

About RIS

Research and Information System for Developing Countries (RIS) is a New Delhi-based autonomous policy research institute that specialises in issues related to international economic development, trade, investment and technology. RIS is envisioned as a forum for fostering effective policy dialogue and capacity-building among developing countries on global and regional economic issues.

The focus of the work programme of RIS is to promote South-South Cooperation and collaborate with developing countries in multilateral negotiations in various forums. RIS is engaged across inter-governmental processes of several regional economic cooperation initiatives. Through its intensive network of think tanks, RIS seeks to strengthen policy coherence on international economic issues and the development partnership canvas.

For more information about RIS and its work programme, please visit its website: www.ris.org.in

About AIC

ASEAN-India Centre (AIC) has been working to strengthen India's strategic partnership with ASEAN in its realisation of the ASEAN Community. AIC at RIS undertakes research, policy advocacy and regular networking activities with relevant public/private agencies, organisations and think-tanks in India and ASEAN countries, with the aim of providing policy inputs, up-to-date information, data resources and sustained interaction, for strengthening ASEAN-India Strategic Partnership. For more information about AIC, please visit its website: <http://aic.ris.org.in>



RIS

Research and Information System
for Developing Countries

विकासशील देशों की अनुसंधान एवं सूचना प्रणाली

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Policy Dialogue on MEKONG GANGA COOPERATION

“Stronger Connectivity, Enhancing Ties”

8 April 2017

New Delhi, India

OUTCOME DOCUMENT



Ministry of External Affairs
Government of India



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Confederation of Indian Industry

ISBN: 81-7122-128-9

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Published in 2017 by:



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Foreword

Amb. Hardeep S Puri

Chairperson, RIS

The Policy Dialogue on Mekong-Ganga Cooperation (MGC) represents the realisation of an idea initially mooted by Gen. (Dr.) V.K. Singh, (Retd.), Minister of State for External Affairs at the 7th MGC Ministerial Meeting held in 2016 at Vientiane, Lao PDR. This recommended the hosting of an MGC seminar focusing on building stronger connectivity and enhancing our multi-dimensional ties. The ASEAN-India Centre (AIC) at RIS was entrusted with the task of convening such interaction and provide a platform for sharing of views, ideas and proposals aimed at strengthening MGC.

The Mekong-Ganga Cooperation (MGC) is a multidimensional initiative among Cambodia, India, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Thailand and Vietnam, which deals with not just economic aspects of regional cooperation but a host of cultural issues important for building inclusive and prosperous societies. MGC member countries have been collaborating for regional cooperation in four areas: tourism, culture, education and transport and communications. MGC has received further momentum under India's Act East Policy (AEP), unveiled in 2014. Since the establishment of MGC, India's trade with the Mekong countries has increased substantially, having gone up from US\$ 1.32 billion in 2000 to US\$ 19.31 billion in 2015, a nearly 14-fold increase in one and a half decades.

The Policy Dialogue and the subsequent follow up activities were undertaken by the ASEAN-India Centre (AIC) at RIS. I wish to commend Prof. Sachin Chaturvedi, Director General, RIS and Dr. Prabir De, Coordinator, AIC for their efforts to initiate and institutionalize this process and to ensure that think-tanks of the region play an increasingly important role in strengthening MGC relations.

This volume is the outcome of the efforts and hard work of my colleague, Dr. Prabir De and his team at AIC. I wish to place on record my appreciation.

This Outcome Document has several policy suggestions/recommendations for the way forward. I am confident that the Policy Dialogue on MGC will continue to make significant contributions to strengthening the relations between India and MGC countries.

It is my expectation that the Outcome Document of the Policy Dialogue on MGC will provide valuable reference for policymakers, academics and other stakeholders.



Hardee S Puri

Preface

Prof. Sachin Chaturvedi

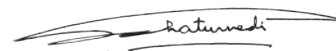
Director General, RIS

The Mekong region comprising Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Thailand and Vietnam is very important for India's 'Act East Policy' for strengthening its economic integration with Southeast and East-Asian countries. The ASEAN-India Centre at RIS has been actively engaged in undertaking research studies for promoting economic cooperation between India and Mekong countries.

Earlier, RIS had also undertaken a project on 'Building capacity through South-South Cooperation: Case of Mekong-India cooperation'. As part of this project the Mekong-Ganga Policy Brief Series had also been launched. Recently, RIS and AIC brought out the seventh edition of the Mekong-Ganga Policy Brief to disseminate the policy related research outcomes among policy circles and think-tanks to promote the cause of deeper cooperation between India and Mekong countries.

AIC, RIS and the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) jointly organised a Policy Dialogue on Mekong-Ganga Cooperation (MGC), entitled 'Stronger Connectivity and Enhancing Ties' at New Delhi on 8 April 2017. The participants deliberated on the issues related to physical and digital connectivity; trade and investment and value chains; cultural relations and people-to-people context and harnessing the diversity. I am sure the recommendation presented in the Outcome Document will be found useful by policy makers, academicians, practitioners and stakeholders involved in the MGC process.

I compliment my senior colleague Dr. Prabir De and members of his research team for preparing this important Outcome Document.



Sachin Chaturvedi

Acknowledgements

The Outcome Document of the Policy Dialogue on “Mekong-Ganga Cooperation: Stronger Connectivity, Enhancing Ties” has been prepared by Dr. Prabir De, Professor, RIS, and Coordinator, ASEAN-India Centre (AIC) with support of Dr. Durairaj Kumarasamy. Dr. Durairaj Kumarasamy, Ms. Sreya Pan and Ms. Opinder Kaur contributed as rapporteurs of the Policy Dialogue.

We are grateful to Ambassador Hardeep Singh Puri, Chairman, RIS for his guidance and encouragement. We are also grateful to Prof. Sachin Chaturvedi, Director General, RIS for his cooperation. We are thankful to Ambassador Preeti Saran, Secretary (East), Ministry of External Affairs (MEA); Ms. Pooja Kapur, former Joint Secretary (ASEAN-Multilateral), Ministry of External Affairs (MEA); Mr. Anurag Bhushan, Joint Secretary (ASEAN-Multilateral) and South, Ministry of External Affairs (MEA); Col. Sandeep Puri, Director, Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) for their continuous support.

This publication is benefitted from work done in support by the RIS Administration. Mr. Tish Kumar Malhotra coordinated the production of the Outcome Document with the support of Mr. Sachin Singhal. Ms. Kiran Wagh extended the secretarial support. Mr. Sachin Singhal designed the Outcome Document.

Views expressed in this Outcome Document are those of the participants of the Policy Dialogue and not the views of Government of India or MGC countries, Research and Information System for Developing Countries (RIS), ASEAN-India Centre (AIC) or Confederation of Indian Industry (CII). Usual disclaimers apply.

Summary of the Policy Dialogue on Mekong-Ganga Cooperation (MGC)

1. The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA), in partnership with the ASEAN-India Centre (AIC), Research and Information System for Developing Countries (RIS) and the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII), organized a Policy Dialogue on Mekong-Ganga Cooperation (MGC) titled “Stronger Connectivity and Enhancing Ties” on 8 April, 2017 at India Habitat Centre (IHC), New Delhi.
2. This Policy Dialogue was organised in pursuance of an announcement made by the Hon’ble Minister of State for External Affairs at the 7th Mekong-Ganga Cooperation (MGC) Ministerial Meeting, held at Vientiane on 24 July, 2016, wherein it was announced that India would host a MGC seminar at the ASEAN-India Centre (AIC) in New Delhi focusing on building stronger connectivity and enhancing our multi-dimensional ties.
3. The event was attended by over 100 delegates, which included government officials, foreign office representatives from local missions in New Delhi, representatives of Industry and research scholars. All MGC countries nominated representatives to attend the Policy Dialogue and form part of the panel discussions. The Senior Officials of the MGC from Thailand, Cambodia and Myanmar also attended the event and delivered a talk as part of the panel discussions in the event. Two senior Members of Parliaments, namely, Mr P D Rai and Mr Vincent Pala, also attended the event and delivered their remarks.
4. The Policy Dialogue was divided into five sessions which included an Inaugural session, a session each focussing on three key themes of Physical and Digital Connectivity; Trade, Investment, Regional Value Chains; and Cultural Relations and People-to-People contacts and a closing session which was titled “Looking Ahead: Harnessing the Diversity, Building the Future”. The Policy Dialogue was aimed at facilitating an in-depth discussion on various aspects relating to the experiences of India and Mekong countries with respect to new initiatives and ideas, that would help formulate an actionable policy agenda for strengthening the MGC.
5. In his Welcome Address, Prof. Sachin Chaturvedi, Director General, RIS, highlighted the objective of MGC Policy Dialogue and elaborated the need of sharing experiences and ideas and drawing an actionable agenda to strengthen MGC. Amb. Hardeep Singh Puri, Chairman, RIS in his Opening Address emphasised the need for enhancing connectivity in MGC. He also highlighted the benefits of ongoing connectivity and development cooperation projects that India has initiated such as Trilateral Highway, Lines of Credit, fellowships, and the importance of further strengthening regional cooperation. In his Special Address, Prof. Lokesh Chandra, President, Indian Council of Cultural Relations (ICCR), New Delhi highlighted the civilisational and cultural relations between India and Mekong countries. He brought out the historical connections of India’s relationship with Southeast Asian countries to include linkages in textiles, architecture/construction techniques, scripts, irrigation, agriculture, animal husbandry, trading, Buddhism and so on. He suggested that the Nalanda University should build a study centre for each Mekong country to promote the cultural relations with India. Dr.

Dinesh Dua, Immediate Past Chairman, CII expressed the importance of regional cooperation for socio-economic development and strengthening manufacturing sector. He mentioned that India has already invested in pharmaceuticals, iron and steel, electronics, agricultural, food processing industries, etc. in the Mekong countries and suggested the possible areas of cooperation in tourism sector. In her Keynote Address, Amb. Preeti Saran, Secretary (East), Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) highlighted the similarities of MGC countries in terms of culture, food and religion, and mentioned that India was the first country to start a regional dialogue process on Mekong subregion. Amb. Saran addressed the development of ongoing connectivity projects and its significance in people-to-people connectivity. She also mentioned India's LoC of US\$ 1 billion to promote physical and digital connectivity and the Project Development Fund of US\$ 77 million that was announced to encourage the Indian investors to invest in Mekong subregion, particularly to establish value chains in areas of textiles and apparels, electronics, agro-processing industries, etc. Amb. Saran also emphasised the need of bridging the historical gap by educating youth about the historical links between India and Southeast Asian countries. In her vote of thanks, Ms. Pooja Kapur, Joint Secretary (ASEAN ML) Division, MEA, highlighted that this was the first ever Policy Dialogue on MGC and the presence of distinguished speakers at the event bore testimony to the importance of the Mekong countries to India. She thanked AIC for organising the event and made a special mention of the efforts of Dr Prabir De, Coordinator, AIC for making the event possible.

Session I: Physical and Digital Connectivity

6. Speakers of Session I presented an overview of regional connectivity between India and Mekong countries. Participants emphasised the need of adequate logistics infrastructure for gaining competitive trade performance. Speakers also shared their national experiences related to scope and challenges in physical and digital connectivity. Participants called for setting up India-Mekong digital highway and suggested that Mekong countries should adopt the Indian model for strengthening digital connectivity. It was highlighted that India has covered almost 40 per cent of the country with fibre optic broadband network, connected almost 94 per cent of villages through different modes of telecommunications, implemented e-governance, e-post office, and promoted e-commerce in health, education, finance, transfer of funds and ITeS. Participants made several valuable suggestions for enhancing the digital connectivity in MGC such as highways with dock to install optical fibre, telecommunication export promotion, IT-enabled capacity building programmes for skill developments, etc. Participants suggested that the India's LoC of US\$ 1 billion can be utilised to promote digital connectivity between India and CLMV countries.
7. In case of physical connectivity, participants discussed the current status of the ongoing projects like Trilateral Highway and its extension to CLV, Trilateral Motor Vehicle Agreement (Trilateral MVA), Mekong-India Economic Corridor (MIEC), Kaladan Multimodal Transit Transport Project, etc. Participants also emphasised the importance of Border Haats to foster border connectivity and improve the well-being of people living on both sides of the border. It was brought out that the Border Economic Zones (BEZs) in Mekong subregion offer important lessons to enhance border connectivity in India and also between India and MGC. There was a view that the cross-border physical connectivity projects will bring seamless movement of passenger and cargo vehicles along highways linking India with Mekong subregion and strengthening infrastructure in NER will lead to establishment of a network of cross-border

production chains, particularly with Southeast Asia and Bangladesh. Participants suggested that the Trilateral Highway should follow a strict completion deadline. Besides, countries should set-up a task force for extension on Trilateral Highway; initiate trial run for passenger and cargo vehicles along the Trilateral Highway; strengthen the connectivity within the North-eastern region of India for improving connectivity with Mekong countries.

Session II: Trade, Investment and Value Chains

8. This session focused on the importance of trade and investment relations in MGC and also the potential scope of creation of regional value chains. Participants commented that the complementarities in goods and services between India and Mekong countries were an added impetus to building and strengthening cross-border regional production networks. Participants viewed that value chains should be created within India, particularly Northeastern region as it supports the overall cross-border trade relationship between India and Mekong. Participants also stressed that since all the Mekong countries were India's FTA partners under ASEAN-India FTA, there was no need for a separate FTA between India and Mekong countries. It was also brought out that there was a need to set-up a mechanism to monitor the BIMSTEC and MGC projects to avoid overlapping and that India could also help Mekong countries in IT-enabled products for agricultural related information and digital connectivity.
9. Participants addressed the major role of CLMV countries in engaging in regional value chains among ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) and raised concerns pertaining to India's low trade with CLMV countries. Participants emphasised that both India and Mekong countries had substantially high untapped trade and value chain potential, which remained unrealised due to barriers to trade and structural differences of the economies, among which some were intuitively policy barriers (such as tariff and non-tariff measures, etc.), whereas a large part of the barriers were related to issues such as remoteness and low connectivity, poor performance in ease of doing business, inadequate banking and financial instruments, etc. Speakers suggested that removal of non-tariff measures (NTMs), reduction of the trade costs with the help of WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA), strengthening connectivity, promote skills development, organising regional trade fairs, etc. would facilitate the trade.
10. Participants brought out that the investment environment in the MGC continues to improve, with Mekong countries and India reforming investment policies and introducing new measures that further promote FDI. It was highlighted that launch of the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) in 2015 and India's massive reforms in recent years have improved the investor sentiments with the result that several companies were planning to expand their presence in MGC. The participants were of the view that while there was a huge potential for FDI flows between India and Mekong countries, a supportive FDI environment was needed for the improvement of connectivity and value chains between India and Mekong countries and Mekong countries had to undertake policy measures to encourage participation of Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs), enhancement of skill, initiate business facilitation measures, etc.

Session III: Cultural Relations and People to People Contacts

11. This session focussed on the rich and glorious past of cultural and civilizational linkages that India and Mekong countries share with each other. Participants noted that the MGC initiative aims to facilitate closer contacts among the people inhabiting the world's two

major river basins – Mekong and Ganga and aims at developing closer relations and better understanding among the member countries to enhance friendship, solidarity and cooperation; facilitating movement of goods and people-to-people links, which are important pillars of MGC partnership. Participants also noted that the key areas of cooperation in MGC were tourism, culture, education, and transport and communications and suggested expanding the cooperation activities to newer areas. They were also of the view that focus should be given in understanding the historiography of North-eastern states of India and Mekong subregion since contiguity helps to bring people-to-people contacts and rejuvenate the cultural relations. Participants also emphasised on educational collaboration, where India can support Mekong by establishing IITs, training programmes in IT sectors, establish India study centre in Mekong countries and promote students and faculty exchange programmes.

12. Participants also shared country level experiences and the evolution of cultural and people-to-people interactions between India and Mekong countries. It was highlighted that Buddhism brought commonalities among MGC countries in cuisines, culture, medicines, arts, etc. Participants were of the view that in order to strengthen the cultural relations, there was a need to involve youth in the cultural projects. Participants put forth several suggestions to strengthen the cultural relations such as promoting continuous dialogue in common cultures; collaborating in archaeological excavation in India and Mekong countries sites; documenting the manuscripts; mapping inscriptions; promoting research on manuscript to find the common heritage; setting up general fund for cultural research through several stakeholders, networking on museums; promoting religious travel; implementing joint cultural programmes, promoting cultural tourism; making direct air links; etc.

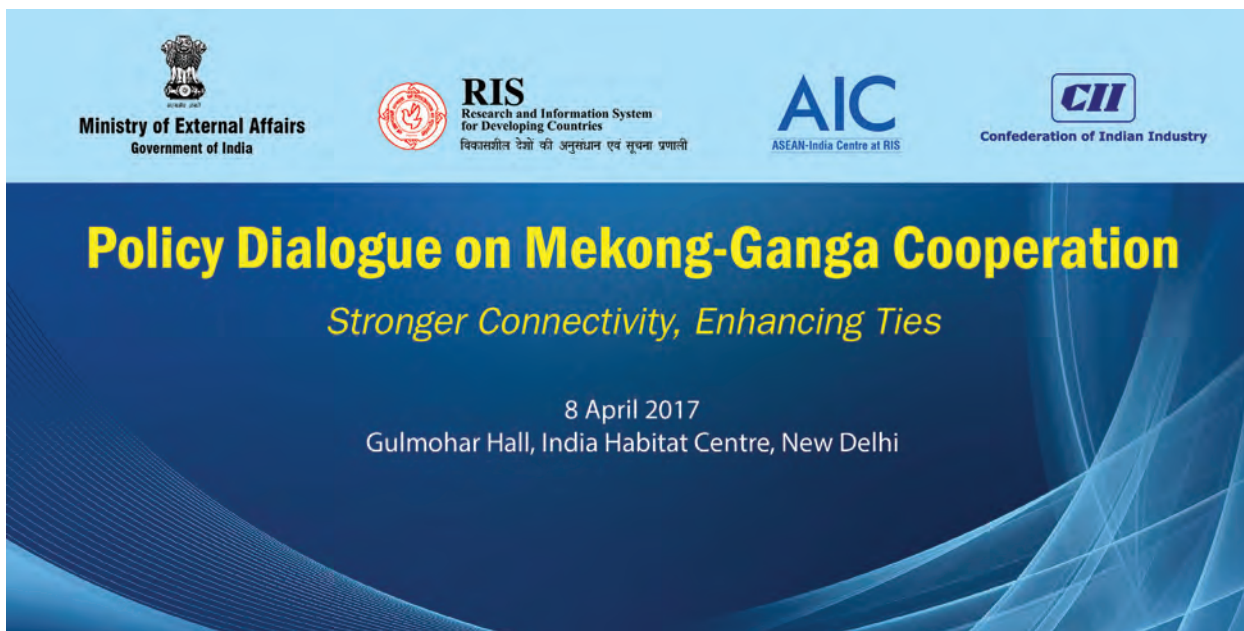
Session IV: Looking Ahead: Harnessing the Diversity, Building the Future

13. The last session focussed on the future of the MGC and was aimed at evolving a set of recommendations to enhance the partnership and set a policy agenda looking ahead. Participants agreed that there was a need to develop some initiatives in order to strengthen the partnership. Participants noted that the diversity of the region presented an opportunity for greater economic integration and given the scope for further integration between India and Mekong countries, there was a need for discussion on measures to strengthen multi-dimensional regional integration through cultural links, connectivity and economic ties. Participants highlighted that connectivity was desired at government to government, institution to institution at the policy level and industry to industry for better business linkages. They also noted that an inclusive approach to regional cooperation shall be the guiding principle of Mekong-Ganga Cooperation. Participants highlighted that North-eastern states of India needed to be well integrated through road connectivity since connecting the remote areas throughout MGC was very important for sustainable cooperation.
14. The Policy Dialogue on MGC countries called upon Mekong participating countries to:
 - actively conduct development cooperation projects under the India-ASEAN Plan of Action 2016-2018;
 - launch a MGC Cooperation Fund (MCF) with an initial capital of US\$ 10 million;
 - expand business investment and cooperation between SMEs and consider setting up a MGC Business Forum (MBF);

- facilitate training and capacity building programme for skill enhancement, since training and capacity building were important to manage the challenges in areas of management of disasters and water resource, non-traditional security issues, skill development, etc;
- strengthen the cultural relations and people to people contacts through exchange of parliamentarians, government officials, leaders of political parties, security officials and civil societies as this exchange of people will increase mutual trust and understanding;
- enhance cooperation against non-traditional security threats including terrorism, transnational crime and natural disasters and promote cooperation in addressing climate change impacts, human assistance, ensuring food, water and energy security;
- develop connectivity across the region and give focus on hardware and software sides of connectivity and consider building network of power grids, telecommunication and internet facility;
- raise the number of scholarship and fellowship with relatively longer duration under MGC programme offered by India;
- setting up a centre on water resource management to strengthen comprehensive cooperation in technical exchange, capacity building, drought and flood management, data and information sharing, conducting joint research and analysis related to Ganga-Mekong river resources;
- form a Mekong-Ganga Shipping Consortium (MGSC) and set-up a Maritime Development Fund (MDF);
- operate more direct flights between India and Mekong subregion in view of the Bilateral Air Services Agreement between India and the Mekong countries;
- open Chiang Mai as an alternate hub for passenger and air cargo;
- design a Master Plan of Connectivity between India and Mekong emerging economies;
- enhance the development cooperation offered by India to Mekong countries in view of the fact that MGC countries have been facing several social and economical challenges and importance of development assistance to mitigate such challenges;
- support India's ambitious digital connectivity project with Mekong subregion to promote medical assistance since the MGC countries needed sophisticated medical knowledge and plans to train local doctors, nurses and other medical staff and to promote basic research on infectious diseases;
- speed up the Trilateral Highway projects and set up a deadline for the completion of ongoing connectivity projects;
- form a Task Force to extend the Trilateral Highway to Cambodia, Lao PDR and Vietnam;
- promote Digital Highways with dock to install optical fibre and for future up gradation of digital technology;
- collaborate to present a collective and similar opinion in international organisations like International Maritime Organisation (IMO);
- pruning of the sensitivity and exclusion list for MGC countries by forming an expert group to review the ASEAN-India FTA;

- synchronise BIMSTEC and MGC projects to avoid overlaps;
 - establish a Network of Mekong-Ganga Think-Tanks to dedicate focused policy oriented research and provide policy inputs for MGC countries;
 - establish a MGC Women Empowerment Fund (MWEF) to help the women from Mekong sub-region to address various social challenges;
 - promote academic cooperation between researchers through joint historical and archaeological research initiatives and undertake joint research projects in the area of history and archaeology so as to strengthen the cultural connections and linkages through long-term academic partnerships with funding for joint cultural research being generated through several stakeholders;
 - promote continuous dialogue, debate and discussion on issues that highlight cultural diversity, multi-religious and plural nature of contacts in the MGC through museum exhibitions, gallery talks, etc;
 - strengthen tourism and religious travel, by producing popular literature/films on religious circuits and mythology across MGC;
 - networking of National Museums among MGC countries to exchange antiques and ideas and collaborate to organise exhibitions based on themes that can emulate India-Mekong cultural links;
 - conduct MGC Trade Fair;
 - develop Indian Textile Park in MGC countries;
 - publish updates on various cooperative activities being undertaken as part of MGC every year;
 - involve youth in MGC activities; and
 - organise the next MGC Policy Dialogue in Ganga or Mekong river basin area.
15. Towards the end, Dr. Prabir De, Coordinator, AIC summed up the proceedings of the day and gave the Vote of Thanks. The participants thanked the Ministry of External Affairs, AIC, RIS, CII for successfully hosting the Policy Dialogue and for the hospitality extended to the delegates.

Agenda



08.30 – 09.30

Registration

09.30-10.30

Inaugural Session

- Welcome Address by **Prof. Sachin Chaturvedi**, Director General, RIS
- Opening Address by **Amb. Hardeep Singh Puri**, Chairman, RIS
- Special Address by **Prof. Lokesh Chandra**, President, Indian Council of Cultural Relations (ICCR), New Delhi
- Special Address by **Dr. Dinesh Dua**, Vice Chairman, Pharmexcil, and Chief Executive Officer, Nectar Lifesciences Ltd.
[Release of AIC-RIS Report on *Mekong-Ganga Cooperation*]
- Keynote Address by **Amb. Preeti Saran**, Secretary (East), Ministry of External Affairs (MEA)
- Vote of Thank by **Ms Pooja Kapur**, Joint Secretary (ASEAN ML), Ministry of External Affairs (MEA)

10.30 – 11.00

Group Photo, and Tea and Coffee Break

11.00 – 12.30	Session 1: Physical and Digital Connectivity <i>Chair:</i> Mr. K L Thapar , Chairman, Asian Institute of Transport Development (AITD), New Delhi <i>Special Address:</i> Mr Shyamal Ghosh , Chairman, Telecom Equipment and Services Export Council (TEPC), New Delhi <i>Speakers:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dr. Ruth Banomyong, Director, Centre for Logistics Research, Thammasat Business School, Thammasat University, Bangkok • Mr. Chasouy Tantsavath, Department of Planning and Cooperation, Ministry of Public Work and Transport, Lao PDR • Mr. A D James, Dy. Secretary, Ministry of Road Transport and Highways (MoRTH), New Delhi & Mr Absar Alam, Consultant, Ministry of Road Transport and Highways (MoRTH), New Delhi • Prof. Amar Yumnam, Manipur University, Imphal • Mr. Anil Devli, CEO, Indian National Ship Owners' Association (INSA), Mumbai
12.30 – 13.30	Lunch Break
13.30 – 15.00	Session 2: Trade, Investment and Value Chains <i>Chair:</i> Amb. Rajiv Bhatia , Distinguished Fellow, Gateway House, Mumbai <i>Special Address:</i> H.E. Dr. Sok Siphana , Advisor to the Royal Government of Cambodia <i>Speakers</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • H.E. Mr Chutintorn Gongsakdi, Ambassador of Thailand to India • Mr. Sisamouth Keoxayya, Foreign Trade Policy Department, Ministry of Industry and Commerce, Lao PDR • Mr. Nguyen Phuc Nam, Deputy Director, Department of Asia -Pacific Markets, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Vietnam • Prof. Amita Batra, Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU), New Delhi • Ms. Amita Dang, Chief Manager, EXIM Bank, Delhi
15.00 – 15.15	Tea and Coffee Break

15.15 – 16.45	Session 3: Cultural Relations and People to People Contacts
	<p>Chair: Amb. Sudhir Devare, Chairman, RIS Research Advisory Council, New Delhi</p> <p><i>Special Address:</i> Mr. Shakti Sinha, Director, Nehru Memorial Museum and Library (NMML), New Delhi</p> <p><i>Speakers:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dr. Bui Hoai Son, Vice Director, Viet Nam National Institute of Culture and Arts Studies, Hanoi • Dr. Sudha Gopalakrishnan, Executive Director, Sahapedia, New Delhi • Dr. Sunil Shukla, Director, Entrepreneurship Development Institute of India (EDII), Ahmedabad • Mr. Subhash Goel, Member, National Tourism Advisory Council, Ministry of Tourism, Government of India, and Chairman, STIC Travel Group, New Delhi • Dr. Ishani Naskar, Associate Professor, Rabindra Bharati University, Kolkata
16.45 – 17.45	Session 4: Looking Ahead: Harnessing the Diversity, Building the Future
	<p>Chair: Amb. Sudhir Devare, Chairman, RIS Research Advisory Council, New Delhi</p> <p><i>Speakers:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mr. P D Rai, Member of Parliament (MP), India • H.E. Mr. Sok Siphana, Advisor to the Government of Cambodia (SOM Leader Cambodia) • Mr. Vincent Pala, Member of Parliament (MP), India • H.E. Mr. Kyaw Moe Tun, Director General, International Organization and Economic Department, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Myanmar (SOM Leader Myanmar) • H.E. Mr. Chutintorn Gongsakdi, Ambassador of Thailand to India (SOM Leader Thailand)
17.45 – 18.00	Summary, Concluding Remarks and Vote of Thanks by Dr. Prabir De , ASEAN-India Centre (AIC), New Delhi

Keynote Address



Ambassador Preeti Saran

Secretary (East), Ministry of External Affairs (MEA)
Government of India

Prof. Lokesh Chandra, President, ICCR;

Shri. Hardeep Singh Puri, Chairman, RIS;

Prof. Sachin Chaturvedi, Director General, RIS;

Dr. Dinesh Dua, Immediate Past Chairman, CII –Chandigarh;

MGC SOM Leaders;

Excellencies;

Distinguished Guests and

Ladies and Gentlemen;

1. It is my pleasure and privilege to be here today to deliver the keynote address at the first Policy Dialogue on Mekong-Ganga Cooperation on the theme “Stronger Connectivity, Enhancing Ties”. This Policy Dialogue is being held in fulfilment of the Minister of State for External Affairs, Gen. (Retd.) V.K. Singh’s announcement at the 7th Mekong-Ganga Cooperation Foreign Ministers Meeting in Vientiane, Lao PDR on 24 July 2016, to host a seminar to brainstorm on how to effectively build stronger connectivity and enhance our multi-dimensional ties under the Mekong Ganga Cooperation process.
2. As you know, the Mekong-Ganga Cooperation is an initiative of India and five Mekong countries (Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Thailand and Vietnam), launched in 2000 at Vientiane, Lao PDR for cooperation in tourism, culture, education, as well as transport and communications. Both the Ganga and the Mekong are civilizational rivers, and the MGC aims to build on the long-standing civilizational linkages between the peoples inhabiting these two major river basins.
3. In fact, India was amongst the first to recognize the viability of tapping into the Mekong identity of the countries to identify synergies in sectors which would benefit from sub-regional cooperation. The MGC is the first and the oldest among all the Mekong initiatives, those created by Japan, China, US and others have followed suit.

4. The 5 MGC countries are the core countries in India's relationship with the ASEAN as well, with which we celebrate the 25th anniversary this year. India has accorded high priority to economic engagement with the MGC countries, working towards establishing seamless physical and digital connectivity, as well as capacity building under the Initiative for ASEAN Integration and Narrowing the Development Gap.
5. Excellencies, connectivity is a huge enabler for development, for improving the quality of life of the people, for encouraging greater people-to-people exchanges, for stimulating trade and investments, and indeed for building peace, stability and security. The aim of today's Dialogue is to discuss new ideas and initiatives and learn from the experiences of Mekong-Ganga Cooperation partner countries with a view to augmenting our policy agenda for strengthening cooperation.
6. Over three sessions today, academicians and policy makers will be deliberating upon physical and digital connectivity including options to finance them; the challenges and opportunities for Mekong-Ganga Cooperation countries in the wake of the emerging economic architecture in the Asia Pacific region; and explore the civilisational and cultural links among the Mekong-Ganga Cooperation countries while touching on the key aspects of people-to-people contacts, with particular emphasis on health, education, tourism, etc. The final session will be forward looking, and focus on how to harness our diversity for our shared peace, prosperity and progress.
7. Enhancing transport and communication linkages, intra-regional supply chains, stronger financial links could boost economic engagement, fuel commerce and investment, speed up development partnership, and strengthen people to people contacts. To address this, a number of initiatives are under way for improving rail, road, water-ways and air connectivity with the region especially through Myanmar, which is our landbridge to the Mekong region.
8. We have made progress in implementing the India-Myanmar-Thailand Trilateral Highway project which would provide seamless connectivity from Moreh in Manipur to Mae Sot in Thailand via Myanmar. Likewise, work is in progress on the Kaladan Multimodal Transport Project which will provide a road and riverine link between Myanmar and Mizoram as well as connect Indian ports to Sittwe port in Myanmar. An extension of the Trilateral Highway to Cambodia, Lao PDR and Viet Nam is also under consideration. Negotiations on an India-Myanmar-Thailand Motor Vehicles Agreement are underway as well.
9. In order to further strengthen our connection, Prime Minister announced a Line of Credit of US\$1 billion to promote physical and digital connectivity projects between India and ASEAN at the 13th ASEAN-India Summit in Kuala Lumpur in November 2015. We have shared with MGC Countries, proposals for enhancing digital connectivity. These involve the setting up of a regional high-capacity fibre-optic network, supplemented by national rural broadband networks and digital villages in remote areas and we are hopeful of MGC Countries making use of the US\$1 billion Line of Credit towards making these proposals a reality.
10. To carry forward these proposals, the Telecom Equipment and Services Export Promotion Council (TEPC), set up by the Ministry of Commerce & Industry and Ministry of Communications & IT, Government of India, has prepared concept notes on each of these proposals including country specific proposals pertaining to Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, Vietnam, and Thailand. TEPC has been undertaking events and meetings in India and MGC countries to further sensitise all levels of stakeholders. TEPC led a delegation to Myanmar to

participate in 'Communicast Myanmar 2016' on 6-8 December 2016 and is planning visits to Cambodia, Laos, Vietnam and Thailand as well. Their representatives will be happy to meet you during your present visit, should you desire.

11. These proposals can serve to aid MGC Countries in achieving their strategic objectives under digital innovation by way of enabling adoption of technology by Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs); improving open data use; supporting enhance data management.
12. The trade relations between India and MGC countries are set to grow stronger with the coming into force of the ASEAN-India Free Trade Area in July 2015. Trade with the CLMV countries, in particular, grew from US\$1.5 billion to more than US\$10 billion in the last 10 years and I am optimistic that India would be able to partner in more trade initiatives with these countries to develop a strong India-CLMV vertical within the ASEAN market.
13. In order to help integrate our companies into the Regional Value Chains and Production Networks, we have operationalized a Rs.500 crore Project Development Fund (PDF) to facilitate Indian investments in the CLMV region. The PDF will be used to identify projects, and facilitate investments by Indian companies, in CLMV countries. The EXIM Bank of India is already in the process undertaking pre-feasibility studies on setting up of multi-speciality hospital, pulses and grains cultivation and processing facilities, pharma industrial parks, etc. in MGC countries towards using this fund.
14. India has extended preferential market access to Cambodia, Lao PDR and Myanmar since August 2008. India is also the only country to have waived fees for Business and Employment visas under Least Developed Country concessions to applicants from Lao PDR, Cambodia and Myanmar.
15. As part of our Market Access initiatives, we are encouraging organization of sector specific exhibitions/shows and holding regular buyer seller meets in the MGC countries. Recently we organised a Buyer Seller Meet-cum-exhibition in Myanmar on 28-29 March 2017, where we showcased our strengths in the healthcare verticals including pharmaceuticals, medical technology and health services.
16. I also understand that Confederation of Indian Industries would be opening offices in Myanmar and Viet Nam which would further assist intra-regional trade. CII also hosted the 4th India-CLMV Business Conclave in Jaipur in February 2017 which saw excellent participation from Ministers and representatives from all CLMV countries.
17. The Youth are our future and we are playing a major role in training the young people from MGC countries. Under the Initiative for ASEAN Integration -Narrowing the Development Gap, we have set up Centres for English Language Training in all CLMV countries and are in the process of setting up Centres of Excellence in Software Development and Training as well besides providing assistance in IT curriculum development and teachers training to CLMV countries, enhancing IT skills of the youth through provision of scholarships for ASEAN students, joint training programmes and courses, e-learning, seminars, workshops, exchange of visits of IT experts, etc.
18. We have also announced 50 new ITEC scholarships for MGC countries in areas of culture, tourism, engineering, management, teachers training, film directing, sound, lighting and stage management, over and above the 900 scholarships already given every year.

19. We are working assiduously to enhance socio-cultural and people-to-people contacts with ASEAN in general and with MGC countries in particular, through exchange programmes of students, diplomats, media, think tanks, farmers and Parliamentarians.
20. Our North East and the Mekong region share special ethnic and cultural affinities. I would like to share that we are in the process of commissioning a project for mapping of Indian inscriptions along Mekong river which would celebrate our peoples and civilisation, which are cradled and nurtured by two great rivers, the Mekong and the Ganga. I am also pleased to state that our flagship initiative, the MGC Asian Traditional Textiles Museum in Siam Reap, Cambodia is flourishing.
21. As you may be aware, 2017 is a special year. ASEAN is celebrating its golden jubilee and ASEAN and India are celebrating the silver jubilee of their dialogue partnership. A series of events have been planned throughout 2017 on the theme “Shared Values, Common Destiny.” Our celebrations span political, economic, cultural and people-to-people contacts, to culminate in a Commemorative Summit. A number of other activities are planned in the course of the year to give greater public visibility and engender multi-stakeholder involvement to our relationship. We hope all Mekong countries will participate enthusiastically in the various activities planned.
22. Today’s Policy Dialogue on Mekong-Ganga Cooperation is an important event among the commemorative activities planned to highlight our socio-cultural cooperation and people-to-people linkages. Among other things, we intend to bring together young fashion designers/ students from our region and task them with developing garments from textiles that depict our shared heritage such as Batik, Ikat, etc. This fashion ensemble would be showcased through travelling fashion shows that would visit cities in India and capitals of the ASEAN member states.
23. I would like to conclude by wishing you all a fruitful and productive dialogue. We will ensure that the outcomes of this Dialogue would feed into the MGC Foreign Ministers Meeting.

Thank You.

Special Address



H.E. Dr. Sok Siphana

Advisor to the Royal Government of Cambodia

Ambassador Rajiv Bhatia,
Dr. Prabir De,
Distinguished Guests,
Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am delighted to join you all at the **Policy Dialogue on Mekong – Ganga Cooperation (MGC)**. Let me express my appreciation to the Ministry of External Affairs and the ASEAN-India Centre for this initiative to organize this Dialogue. I am certain, listening to the previous speakers this morning, we can learn a lot from the experiences of India and the Mekong countries and hopefully we can be inspired to work together to formulate an actionable policy agenda for further strengthening the MGC. Let me also congratulate the AIC for playing an active role since 2013 in fostering dialogue and cooperation between ASEAN Member States and India. I wish to highlight that this year we are celebrating the 25th anniversary of ASEAN-India Dialogue Partnership, including 15 years of Summit Level interaction and 5 years of Strategic Partnership.

Today's conference theme of '*Stronger Connectivity, Enhancing Ties*' is very timely and relevant for India and the Mekong countries as there is clear sense of urgency to speed up the collaboration efforts under the MGC framework. I wish to recognize the successful outcome of the Seventh MGC Ministerial Meeting held last year in Vientiane, which has given an additional boost to the implementation of the MGC particularly in the area of trade, investments, and connectivity.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

We are now living in an interesting time. We have witnessed a bleak global economy that is being reshaped by forces, which are disrupting trade and industry structures, value chains and business models. The world is facing many challenges and undergoing great changes and profound adjustments: a new paradigm emerging with the rise of populism spreading wide and strong across the globe; a shift of a political trend toward nationalism and against globalization; the death of the TPP; the Brexit and its impact on the future of EU.

This year, Davos was confronted with a fundamental question: *'has Globalization really benefited everyone?'* Not all who came to Davos were convinced that capitalism has worked well for everyone. Instead, there seem to be the return to the criticism that globalization and free trade will only benefit the rich-man club.

Ladies and Gentlemen! Not all is so bleak! At least in our part of the world, the free trade spirit is still intact and strong. The Asia-Pacific region has been witnessing efforts at fostering new regional trade integration arrangements such as the *Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP)*. Equally important is the changing regional economic landscape toward deeper integration and greater connectivity: the Greater Mekong Sub-region is increasingly integrated; ASEAN has markedly achieved deeper regional integration through the *ASEAN Economic Community (AEC)*; the rise of China as a global economic power along with its recently launched the *'One Belt One Road (OBOR) Initiative'* and the associated mechanism like the *Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB)*; India's *'Look East Policy'* that has matured into a dynamic and action oriented *'Act East Policy'*, all these would also have profound implications for regional and sub-regional development. I believe, all these factors will significantly impact the trade and the future course of development of MGC countries.

There is a good trend that companies from Japan, United States, European Union, South Korea, Australia and even China are looking for cost and production efficiencies. Given the Mekong countries' strategic location in the fast-growing East Asian region, these present tremendous opportunities for their industrial sector to diversify and upgrade value chains.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

According to World Bank and OECD research, Global Value Chain (GVC)-driven policies have been shown to drive productivity growth, create jobs and improve living standards. East Asia is the region with the highest level of GVC participation. Advanced economies such as Japan and Korea often produced parts and components and then exported to emerging economies such as China, Thailand, Vietnam and Cambodia to assemble into finished products and export to global markets. Such an intensity and dynamics of intra-regional trade make the region known as *'Factory Asia'*.

So what exactly are GVCs and are they the solution that India and the Mekong Countries are looking for to advance their trade and investment agenda? To what extent are the Mekong Countries integrated into GVCs? What are challenges for Mekong Countries in the context of GVCs dynamics?

Indeed, there is clear and convincing evidence that GVCs can speed up industrialization, growth and development. But not all GVCs are equally complex or widespread, nor are they easily captured in a simple flowchart; their technical characteristics and distribution may and does evolve over time. There is also the divergent socio-economic conditions between Mekong Countries and India, which can become either a strength or a weakness in a formation of various value chains. GVCs total participation index of Mekong Countries differs from country to country. Countries with low total participation index indicates that they have a limited integration in the global economy. It means they rely more on raw materials supplied to and processed further by other countries within the global value chains. According to global value chain data, Cambodia's global value chains participation index is 49 percent, slightly lower than Vietnam. Thailand have the highest degree of participation among ASEAN countries. Due to these divergent socio-economic conditions between Mekong Countries, the success of the GVC implementation will highly depend on the political and socio-economic realities of the respective member countries.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

The good thing about GVCs is that individual members of the Mekong Countries do not need to undertake the full range of value chains. They can take part in particular tasks or activities or functions in which they have comparative and competitive advantages.

The remarkable success of Cambodia's garment and footwear industry is a typical example of successful integration in global value chains. As well as a key driver of strong and sustained growth, Cambodia's participation in garment and apparel value chains has contributed to the increase in wage employment that absorb much of productive labour force from rural areas. Cambodia's GVCs are increasingly integrating electronics, automatic components and vehicles sectors.

To some extent, Cambodia's garment and apparel value chains have contributed to the notable socio-economic progress of the country. Such high level of sustained growth has earned Cambodia a place in the World Bank category known as '*Olympian of Growth*'. The progress also lifted per capita income from just USD 248 in 1994 to the level that moves the country from the lower income country to lower-middle income country (at USD 1307 in 2016). Over the same period, the economy has rapidly industrialised; the industrial sector accounted for 28.9 per cent of GDP in 2016, a sharp increase from 13.5 per cent in 1994.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

From its inception, the MGC initiative aims at developing closer economic relations among the member countries. Their Ministers have highlighted long ago their objectives with regards to facilitating movement of goods and people in the region; creating necessary infrastructural facilities in the Ganga-Mekong basin areas; and building value chains in the region. I must admit that the MGC has not matured to the extent that it was originally envisaged; its speed has been slow and uneven. Having said, as an optimist and a pragmatist, I am still of the view that we have taken our time to build our foundation. Slow pace indeed, but on solid foundation of trust, sincerity and understanding.

Furthermore, I would like to believe that this solid sub-regional foundation will enable us to take good advantage of the many recent regional and global developments.

First and foremost, the Mekong countries are an integral part of ASEAN and India is one of the strategic partners of ASEAN. With a total population of 1.8 billion and a combined GDP of some USD3.8 trillion, ASEAN and India together form an important economic space in the world. Presently, ASEAN has grown to be India's fourth largest trading partner after China, the European Union and the United States. The ASEAN-India Free Trade Area has been completed with the entering into force of the ASEAN-India Agreements on Trade in Service and Investments in 2015.

Investment flows are also substantial both ways, with ASEAN accounting for approximately 12.5% of investment flows into India since 2000. FDI inflows into India from ASEAN between 2000 to 2016 was about USD49 billion, while FDI outflows from India to ASEAN countries, from 2007 to 2015, was about USD38 billion.

Second, with the realization of the AEC last January 2016 and the RCEP negotiations in full swing, ASEAN and India are poised to become another economic block powerhouse of Asia. The eminent conclusion of the RCEP would deepen integration among the member countries, while promoting goods and services trade, investment, the IT sector, competition, dispute settlement, and altogether facilitate the creation of many GVCs. While awaiting for the RCEP to be realized, ASEAN has already abolished intra-regional tariffs under the ASEAN Trade in Goods Agreement (ATIGA), which was a good starting point for creating opportunities for GVCs to flourish throughout the region.

Third, India's 'Act East Policy' has placed renewed emphasis on its Eastern neighbours with focus on countries in East and Southeast Asia. India's announcement of a Line of Credit of USD 1 billion to promote projects that support physical and digital connectivity between India and ASEAN and a Project Development Fund of about USD73 million to develop manufacturing hubs in CLMV countries are clear indication of India's commitment.

Fourth, transport connectivity is an important component of physical connectivity. Two major initiatives come to mind: (i) the proposed protocol of the India-Myanmar-Thailand Motor Vehicle Agreement (IMT MVA). I understand that a consensus has been reached. This agreement, when implemented, will have a critical role in realizing seamless movement of passenger, personal and cargo vehicles along roads linking India, Myanmar and Thailand; (ii) the extension to India-Myanmar-Thailand Trilateral Highway (IMTTH) to Cambodia, Lao PDR and Viet Nam is also under consideration. *Ladies and Gentlemen*, when all these initiatives become a reality, you can imagine a highway, a vibrant economic corridor full of life, that will take you from Vietnam to Cambodia, Thailand, Myanmar right up to East Asia.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

The diversity of the Mekong countries and India presents an opportunity for greater strategic partnership. India plays an increasingly greater role as a growth centre of the world and an attractive destination for foreign direct investment. Aside from having a huge domestic market with a growing aspirational middle class, India is also a world leader in the IT sector and there are huge opportunities for Mekong countries to forge a deep relationship with India.

For India, Mekong countries occupies a significant position in global trade flows and are considered to be a growing hub for consumer demand. Focusing on trade in services with Mekong countries will give India an opportunity to use its competitive strength to become a services export hub for the ASEAN region as a whole. In sum, a stronger engagement with Mekong countries will give a major boost to India's stature in ASEAN.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

No great initiatives comes without great challenges. GVCs are essentially the practice of vertical integration in which the various stages of a production process are located across multiple countries in order to minimise marginal costs. In other words, a product may undertake multiple 'value-adding' stages across borders before reaching the final market. As such this process, which applies both for imports as well as exports, is dependent on efficient and inexpensive transportation of raw materials and intermediate inputs. GVCs thrive in countries with open borders.

As such Mekong countries involved would need to have a clear policy and strategy to align with global supply chains. Also key to value chains participation are policies that promote deep integration including *trade and investment openness, trade facilitation, service liberalization, competition policy, intellectual property protection and dispute settlement*. I am proud that Cambodia is among the most open economies not just in the Mekong region but in ASEAN.

Other impediments to trade such as lack of adequate trade finance and appropriate financial instruments such as lines of credit, up-to-date modern manufacturing facilities, limited skill gaps have to be addressed in advance. In sum, private sector competitiveness would be a big issue going forward since most of Mekong Countries have small and medium sized companies (SMEs).

As such, India and Mekong countries should seek actively to tackle the real challenge, that is to integrate SMEs into regional value chains: how to help them build the required capacity to navigate the complicated GVC process.

In my country, the Royal Government of Cambodia has adopted in 2015 its '*Industrial Development Policy 2015-25: Market Orientation and Enabling Environment for Industrial Development*' (IDP). The Government's vision is ambitious – to transform and modernise Cambodia's industrial structure from labour-intensive industry to a skill-driven industry, through connecting to regional and global value chains; integrating regional production networks and developing interconnected production clusters along with efforts to strengthen competitiveness and enhance productivity of domestic industries; and moving towards technology-driven and knowledge-based industry.

The IDP is fully coherent with other key government policy instruments: (i) the *Rectangular Strategy III*, in which transport and logistics sector are identified as one of four key pillars; (ii) the *National Strategic Development Plan 2014-18*, which has imbedded the Master Plan for Transport Infrastructure Development; and (iii) the *Cambodia Trade Integration Strategy 2014-18*, which envisages the creation of a National Logistics Blueprint and reforms in customs, including the establishment of the National Single Window system and its integration into the ASEAN Single Window.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let me share with you now a few ideas on how I see the Mekong countries and India could move forward to ensure the success of its GVCs.

First, by committing to GVCs, Mekong countries would send a strong signal to the investment community that it is open for business. But participation in GVCs cannot be a single country endeavour. All Mekong countries must work together to eliminate distortions to trade to enable the sub-region to shine as a participant in GVCs. They should also leverage off existing ASEAN regional value chains as a way to enhance GVC participation.

Second, I am convinced that GVCs can provide Mekong countries with the opportunity to take on a more ambitious domestic policy reform agenda to remove market access barriers and implement a sound regulatory framework that enables foreign companies to operate in a transparent and non-discriminatory environment. The bottom line is that open, predictable and transparent trade and investment regimes are necessary for successful GVCs. In other words, GVCs do not work well with discriminatory trade policies and non-tariff barriers.

Third, for the GVCs to be successful, Mekong countries should develop greater co-operation in term of institutional and regulatory framework at three levels – (i) government to government, (ii) among industry associations and (iii) among businesses. They should also be open minded to reach out for synergy with other mega initiatives such as the One Belt, One Road initiative.

Fourth, on a more micro level, Mekong countries need to speed up the operationalization of its respective National Single Window so that the ASEAN Single Window can be fully functional. This would allow firms to submit all required import, export and transit documentation via a single electronic gateway. Other ASEAN ongoing initiatives would surely bring benefits to the Mekong Countries for developing its GVCs, such as the regional self-certification scheme that would enable exporters to self-certify the compliance of their exports with ATIGA's rules of origin. Similar efforts need to be done to upgrade their standards to comply or best to harmonize with ASEAN and other international standards through more mutual recognition agreements.

Fifth, the availability and quality of overall human capital in terms of skilled workforce and knowledge capital are also critical to value chains. The impressive industrialization and sustained economic growth of East Asian economies or known as ‘the East Asia Miracle’ is in part due to the ability of these economies to achieve superior accumulation of physical and human capital. Mekong countries should work closely with India to undertake functional upgrading throughout the whole value chain process, that is from manufacturing activities where process and product upgrading naturally takes place toward concept, R&D, design, branding or/and toward distribution, marketing or sales and after service.

Sixth, I am of the view that India and Mekong countries should seriously consider developing its own value chain, by undertaking functional upgrading and brand manufacturing niches in their respective countries. For this purpose, they should support the development of market intelligence center to provide information for its member countries to gain understanding of demand characteristics and consumer needs in various markets.

In conclusion, *Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen*, by realizing the India-Mekong Countries GVCs, new business opportunities will be widely open for its member countries to fully enjoy the benefits of the AEC, to improve their respective competitiveness, and to capture over time more domestically created value added content activities.

I would like to again stress that to achieve our ambitious goals of moving up the value chains, it will require an unprecedented level of coordination and cooperation between key agencies and ministries, the private sector, our development partners, research community and educational institutions. The policy dialogue that is held today is such a good initiative and we should encourage more of these sorts of events to take place in the various Mekong countries. It is on that positive and optimistic note that I bring my remarks to a close. I thank you for your attention!

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Resumes of Speakers

INAUGURAL SESSION

SACHIN CHATURVEDI



Prof. Sachin Chaturvedi is Director General at the Research and Information System for Developing Countries (RIS), a New Delhi-based autonomous Think-Tank. He was also a Global Justice Fellow at the MacMillan Center for International Affairs at Yale University. He works on issues related to development cooperation policies and South-South cooperation. He has also worked on trade and innovation linkages with special focus on WTO. Dr. Chaturvedi has served as a Visiting Professor at the Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) and has also worked as consultant to the UN Food and Agriculture Organization, World Bank, UN-ESCAP, UNESCO, OECD, the Commonwealth Secretariat, IUCN, and to the Government of India's Department of Biotechnology and the Ministry of Environment and Forests, among other organizations. He has been a Developing Country Fellow at the University of Amsterdam (1996), Visiting Fellow at the Institute of Advanced Studies, Shimla (2003), and Visiting Scholar at the German Development Institute (2007). His experience includes working at the University of Amsterdam on a project on International Development Cooperation and Biotechnology for Developing Countries supported by the Dutch Ministry of External Affairs. Dr. Chaturvedi has also been a member of the IGSAC Committee of Experts for evolving a framework for cooperation on conservation of biodiversity in the SAARC region, as well as a member of the Editorial Board of Biotechnology Development Monitor (the Netherlands); Editor of *Asian Biotechnology Development Review* (New Delhi). He has authored two books and edited four books apart from publishing several research articles in various prestigious journals.

HARDEEP SINGH PURI



Ambassador Hardeep Singh Puri presently is Chairman of the Research and Information System for Developing Countries (RIS). Amb. Puri is a 1974 batch Indian Foreign Service officer who served as the Permanent Representative of India to the United Nations from 2009 to 2013. He formerly served as Chairman of United Nations Security Council Counter-Terrorism Committee, Vice President of International Peace Institute and Secretary-General of Independent Commission on Multilateralism in New York. Amb. Hardeep Singh Puri was born in Delhi. He pursued Bachelor's and Postgraduate study at Hindu College, University of Delhi, and worked as a Lecturer at St. Stephen's College, Delhi. Puri has been stationed at important diplomatic posts in Brazil, Japan, Sri Lanka, and the United Kingdom. Between 1988 and 1991, he was the Coordinator of the UNDP/UNCTAD Multilateral Trade Negotiations Project to help developing countries in the Uruguay Round of Multilateral Trade Negotiations. He also served as the Chairman of the United Nations Security Council Counter-Terrorism Committee from January 2011 to February 2013, and as President of the United Nations Security Council in August 2011 and November 2012. He has joined the International Peace Institute as a Senior Advisor in June 2013.

LOKESH CHANDRA



Prof. Lokesh Chandra presently is the President of Indian Council for Cultural Relations from 27th October, 2014, has been appointed by Hon'ble President of India. Prof. Chandra is the Honorary Director of the International Academy of Indian Culture, a premier research institution for Asian cultures. In the past, he has held several important positions including Chairman of Indian Council for Historical Research, Vice President of Indian Council for Cultural Relations. He has been Member of Parliament (Rajya Sabha) for two terms from 1974-80 and 1980-86. In 2006, he was awarded 'Padma Bhushan', one of the most prestigious civilian honours, by the Government of India in recognition to his contributions to the academic life and public discourse. He has to his credit 596 works and text editions. Among them are classics like Tibetan-Sanskrit Dictionary, Materials for a History of Tibetan Literature, Buddhist Iconography of Tibet, and his Dictionary of Buddhist Art in 15 volumes. He has recently written Buddhism Across the Grasslands of Chinggis Khan on Indo-Mongolian relations, Lord Giva and Buddha in the Golden Isles on Indonesia, and Cultural Interflow between India and Japan. At the moment he is writing on the cultural exchanges of the last two millenia between India and China. These volumes cover the researches of Chandra on the art and archaeology, literature and philosophy of the Buddhist cosmopolis.

DINESH DUA



Dr. Dinesh Dua is presently the Chief Executive Officer & Whole Time Director of Nectar Life sciences Ltd. – a US\$ 300 Million company in Pharmaceuticals & Phytochemicals. Immediately prior to NLL, he was Managing Director of Akorn India Pvt. Ltd., 100% owned subsidiary of Akorn Inc., USA. Dr. Dua holds a Masters in Business Management - 1979 batch from the Indian Institute of Management Ahmedabad. He has over 37 years of professional experience across varied industries such as Healthcare, Pharmaceuticals, Agrochemicals, Petrochemicals and Consumer goods, having worked in multinational organizations such as Hoechst (Sanofi Aventis) & Berger Paints, and in leadership positions in large Indian Corporates like Reliance, Jubilant Organosys, Zydus Cadila Healthcare & Wockhardt Ltd. He is the Immediate Past Chairman of Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) Chandigarh Council, one of the major Industry Associations of India. He is also a visiting faculty to leading & reputed Management institutes in India.

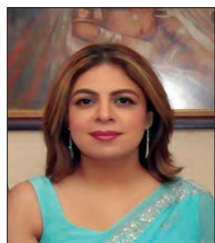
PREETI SARAN



Ambassador Preeti Saran has been a member of Indian Foreign Service since 1982. She is presently Secretary (East), Ministry of External Affairs, India. Previous assignments include, Ambassador of India to the Socialist Republic of Vietnam (September 2013 – February 2016), Consul General of India, Toronto (November 2008 – August 2013), Joint Secretary (SAARC/North), Ministry of External Affairs, New Delhi (November 2005 – November 2008), Counsellor/Minister, Permanent Mission of India, Geneva (August 2002 – November 2005), Counsellor (Press), Embassy of India, Cairo (August 1999-July 2002), Deputy Secretary / Director (Establishment) /

East Asia, Ministry of External Affairs, New Delhi (March 1994-July 1999), Second Secretary/First Secretary & Head of Chancery, High Commission of India, Dhaka (March 1989-June 1992), Under Secretary (ICCR/AMS), Ministry of External Affairs, New Delhi (January 1986-February 1989), Third Secretary/Second Secretary (Culture), Embassy of India, Moscow (January 1984-December 1985).

POOJA KAPUR



Ms. Pooja Kapur is an Indian Foreign Service officer of the 1996 batch, who is currently posted as Joint Secretary (ASEAN Multilateral) in the Ministry of External Affairs, New Delhi. Ms. Kapur was a Chevening scholar at the Oxford University. She has a Masters degree in Public Administration from the prestigious *Ecole Nationale d'Administration* in Paris as well as a Masters in Political Science from the University of Delhi. A university topper and recipient of several scholarships and academic awards, she is a published author.

Ms. Kapur has previously served as Minister/Counsellor in charge of the European Union, Environment, Education, Culture and Consular affairs at the Indian Embassy to the EU, Belgium and Luxembourg; as Counsellor (Press, Information, Culture and Community Affairs) at the Indian High Commission in Kuala Lumpur, as the Economic and Political Counsellor/ First Secretary at the Indian High Commission in London and as Second Secretary (Political) at the Indian Embassy in Paris. She has also held charges pertaining to India's relationship with Western Europe, South East Asia, the United Nations and the Commonwealth in the Ministry of External Affairs. Ms. Kapur maintains a keen interest in international politics. She was instrumental in setting up of the Indian Cultural Centre in Kuala Lumpur in 2009-10 and in organising the Europalia-India festival in Europe in 2013-14, which was the largest Festival of India to be held abroad in recent years. Ms Kapur has served on the Advisory Boards of several India-focussed groupings such as the UK-India Business Council's Next Generation Network; University of Greenwich's Centre for Indian Business; South East England Regional Development Agency's India Board; and the Indian Maritime Association, London.

SESSION 1: PHYSICAL AND DIGITAL CONNECTIVITY

K L THAPAR



Mr. K L Thapar is the Chairman of Asian Institute of Transport Development (AITD), New Delhi. AITD is an independent, not-for-profit organization devoted to capacity building, non-partisan research and regional cooperation in infrastructure sector with special focus on transport, trade and logistics. The Institute aims at promoting balanced, efficient, equitable and sustainable development. It also fosters regional cooperation and partnership, promotes human resource development and harmonisation of technologies for enhancing welfare.

SHYAMAL GHOSH



Mr. Shyamal Ghosh IAS, a 1965-batch Gujarat cadre IAS officer has taken charge as Chairman of Telecom Equipment & Services Export Promotion Council (TEPC), a body promoted by the Department of Telecom and Department of Commerce and promoted by TEMA. He holds Bachelor of Arts (Hons.) Degree in Economics from Scottish Church College, Calcutta, securing first position in the College, and Master's Degree in Economics, from Calcutta University securing second position in the University. He was also awarded Parvin Fellowship by Princeton University for the MPA programme of Woodrow Wilson School. He was Chairman of Telecom Commission and Secretary, Department of Telecommunications, Government of India and has served in various capacities including Secretary, Department of Electronics, DGFT, Administrator USOF, Secretary Textiles. He was also Chairman of Data Security Council of India and India Broadband Forum. Mr. Ghosh is known as an able administrator and responsible for implementation of the New Telecom Policy of 1999, taking initiative for drafting the Information Technology Act 2000 and initially proposing creation of Information Super Highway in India in 1997.

RUTH BANOMYONG



Dr. Ruth is currently an associate professor at the Department of International Business, Logistics and Transport Management at the Faculty of Commerce & Accountancy (a.k.a Thammasat Business School), Thammasat University in Thailand. He received his PhD in 2001, in the field of International Logistics within the Logistics & Operations Management Section (LOMS) at Cardiff Business School (UK). He was the winner of the James Cooper Cup in 2001 for the best PhD dissertation in logistics from the Chartered Institute of Logistics & Transport (CILT) in the United Kingdom. In 2016, he received the prize of Supply Chain Educator of the Year by Supply Chain Asia, Singapore. Ruth's main research interests are in the field of multimodal transport, international logistics, logistics development policy and supply chain performance measurements. He has published over 90 papers and reports in such journals as International Journal of Physical Distribution and Logistics Management, International Journal of Logistics Research and Application, Asia Pacific Journal of Marketing and Logistics, Journal of Applied Sciences, Maritime Policy and Management, among others, and he has co-authored 10 books. Since 1995, Ruth has been a consultant for international agencies such as the United Nations Conference on Trade & Development (UNCTAD), the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UN-ESCAP), The World Bank, The Asian Development Bank (ADB), The Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN), etc.

CHASOUY TANTSAVATH



Mr. Chasouy Tantsavath is with the Department of Planning and Cooperation, Ministry of Public Work and Transport, Lao PDR

ABSAR ALAM



Mr. Absar Alam is a Consultant with the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways, Government of India and is providing technical assistance on connectivity projects. Mr Alam is also a Consultant to the Asian Development Bank (ADB) on its regional cooperation and transport facilitation related initiatives. He was with the Asian Institute of Transport Development (AITD), a think tank having special consultative status with the United Nations. He has also worked as Economist with RITES Ltd. (under the aegis of Ministry of Railways).

His areas of consulting and research include transport economics, regional cooperation and trade and transport facilitation. His works include BIMSTEC Transport and Logistics Study-Update for ADB. The study focussed on prioritisation of connectivity related soft and hard projects covering all the modes of transport for transport and trade facilitation among member countries of BIMSTEC.

AMAR YUMNAM



Prof. Amar Yumnam was awarded Ph.D. from the Centre of Advanced Study in Economics, University of Mumbai in 1986. Presently, he is a Professor in the Department of Economics, Manipur University. He has been to France and Russia as Exchange Scholar. A Senior Fulbright Scholar at the University of Southern California, Los Angeles, USA during 2006-07. Travel frequently to South East and East Asia on Academic and International Economic Policy related matters. Yumnam has delivered a few invited Lectures including at the Mahidol University,

Bangkok, JNU and Sambalpur University. He has been part of international consultation Team of the World Bank and JETRO, Japan.

ANIL DEVL



A lawyer by profession, Mr. Anil Devli has notched several milestones in his career in the shipping industry spanning 20 years. He is presently the Chief Executive Officer of Indian National Shipowners' Association, (INSA). He is also a practicing maritime arbitrator, a recognized consultant/sector specialist on Indian coastal shipping with various consulting firms and an active representative for the shipping industry in his personal capacity. His achievements include, set up and expanded operations of a mid-sized Indian flag shipping company

(1992-2008), pioneered coastal container transshipment in India (1998-1999), pioneered intermodal domestic transportation using land-sea-land route, a business model which came to be followed by several Indian flag container operators(2001), actively pursued the signing of the Indo-Pak maritime treaty for carriage of containerized cargo on Indian flag ships to Pakistan (2005), past president, Container Shipping Lines Association of India (2007-2008) and past director, Indian National Shipowners' Association (1998-2009).

SESSION 2: TRADE, INVESTMENT AND VALUE CHAINS

RAJIV BHATIA



Ambassador Rajiv Bhatia is a Distinguished Fellow, Foreign Policy Studies Programme at Gateway House. As Director General of the Indian Council of World Affairs (ICWA) from 2012-15, he played a key role in strengthening India's Track-II research and outreach activities. During a 37-year innings in the Indian Foreign Service (IFS), he served as Ambassador to Myanmar and Mexico and as High Commissioner to Kenya and South Africa. He dealt with a part of South Asia, while posted as Joint Secretary in the Ministry of External Affairs. A prolific columnist, he also delivers lectures on foreign policy issues in India and abroad. He was Senior Visiting Research Fellow during 2011-13 at the Institute of Southeast Asian Studies (ISEAS), Singapore. He holds a Masters degree in political science from Allahabad University. His book *India-Myanmar Relations: Changing Contours* (Routledge) has received critical acclaim.

SOK SIPHANA



Since 2009, Dr. Sok is the Managing Partner of SokSiphana & Associates, a law firm he restarted in 2009 in Phnom Penh, Cambodia. He was also appointed concurrently as Advisor of the Royal Government of Cambodia attached to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, to the Supreme National Economic Council and to the Council for the Development of Cambodia with rank of Minister. Since 2011 he has served as Board Chairman of Cambodia Development Resource Institute (CDRI), Cambodia's oldest and prominent independent research institute. Previously he served as Director at the International Trade Center (ITC) UNCTAD/WTO in Geneva (2005-2009) and Secretary of State (Vice Minister) of the Ministry of Commerce (1999-2005). Dr. Sok hosts also a 45-minute weekly talk show on the SouthEast Asia Television (SEATV) called "Cambodia's Global Dialogue", which is a dialogue with local and international personalities on global and regional issues and their impact on Cambodia. He is holder of a Juris Doctor from Widener University School of Law in Delaware, United States (1992) and a Ph.D. from Bond University School of Law in Queensland, Australia (2009). Since 2015, he is pursuing another doctoral program on Comparative Laws at the University of Paris II, Pantheon-Assas.

CHUTINTORN GONGSAKDI



H.E. Mr. Chutintorn Gonsakdi is Ambassador of Thailand to India. He was earlier the Director General, Department of International Economic Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Thailand and Deputy Director General, Department of International Organizations, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Thailand. Mr. Gonsakdi was also Deputy Director General, Department of ASEAN Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Thailand, Minister and Deputy Permanent Representative, Permanent Mission of Thailand to the World Trade Organization (WTO), Geneva; Special Assistant to the Executive Director, Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Secretariat, Singapore. He did his Master of International Studies at the University of Birmingham, UK, and Bachelor of Commerce and Administration (Economics) (Honours) at Victoria University, Wellington, New Zealand.

SISAMOUTH KEOXAYYA



Mr. Sisamouth Keoxayya is from Department of Planning and Cooperation, Ministry of Industry and Commerce, Lao PDR

NGUYEN PHUC NAM



Mr. Nguyen Phuc Nam is Deputy Director, Department of Asia-Pacific Markets, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Vietnam.

AMITA BATRA



Dr. Amita Batra is Professor of Economics in the Centre for South Asian Studies, School of International Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU), New Delhi. Previously, she Senior Fellow, Indian Council for Research on International Economic Relations (ICRIER), New Delhi, and prior to that, Reader, University of Delhi. Prof. Batra was the first holder of the ICCR Professorial Chair in Contemporary Indian Studies at the Centre for South Asian Studies & Edinburgh-India Institute, University of Edinburgh (January-May 2013). In 2008, Prof. Batra was Visiting Professor at the Indian Institute of Management (IIM)-Ahmedabad, where she taught a course on 'International Economic and Political Environment'. She has worked extensively in the area of regional trade and economic integration with a special focus on Asia. Her most recent Book on the subject is titled 'Regional Economic Integration in South Asia: Trapped in Conflict?' (London: Routledge, 2013). She also has to her credit two other books – Preferential Trading Agreements in Asia: Towards an Asian Economic Community (ed), 2008 and India and the Asian Corridor (Co-authored, 2007) She has contributed several research papers published in national and international refereed and other journals, books etc. She has also worked as consultant on research assignments including for the Sigur Centre for Asian Studies, George Washington University, Washington DC; Samsung Economic Research Institute, Seoul, Korea; and the World Bank's New Delhi Office, among others.

AMITA DANG



Ms. Amita Dang is Chief Manager, EXIM Bank, New Delhi. She has completed post graduate in banking and finance from NIBM, Pune and Chartered Associate of Indian Institute of Banker (CAIIB). She has about 11 years of experience in banking in the area of international trade finance. She is currently responsible for the Bank's activities in South and Southeast Asia covering Lines of Credit extended on behalf of the Government of India. Prior to this, she has handled commercial lending to support the internationalisation of Indian companies for 7 years. She also has a successful stint in commercial banking at Dena Bank.

SESSION 3: CULTURAL RELATIONS AND PEOPLE TO PEOPLE CONTACTS

SUDHIR DEVARE



Ambassador Devare has served in the Indian missions in Moscow, Washington D.C., Myanmar, Frankfurt and Geneva. He was the Permanent Secretary with the Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India from 1998 to 2001, where he was closely associated with India's 'Look- East' Policy initiative with the Asia-Pacific. Ambassador Devare has also served as India's Ambassador to South Korea, Ukraine and Indonesia and has been a visiting professor at the Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) and the Chairman of RIS Research Advisory Council, New Delhi. He was also the Director General of the Indian Council of World Affairs (ICWA), one of India's oldest think-tanks. Ambassador Devare is also a Fellow at the Weatherhead Center for International Affairs, Harvard University, USA. He has authored and edited books, and written extensively on India's relations with Southeast and East Asian nations. He has also authored papers in the field of economic diplomacy, which have been published in various national and international journals.

SHAKTI SINHA



Mr. Shakti Sinha is the Director at the Nehru Memorial Museum & Library (Teen Murti), New Delhi. He is also a Distinguished Fellow at the Institute for National Security Studies Sri Lanka. He was in the Indian Administrative Service from 1979 to 2013, when he took voluntary retirement. He has held positions at different levels at the Union, State and District levels, including as private secretary / joint secretary to Prime Minister (Vajpayee), principal finance secretary in Delhi government, chief secretary of the Andaman government and others. Internationally, he headed the United Nation's governance & development team in Afghanistan (2006-09) coordinating donor support to the Afghan government, and was earlier Senior Advisor to Executive Director on the Board of the World Bank (2000-2004). Mr Sinha has worked at think tanks in India (Director, India Foundation; Director, South Asian Institute for Strategic Affairs; Visiting Senior Fellow, Observer Research Foundation) and Singapore (Institute of South Asian Studies) and written many book chapters, working papers, briefs, columns etc on political economy & governance of India, Indian foreign policy & strategic affairs, Chinese economy and politics, and on Afghanistan, for global and Indian publications.

BUI HOAI SON



Dr. Bui Hoai Son is Vice Director of the Viet Nam National Institute of Culture and Arts Studies, Hanoi

SUDHA GOPALAKRISHNAN



Dr. Sudha Gopalakrishnan is presently Executive Director of Sahapedia, an open, online encyclopedic resource on Indian cultures and the arts. She was the founder director of India's National Mission for Manuscripts. Her books include translations of classical texts and original books relating to Indian arts, including the recent *Kutiyattam: The Heritage Theatre of India*.

SUNIL SHUKLA



Dr. Sunil Shukla, Director of Entrepreneurship Development Institute of India, Ahmedabad, is a distinguished entrepreneurship educator, researcher and institution-builder. His pioneering work and research studies in entrepreneurship have been successfully adapted in the form of modules, programs and developmental interventions. An avid researcher, his research projects have helped Govt. of India in framing policies to establish Entrepreneurship and Business Development Centres at Universities. Dr. Shukla is on the Board of several organizations and Ministries of the Government, besides being the National Team Leader of Global Entrepreneurship Monitor, (GEM) India, since 2012.

SUBHASH GOYAL



Dr. Subhash Goyal is member of National Tourism Advisory Council, Ministry of Tourism, Government of India, and is the Chairman of STIC Travel Group, one of India's biggest travel Group with branches in all the major cities of India. Representing some of the world's best brands like United Airlines, Ethiopian Airlines, Air China, Malaysian Airlines, Srilankan Airlines, Ukraine International Airlines, Myanmar Airways International, Philippine Airlines, Royal Brunei Airlines, Holland America Cruise Line, Seabourn Cruises, A-Rosa – European River Cruise, Windstar, Wyndham Group of Hotels, etc. He is the immediate Past President of the Indian Association of Tour Operators (IATO), and has served as IATO's President for more than ten years. Dr. Goyal is the Chairman Tourism & Services Sector of Federation of Indian Export Organizations (FIEO) set up by the Ministry of Commerce, Govt. of India and the Chairman of Haryana Tourism Mart. He is also the President of The Confederation of Tourism Professionals of India. Dr. Goyal is the member of Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) Expert Committee on Tourism. He is also the Chairman of the Civil Aviation & Tourism Committee of the Indian Chamber of Commerce & Industry (ICCI). He is also the Advisory Board of several Govt. bodies and contributes frequently to National dailies like Hindustan Times, Economic Times, Times of India & various Travel & Trade Magazines on tourism/ aviation subjects. Mr. Goyal is a well-known TV personality frequently appearing on ABP News, ZEE News, Aaj Tak, CNBC, CNN-IBN, NDTV, DD News for interviews/ discussions/ talks etc. Dr. Goyal is an author of a book entitled "Poverty Eradication & Economic Development Through Tourism" which has won him wide recognition and acclaim

ISHANI NASKAR



Dr. Ishani Naskar is Associate Professor at the Department of Political Science, Rabindra Bharati University, Kolkata. She has completed her Masters in International Relations from Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi and acquired doctorate in Southeast Asian Studies. Over the years her professional commitments have increased her interest in Indian Foreign Policy with a special interest in India's relations with East Asia specially the Southeast Asian Region and the Indo-Pacific. She has also worked on the maritime issues pertinent to the Indian foreign policy in the region covering the areas of the Indian Ocean, the Indo-Pacific and the South China Sea and Policy papers and articles on India and South China Sea. Her present ICSSR project on Project *Mausam* Revitalising India's Cultural Links with Southeast Asia, has led her to look at the cultural contact between India and the Southeast Asia which includes the MGC sub-region and written on the same. She has been a part of the Kolkata 2 Kunming Forum, spoken in the Track II BIMSTEC discussions and has participated in policy discussion on the BBIN focussing on the people to people contacts.

SESSION 4: LOOKING AHEAD: HARNESSING THE DIVERSITY, BUILDING THE FUTURE

PREM DAS RAI



Mr. Prem Das Rai is the Member of Parliament (MP) of Lok Sabha from Sikkim. Mr. Rai pursued B.Tech. (Chemical), P.G.D.M. and Eisenhower Fellow Educated at IIT, Kanpur and IIM Ahmedabad, Gujarat. He was also the Deputy Chairman, State Planning Commission, Sikkim (2008-09). He was the Member of Committee on Information Technology, Committee on Ethics and Committee on Human Resource Development. He also writes on current issues especially those in Sikkim and the Northeast in newspaper and magazines; taking part in conferences and debates. He has also avid interest in environmental issues and promotion of eco-tourism and education.

VINCENT H PALA



Mr. Vincent H Pala is the Member of Parliament (MP) of Lok Sabha from Shillong constituency, Meghalaya. As a member of Indian National Congress, he was first elected in 2009 and re-elected in 2014 for Lok Sabha. In his first tenure, he served as a Union Minister of State, Water Resources (2009-2012) and Union Minister of State, Minority Affairs (Additional Charge) for 2011-2012. In his second tenure, he became the Member of Standing Committee on Personnel, Public Grievances, Law and Justice, Member of Committee on Member of Parliament Local Area Development Schemes (MPLADS) and also Member of Consultative Committee, Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region. Mr. Pala is the Member of Parliament from Meghalaya and has several key positions in the Government. He has served as Asst. Chief Engineer,

Public Works Department, Govt. of Meghalaya; Chief Coordinator, Meghalaya Pradesh Congress Committee; Treasurer, Meghalaya Pradesh Congress Committee; General Secretary, North East Congress Coordination Committee; Ex-Member of Consultative Committee, Ministry of Rural Development and Commerce and Industry; Parliamentary Standing Committee Ministry of Science and Technology and Environment and Forest; General Council of the School of Planning and Architecture, Ministry of Human Resource Development and Court of Manipur University, Member of Standing Committee on Law, Justice and Public Grievances; Consultative Committee Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region (DoNER); Committee of Parliament Local Area Development Scheme (MPLADS).

CLOSING SESSION

PRABIR DE



Dr. Prabir De is a Professor at the Research and Information System for Developing Countries (RIS), New Delhi. He is also the Coordinator of ASEAN-India Centre (AIC) at RIS. Dr De works in the field of international economics and has research interests in international trade and development. He was a Visiting Fellow of the Institute of Developing Economies (IDE-JETRO), Chiba; Asian Development Bank Institute (ADBI), Tokyo; and visiting Senior Fellow of United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP), Bangkok. He has been conducting policy research for the Government of India and several international organisations. Prof. De has a Ph.D. in Economics from the Jadavpur University, Kolkata. He has contributed several research papers in international journals and written books on trade and development. His recent publication on ASEAN includes “*Celebrating the Third Decade and Beyond: New Challenges to ASEAN – India Economic Partnership*” (AIC-RIS and Knowledge World, 2016). He is also the Editor of *South Asia Economic Journal*, published by Sage.

Glimpses of the Policy Dialogue





