Resolution No.120/NQ-CP on sustainable land use in climate change conditions.

Second, the movement to convert rice to fruit trees is popular, but still scattered.

Third, rotation has been made between rice with other crops: sesame, corn, especially some places have planted sorghum to be used as raw materials for biomass electricity generation. I propose that the Government should instruct ministries and agencies to study carefully and guide farmers in restructuring crops to avoid lower prices in bumper crop seasons, difficulties for farmers to sell their products or product prices forcefully decreased resulting in farmers calling for rescue purchase. In the Mekong River Delta Master plan, we need to instruct what crops to grow in what areas to link farmers together in accordance

with the direction from Prime Minister Nguyen Xuan Phuc, to form one or more cooperatives to link with enterprises and processing factories, to participate in the production chain to ensure stable markets for farmers.

In my opinion, the Government elected by the 13th Party Congress will have specific solutions and guidelines for us to connect farmers with enterprises and markets. We should promote linkage with Ho Chi Minh City, where there are many active enterprises to help finding markets for the Mekong River Delta products. Revising land policies to promote land accumulation for large-scale production, attracting enterprises to invest in increasing land value, to create higher productivity, better prices and higher quality, better selling products will help to improve the livelihood and farmer life in the Mekong River Delta.

Above are my comments to this important Conference.

Thank you!





H.E. NGUYỄN XUÂN PHÚC

Prime Minister of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam

CONCLUDING REMARKS OF PRIME MINISTER

Leaders, former Leaders of the Party and the State,

Distinguished Ambassadors and international guests,

Distinguished scientists, entrepreneurs and delegates,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

First of all, on behalf of the Government, I would like to sincerely thank and highly appreciate your participation, especially many practical, enthusiastic, profound, responsible and thoughtful comments from reports and remarks. However, regrettably, due to very limited time, professors Nguyen Ngoc Tran, To Van Truong, and leaders of the major enterprises of the Loc Troi Group, Sovico... and even leaders of the Politburo and Party Central Committee including Mr. Nguyen Van Nen, Mr. Tran Thanh Man, Mr. Le Minh Khai as well as many other leaders have yet to make their comments at this important Conference. Many other comments cannot be made,

either. It shows the affection of the delegates, and especially of people who are watching online today, for the Mekong River Delta amid the concerns about development as well as extreme impacts of climate change. Attending the Conference are also many new delegates, especially international delegates, who are calling the Mekong River Delta region with different names: The Land of Nine Dragons or the Mekong River Delta or the West Land with a lot of affections and emotions. At such a cheerful atmosphere of the conference, I would like to quote two sentences in a very famous poem:

“The Mekong River has nine gates and two flows

In love with me, so many ladies, I have my heart just for you though.”

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The West Land has been part of the flesh and blood of the beloved Viet Nam,

as affirmed and emphasised for long in many conferences, seminars, reports at other conferences, the West Land has a strategic role and position that no one can deny or take it less serious. All speeches made this morning have also reiterated that and we all have agreed on the important position and role of the West Land for the beloved country of Viet Nam. I would like to reiterate by summarising some of the following statistics:

The Mekong River Delta is home to 13 provinces and cities, accounting for 12% of total area and 19% of total population of the whole country. This is the largest agricultural production centre, contributing 50% of rice production, 95% of exported rice, 65% of aquaculture production, 60% of exported fish and 70% of fruits of the whole country. The World Bank’s assessments show that the Delta accounts for about 20% of global rice trade and has contributed to food security for Asia, Africa

and the Latin America. Fully aware of the Delta’s importance, the Party and the State have issued many policies and allocated resources to implement many solutions to promote potential, advantages and motivations for the Mekong River Delta socio-economic development, especially in the context that this region has been forecasted to continue most affected by climate change compared to other regions of the world and of Viet Nam.

The Government’s Resolution No.120/NQ-CP in 2017 is also in line with that spirit; the policies, solutions and actions of the Party and the Government over the past time have not been only merely economic development but also shown the spirit, responsibility and sharing of people throughout the country with people in the West Land. The rice, fruits, and fish we consume everyday are mainly made from alluvial droplets and water with diligent hands of the Delta people. I, therefore,



wish to repeat two verses about farmers in the West Land: *“When eating fruits, we should remember tree growers/When eating rice, we should remember those who mill, grind, and sieve it”*. Today, through the live broadcast, I would like to thank hardworking and industrious farmers, who work all days and nights to join people of the whole country to produce and to ensure food security for the region and the world as well as offer other made products.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

About a week ago, the Government organised the “Dialogue 2045” to seek breakthrough solutions and policies to realise Viet Nam’s aspiration to become a developed country by 2045, to realise the aspiration of President Ho Chi Minh that Viet Nam would stand on equal

footing with powerful countries of the five continents. According to the agenda, at least one such “Dialogue 2045” will be held in the Land of Nine Dragons to seek more breakthrough solutions to help this region take off, not just to be on equal footing with the whole country, but also make important contributions on the path to prosperity as mentioned in the topic of today’s conference.

In the previous Conference, I mentioned three factors to keep the Mekong River Delta, including people keeping, water keeping and land keeping. Today I want to say again that the Mekong River Delta is a land of talents, where many talented people were born or attracted to from elsewhere. We need to consider it an important resource, even a decisive factor. In the strategy to response to climate

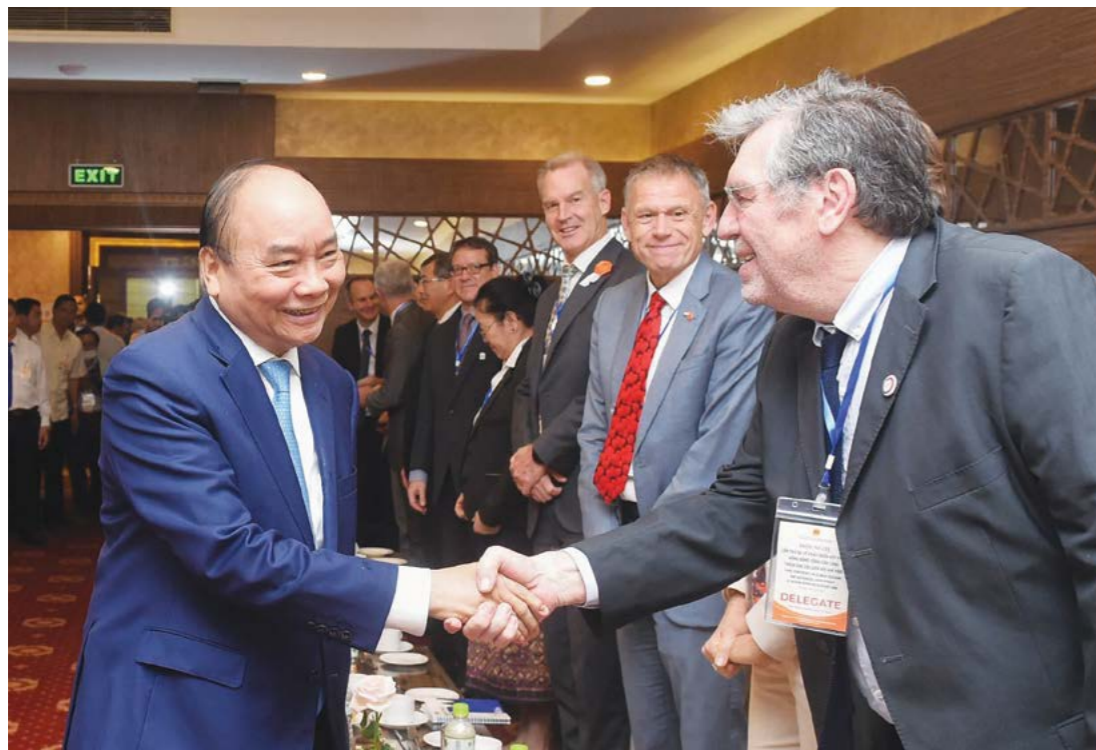
change, financial and material resources are important but the most decisive factor is still human resources, the people, gray matter, wisdom, emotion and courage.

Taking this opportunity, I would like to announce that, the Mekong River Delta region will in the coming time host a forum within the framework of the “Dialogue 2045” initiative to meet intellectuals, scientists, enterprises and entrepreneurs, who have been in love with and invested in the Land of Nine Dragons to find solutions for the local people to develop faster and more sustainably. I assign the Can Tho University to take the lead and prepare for this forum of the Mekong River Delta.

By 2045, even the country average income reaches the high level as specified in the Resolution of the 13th National Party

Congress, incomes of the Mekong River Delta people still remain in the middle range and they still have to struggle with climate change impacts every day, so our goal will have not been achieved, Uncle Ho’s aspirations will have not been realised. In his time, Uncle Ho said that the South, meaning from the Ben Hai River towards the South, especially our Southern region, had always been in his heart. Therefore, Conference today plays a very important role, but the success is only determined with specific actions of ministries, agencies and local governments after this Conference. We are talking theoretically and strategically but specific actions of ministries, agencies and localities are extremely important.

The achievements achieved over the past three years, especially in terms of



people's material and non-material life, the production structure, infrastructure, shortcomings, limitations, challenges, basic solutions, long-term and immediate measures have been comprehensively reported by the Ministers and I do not want to repeat them. I would like to say that the achievements have been resulted from our guidance. However, the results, even the concentration of investments in developing the Mekong River Delta in recent years, cannot be counted as our feat, it should be considered as the responsibility of the Government, officials, public servants, members of the Party Committees, the People's Committees of provinces and cities. These are just important initial results, more things will need to be done. Ministries and local agencies must continue to fulfil that responsibility, which is very challenging for this area is very sensitive to the weather and climate change.

From the reports of local agencies, especially the remarks made by the Ministers, scientists, opinions of delegates at the Conference as well as other major issues that I raised in other conferences, I would like to briefly describe a new strategic "8G" approach to be more easily applied in practice. Some of the issues in the following "8G" approach have not been included in the Resolution No.120/NQ-CP. Therefore, I propose the standing agency, the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment, to add the issues to the Resolution.

The first G is "Giao" (Transport). It means we need to concentrate resources, prioritising the development of the transport, irrigation and infrastructure systems in line with the vision of the entire Mekong River Delta, especially the expressway system to create low cost and linkage and connectivity favourable for promoting trade and economic activities

for people as a basis for effective response to climate change challenges. Mr. Nguyen Chi Dung, Mr. Tran Hong Ha, Mr. Nguyen Van The, Mr. Nguyen Xuan Cuong and Mr. Nguyen Thanh Nghi have all mentioned it, so I would like to reiterate the point that I have raised that we issued the Resolution No.120/NQ-CP with the nature-based spirit, specifically adaptation, but instead of letting the nature impacts in whatever ways, we need to pay attention to the development of the transport and irrigation infrastructure as well as to the provision of support for people who live in the places where landslides occur and suffer from the loss. In the previous conference I did say that such works as Cai Lon - Cai Be, Tra Su, the system in Mang Thit, the water desalination area in Ben Tre, in Bac Lieu, airports, seaports, things that facilitate people to produce, irrigation works developed by the agriculture and the transport sectors

need to be studied and developed to support the nature-based development in the Mekong River Delta.

In the near future, the development of such connecting routes as the East and West coastal roads has been instructed by the National Assembly Chairman and the Prime Minister as important works, and agreed by the Prime Minister and the Minister of Planning and Investment to be included into the medium-term public investment plan for the 2021-2025 period. With many beneficiaries in the East sea and West sea region, the development of the routes has met one of the very important investment principles of bringing benefits to as many people as possible. As well as the Can Tho - Ca Mau route, airports, railway line between Ho Chi Minh City - Can Tho, seaports, river ports, including the ports of Long An, Tran De and Hon Khoai, especially those on Tien and Hau River for developing



logistics services are very important for production in the Mekong River Delta. We are talking about competition, cost reduction, but without the systems we are unlikely to compete with the world. Long Xuyen bypass in An Giang province and the highways that Mr. Nguyen Van The had mentioned today need to be studied for implementation in the plan for the period of 2021-2025 and beyond.

The second G is "Giáo" (Education). It means education and human resource development. It can be said that education is the golden key to sustainable development. For the Mekong River Delta, education is the answer for both short-term and long-term development. The Mekong River Delta education system should focus on the content of the "education, education and education" model. Specifically, the first education is basic education, ensuring that everyone, especially children, can complete general education. We must not let any child not go to school due to financial difficulties. Just as last time I said, the Mekong River Delta has been an area of poor education, so general education will be a very important factor to bring this region to an equal footing with other regions. The second education is vocational education to help people access basic employment. The third education is high-level education, including senior management, to serve as a basis for the region to transform to be of a higher productivity and incomes, catching up with the country's high income earning region group. For example, it's not easy for the Loc Troi Group to find several thousands of

senior engineers... The issue of education and training, although mentioned, remains not clear and sharp enough in the Resolution No.120/NQ-CP. Education and training first must meet the region development needs, creating readiness of a labour force with professional skills associated with climate change adaptation. Mechanisms and policies should be in place to encourage enterprises to invest in human resources of the Mekong River Delta. In addition, education and training will create talents from engineering to leadership to govern the change of the region. I propose that the Ministry of Planning and Investment, the Ministry of Science and Technology and the Ministry of Education and Training integrate the education and training with the above-mentioned focuses into the Resolution. As the content of education and training is not sufficient enough in the Resolution, so if revised, it must emphasise the content of education, training, science and technology.

The third G is "Giang" (River), according to the old Vietnamese language, "Giang" means rivers and major rivers. The Mekong River Delta is an area of rivers, economy and livelihood of local people have been closely associated with many such rivers as Tien, Hau and others. The development strategy should take advantage of and promote the role of rivers to develop the agricultural economy consisting of rice, fruits and fish. Only with the well-developed transport, especially the river logistics system, can we be successful and can the culture of the

Mekong River Delta be formed. Without rivers and canals, there had not been the culture of the West Land, so, it is right that "the best is to live near downtown; the second best, near rivers and the third best, near roads". The role of rivers is an indispensable factor when talking about the Mekong River Delta. This issue is still blurred in Resolution, so I propose that the concept of river economy should be studied. Inland waterway transport in the Mekong River Delta is a significant issue that requires more specific research for development. Therefore, river economy needs to be added as a new spirit of Resolution No.120/NQ-CP in the future. Rivers, canals and the ecosystem of the Mekong River Delta constitute a strategic natural resources, a distinct natural advantage of the Mekong River Delta compared to many other deltas in the region and in the world. I have visited the Netherland's delta and found

that our Mekong River Delta have more advantages thanks to its river system.

The fourth G is "Gắn" (Linkage). Many delegates have used this word, Mr. Le Tien Chau, Secretary of the Hau Giang Party Committee used it a lot. The word means the linkage between the central and local level, the state and market, people and enterprises, domestic and international organisations and investors. Especially, it means regional linkage for the Mekong River Delta sustainable development. "If you want to go fast, go alone, if you want to go far, go together". For climate resilient development is a long-term strategy, challenging for any local agency or organisation, it is necessary to stick to a linkage and cooperation strategy to share opportunities and contribute resources to overcome challenges instead of working individually. No region has favourable conditions for promoting such a linkage as the Mekong River Delta does.



The fifth G is "Giàu" (Rich). It means actively attract rich, well-off people and potential enterprises to invest in the local economy development. To have development resources, it is necessary to "build nests to welcome eagles". In order to do so, it is necessary to improve the investment and business environment, reform administrative procedures and improve the competitiveness of the economy and each local province. In fact, many large-sized enterprises and middle-class people have now been in the West Land, some enterprises are the largest in the world. Many enterprises can be found in the world but USD 1 billion shrimp production enterprise can be found only in the Mekong River Delta and the Minh Phu Company is an example. When chairing a conference on shrimp production two

years ago, I said that we would strive to reach USD 10 billion in shrimp export turnover by 2045. The CEO of the Minh Phu Group said why would not we reach USD 20 billion. Ca Mau, Bac Lieu, Soc Trang and some other provinces and areas of Viet Nam can achieve this target. Not only that, Phu Quoc has now become a famous tourist island in the region and in the world. Why not?

The sixth G is "Giỏi" (Talent). It means to attract talents to contribute the gray matter and wisdom to the Mekong River Delta. The Mekong River Delta is a land of talented people, where many famous scientists were born, especially the ones in the agriculture sector, besides many intellectuals and experts in many sectors are willing to come to work in or collaborate with the Mekong River Delta

provinces. Therefore, it is necessary to have a common policy to attract talents to come back and to contribute to the Nine-Dragon Land development. Famous scientist Luong Dinh Cua came from Soc Trang, Mr. Philipp Rosler, former Vice Chancellor of Germany, also has the Soc Trang background and many others I cannot mention them all here. Attracting talented people and scientists to the region has not been mentioned in Resolution No.120/NQ-CP and this is a shortcoming. Attending the Conference today are many scientists and experts, not only just Professor Võ Tông Xuân, Professor Nguyen Ngoc Tran but also many other. I suggest to encourage and attract more talents to the Mekong River Delta, so that we have more grey matter to effectively respond to the challenges of

climate change. Therefore, I would like to say once again that we should organise the Mekong River Delta Intellectual Forum as part of "Dialogue 2045" that I have proposed to convene experts, scientists, intellectuals, leading entrepreneurs, and those who have passion and determination to contribute to the development of this fertile Mekong River Delta. Can Tho city should assume this important role.

The seventh G is "Già" (Elder), which means aging population and social security policy. The Mekong River Delta has faster aging population than the national average. This is the vulnerable group in terms of economy, society and environment. Therefore, the Mekong River Delta needs to issue proactive policies on aging population and to form a better social security network to provide better welfare



for the elderly and the disadvantaged. I would not like to mention the name of a province in the region with an image of old people living with a few children in great difficulties. That is the heart-breaking scene. After three years of implementing the Resolution, we have seen population aging as an emerging issue, but this issue has not been included in the Resolution yet, so it needs to be supplemented and improved.

The eighth G is "Giới" (Gender). It means to promote gender equality, job accessibility and promote the role and position of women. The development

of science and technology to a certain extent, such as automation, is directly threatening job opportunities for women. Therefore, a strategy should be in place to ensure that female workers, especially those who may easily lose their jobs due to the development of the fourth Industrial Revolution, will have opportunities to receive education and to access employment. In his time, former Prime Minister Võ Văn Kiệt, mentioned many times that though women in the Mekong River Delta were beautiful many of them got married to foreigners and earned living with some sensitive jobs. Uncle Sau

Dan (nickname of Prime Minister Võ Văn Kiệt) always disagreed with such situation and our responsibility is to ensure gender equality and employment for women in Mekong River Delta.

Regarding the climate resilient and sustainable development strategy as proposed by the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment, ministries, agencies and contributed by delegates at this Conference, I would like to highlight some of the following issues:

First, to create the best business environment for enterprises, promote

the flexibility of policies and economic factors. Only when projects of enterprises and cooperatives are implemented, will the catalyst appear to neutralise impacts of climate change and sea level rise. Enterprises have been cared for as they create jobs, increase income, contribute to economic growth and budget revenues. The U.S. and many other countries pay great attention to the development of enterprises, we should do the same. If we work individually without any production linkage, especially deep processing with added value, it would be very difficult for us to succeed.



Second, to promote a synchronised development and improve key markets. For the labor market, local agencies need to focus on training and retraining human resources effectively, to catch up with the trend of production shift to prepare necessary skills for workers to adapt to the market demand. I request the Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs to take lead in the development and implementation of a scheme of the kind.

For the land market, land conversion should be promoted to adapt to the need for and purpose of land use in the context of rapid and unpredictable changes of the nature. Research must be conducted to provide a flexible basis for planning rice cultivation area to convert to crops of higher economic value and climate resilience to ensure incomes and

sustainable livelihood for local people. The Politburo has decided to amend the Land Law in late 2021. Therefore, local agencies, especially the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment must actively listen to prepare the best version of the Law. There must be suitable land policies for large-scale production in the Mekong River Delta.

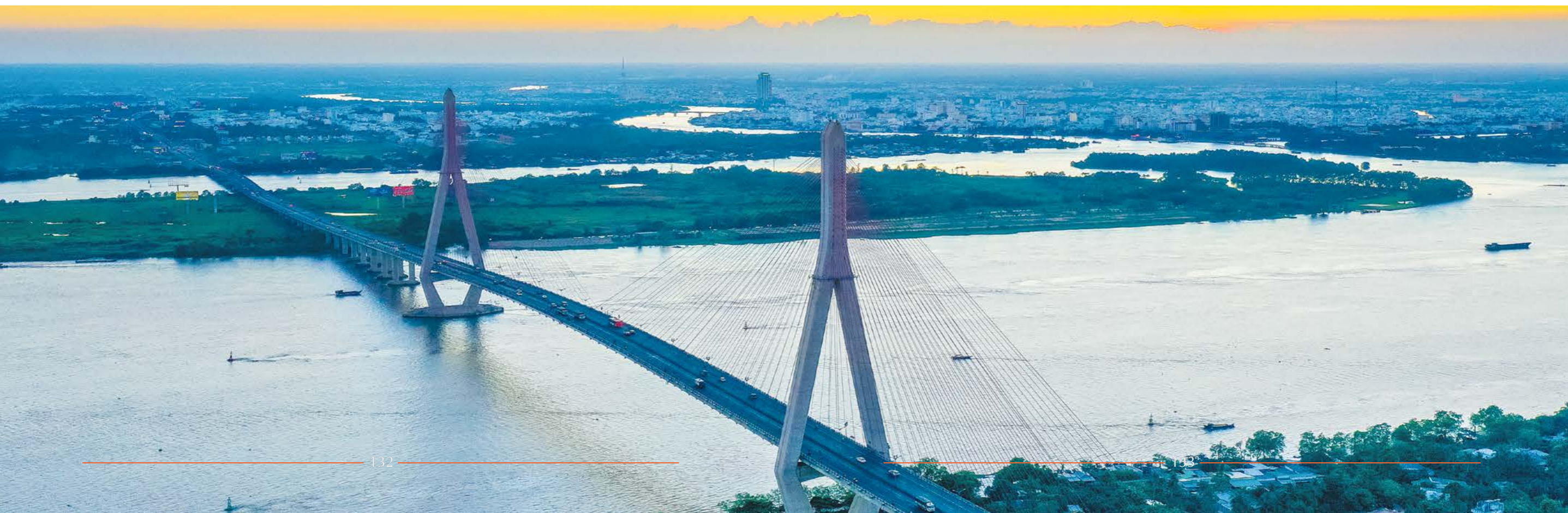
For production factor market, we need to build an ecosystem for manufacturing industries, reducing transaction costs, promoting the circulation of goods, chain links and the development models of the industries available in the Mekong River Delta as pointed out in a recent research of the Fulbright University. Production must be aligned with consumption and circulation of goods; we cannot produce things that are not needed. I assign the

Ministry of Industry and Trade to take lead and coordinate with the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development to prepare this task.

Regarding the science and technology market, the localities need to increase investments in science and technology, identify technologies prioritised for investments in the Mekong River Delta such as biotechnology. Particularly, policies and mechanisms should be in place to accelerate the study of initiatives and solutions for sustainable production, especially technology solutions on climate change adaptation. For knowledge needs to be spread effectively, I suggest that the localities provide funding for relevant agencies to share research results. Minister Huỳnh Thành Đạt has some ideas to innovate scientific research. I suggest

that in addition to the Climate change response science programme, the Ministry of Science and Technology should take lead and coordinate with the localities to develop a science and technology market for the region. As science and technology has already been a market but our policies and direction for the Mekong River Delta have not been in line with it, during this intake, the Minister of Science and Technology will be responsible for completing this task.

The capital market has not been adequately developed for the Mekong River Delta development, even many local provinces have not got a capital market yet. Financial investments and access to credit of people and enterprise remain still limited. I propose to speed up the formation of investment funds



and capital mobilisation mechanisms, to encourage the provisions of loans for those areas which accelerate the structural transformation and to strengthen the financial market capacity in this region. The Ministry of Planning and Investment, the State Bank of Viet Nam and the Ministry of Finance are assigned to explore on capital mobilisation mechanisms, promote the development of the financial market, create investment capital sources and implement climate resilient production development projects. Nearly 20 development partners and financial institutions attending the Conference have shown their interest in supporting the Mekong River Delta and committed to provide necessary support funds for this region. The Ministry of Planning and Investment, Ministry of Finance and State Bank of Viet Nam should prepare schemes

to attract capital to this region, especially funding from the World Bank, ADB, JICA, KfW, Japan, New Zealand, Australia, etc. to join hands with the state budget for development purpose.

Third, it is necessary to prioritise state resources to invest more in infrastructure for the Mekong River Delta. The specific budget allocation of the next five years will be submitted to the National Assembly, including investments for accelerating the implementation and completing projects planned for the next 5-10 years to improve the business and investment environment, promote production development, reduce costs and improve capacity to respond to climate change. It is said that “*medium-sized roads bring medium-sized wealth, large-sized roads bring large-sized wealth*”, now we say “*highways open to traffic will unlock wealth*”. It means that

well-developed transport infrastructure system, including aviation, waterways, roads and railways, will bring prosperity to this region. The economy of the Land of Nine Dragons will be greatly boosted with the infrastructure system including irrigation works being and to be invested in in the coming years. Professor Dao Xuan Hoc stated in his remarks that the planning and the action plan must be aligned, saying must go together with doing. We would like to request that Ministers and the Government-elect do their best to put forward directions in the planning that the Ministry of Planning and Investment is synthesising and submitting for appraisal and to be approved for implementation in the medium and long-term plans.

Fourth, to make budget expenditure for climate change responses a key expenditure task in the local budget.

Accordingly, programmes and resources need to be developed to proactively respond to climate change instead of preparing budget estimate as contingency for natural disaster prevention, i.e. the type of passive response, as it has been done so far. I suggest that local agencies allocate necessary budget for climate change response programmes between now and 2025, use medium-term budget as counterpart fund suitable for each locality. I request the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Planning and Investment to study the development of a specific counterpart fund mechanism. I have been reported about loans of several billion of USD but that is for inter-regional investments. The World Bank Country Director told me that those loans should not be separated, as it is for inter-regional investment, so the issue of mechanism on



counterpart fund and on-lending is a matter to be discussed. Mr. Lê Quang Mạnh, Secretary of the Can Tho Party Committee also mentioned this issue to me. I now hand it over to the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Planning and Investment to study the inter-regional mechanism, and the most favourable mechanisms on counterpart fund and on-lending for ODA loans should be applied for Mekong River Delta provinces. We will strengthen the responsibility for capital recovery but with the Mekong River Delta characteristics we should have an appropriate and more synchronised mechanism.

Fifth, to promote horizontal and vertical linkages, innovative cooperation. First of all, it is necessary to strengthen cooperation between ministries, central agencies and local authorities with a strong commitment associated with responsibilities and actions of each agency and organisation at all levels. Letter G in “*Gắn*” (*Linkage*) must be enforced. The linkage among local agencies in the region, and between the whole region and Ho Chi Minh City need to be further promoted. I have said several times that it is wrong to say that Ho Chi Minh City helps the Mekong River Delta consume products, actually it is the Mekong River Delta to provide

talents and resources for the sustainable development of Ho Chi Minh City. Ho Chi Minh City and the Mekong River Delta create together a sustainable and organic linkage, not a single aspect linkage, for a mutual development. I suggest to promote the role of the Regional Coordination Council, piloting the Council functions and mandates of mobilising and allocating resources, budget and making investment decisions on inter-regional infrastructure within another framework of cooperation.

I request the Ministry of Planning and Investment assumes the prime responsibility and coordinate with Ho

Chi Minh City and localities in the region to develop a linkage mechanism to be submitted to the Government for consideration. Taking this opportunity, I would like to talk about the role of major cities in the region. As urban economy has become a development trend as stated by Mr. Nguyen Thanh Nghi, we must strongly develop urban areas in line with the spirit of the Resolution, controlling well planning, upgrading cities and developing towns and townlets with residential re-planning. We will not allow the current situation, which will be both costly and unsafe while the trade index of services is very low, to continue.



To promote international cooperation, cooperate with countries of experience in responding to climate change, taking advantage of international support. Viet Nam welcomes, acknowledges and highly appreciates the support of international organisations in policy development and implementation of programmes and projects in Viet Nam in general and in the Mekong River Delta in particular on climate change adaptation and resilience in recent years. The Government assigns the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to take lead and coordinate with the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment, the Ministry of Planning and Investment, concerned ministries and agencies in promoting new cooperation mechanisms. I also emphasise that there should be not only structural measures but also non-structural measures such as afforestation, offshore wind power development in using resources.

Sixth, it is necessary to have programmes and plans to support the most vulnerable groups, especially to promote programmes to help women, children, the elderly and many other vulnerable people respond to climate change.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Along with response measures, we need some prevention measures:

First, it is the key to raise awareness and understanding of local authorities, enterprises, people, social organisations. For the local government, it is about enhancing governance capacity. For community and people, it is about changing the perception on climate change impacts, and the participation role and responsibility of the community. Students and pupils in the Mekong River Delta need to be educated with knowledge and skills to have responsibility for joining hands to protect the environment.

At the same time, it is necessary to enhance the capacity of natural disaster warning, develop scenarios on climate change responses for each period of the year. I talk about management of change. For the community, it is a major campaign to increase awareness of roles and responsibilities as without people, responses to climate change will be unsuccessful. The advocacy role of the whole political system for climate change response must come from people and different organisations, not just only from the State.

Second, I request the business community and people to join hands with the Government in reducing greenhouse gases emissions, to contribute to fulfilling Viet Nam's contributions committed with the international community. Study must be conducted on carbon tax to encourage the reduction of greenhouse gases emissions, and at the same time to share

revenues to support the severely affected localities. I request the Ministry of Finance to consider and handle the financial issues, especially tax policies.

Planning, institution, regional coordination mechanism, breakthrough policies on infrastructure, a strong application of the fourth Industrial Revolution achievements and the development of the digital economy, digital society, etc. are the urgent and immediate solutions for the Mekong River Delta. One point that has rarely been mentioned is that along with developing production forces to respond to climate change, building production relations, in which the role of collective mechanism in production in the Mekong River Delta plays a very crucial role. The Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development and the Viet Nam Cooperative Alliance should study this issue in accordance with the Mekong River Delta river and



water characteristics. I would like to give an example that when Mr. Le Minh Khai was the Secretary of the Bac Lieu Party Committee, he recommended that the building of coal-fired power plants should be terminated in Bac Lieu province as the locality was a key shrimp farming area of the country. I found this proposal reasonable, hence, Bac Lieu has so far had its first gas power plant. Next, Long An province will soon replace coal-fired power plants with gas power plants. It is a very timely climate response action. Ben Tre now has become the first province in the Mekong River Delta to launch a programme in response to on the Prime Minister initiative of planting 1 billion trees on the occasion of New Year Tree Planting Festival of Uncle Ho. These are essential actions for our Delta.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Mekong River Delta is the land that our ancestors discovered and reclaimed at the latest with just over 300 years ago in thousands of years of the history of our nation. The challenges of climate change today cannot be compared with the difficulties and dangers from sacred forests and poisonous water that our ancestors experienced with many sacrifices and blood in exploiting, reclaiming and protecting our country to leave a rich land as today for future generations. Our ancestors reclaimed the land, then we have a responsibility for making our country more prosperous and our people richer. After all, climate change is just exogenous change, when we can retain our cultural root, national spirit, internal factors with endogenous strengths, we

will develop prosperously on the land inherited from our ancestors.

We are now promoting the “nature-based” development philosophy, like the meaning of the two words inscribed on King Le Loi’s sword that we follow the rules of nature to develop without any brutal intervention or destruction of natural conditions but we would not accept the destiny or any arrangements of the Creator. Climate change is not caused by the nature but mainly by human activities on this planet. Therefore, we need to have correct understandings and to have a solution and act in line with the current rules of nature. Awareness solutions, structural and non-structural measures, linkage for development, production restructuring are very necessary. Thanks to production restructuring, our crops losses have greatly

been reduced. In 2016, climate change caused us extremely high losses, but in the following years, we changed our crop season to earlier time and changed crop structure. Although climate change impacts were severer the losses were only 7.12% of those of 2016. The arid Israel and Dubai threatened by nature but now have begun to produce food and become agriculture exporters. We have capacity to save ourselves and to be more successful than such arid countries. We must have such a belief.

We also know that, climate change response and natural disaster prevention are a difficult and complex multi-year fight over generations. Therefore, Resolution No.120/NQ-CP has set a vision for nearly a hundred years later (2100), so to succeed in implementing it, we must



know how to mobilise the synergy of people, the entire political system from the central to the local and to develop linkage between local agencies both inside and outside the country. The Party, the National Assembly, the Government, the Provincial and City Party Committee, the local authorities and the entire political system have been determined to act strongly and drastically with responsibility and honor to accelerate the implementation of orientations, strategies and solutions set out in the Resolution as well as other resolutions of the Politburo, the National Assembly, the Government to full tap the potentials of the Land of

Nine Dragons, to seize opportunities, to overcome challenges for sustainable development, not only for the livelihood of 100 million people of the West Land, but also join hands with the entire country the aspirations of independence, self-development and prosperity of 2045 when 100th year anniversary of the establishment of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam is marked.

On this occasion, once again, on behalf of the Government and Vietnamese people, I would like to thank scientists, enterprises, investors, the international community, development partners, friends from other countries for supporting

the spirit of Resolution No.120/NQ-CP, for supporting, financing, making valuable contributions and cooperating with the Government, local authorities and Vietnamese people in the implementation of sustainable development goals in Viet Nam in general and in the Mekong River Delta in particular. The Government hopes to continue to receive more support from other Governments, organisations, donors, scientists, enterprises and people, both in terms of financial and human resources, brainpower and all other supports in the upcoming time.

With that spirit, I would like to thank you many more times. Once again, I

highly appreciate the Ministers, especially the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment, Can Tho city, for their hard work for the success of this Conference. The Prime Minister has also received recommendations from leaders of Mekong River Delta provinces, Ho Chi Minh City and 10 ministries. I will assign the ministers to study and answer the requests of local agencies. I wish you all, especially the international guests good health, happiness and success.

Thank you very much!





PROCEEDINGS OF THE THIRD CONFERENCE ON CLIMATE RESILIENT
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