

JOINT PRESS STATEMENT OF THE U.S.-LOWER MEKONG MINISTERIAL
MEETING
JULY 23, 2009

The U.S. Secretary of State and the Foreign Ministers of the Lower Mekong Countries - Cambodia, Laos, Thailand and Vietnam - held the first-ever U.S.-Lower Mekong Ministerial Meeting today in Phuket, Thailand, to discuss issues of common interest, particularly in the areas of the environment, health, education, and infrastructure development.

U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton underlined the importance of the Lower Mekong region and its individual countries to the United States and America's commitment to advancing peace and prosperity in the ASEAN region as a whole. The Ministers of Cambodia, Laos, Thailand and Vietnam welcomed the closer cooperation by the United States with the countries of the Lower Mekong region on issues of regional significance of mutual interest to ensure sustainable development and prosperity in the Mekong region.

The Ministers discussed shared priorities, including understanding the impact of climate change and how to respond effectively; fighting infectious diseases; expanding the use of technology for education and development, especially in rural areas; developing infrastructure.

The Ministers reviewed ongoing joint efforts in these areas and agreed to explore new areas of cooperation. The Ministers welcomed, in particular, the initiative of the Mekong River Commission and the Mississippi River Commission to pursue a "sister river" partnership to share expertise and best practices in areas such as climate change adaptation; flood and drought management; hydropower and impact assessment; water demand and food security; water resource management, and other common concerns.

The Ministers agreed that senior officials and experts would discuss specific activities for cooperation and follow-up.