



**Budapest Initiative on ASEM Sustainable Development Dialogue:
Showcase of the Danube Region Strategy and the Greater Mekong Subregion: Initiative
for co-operation and Comprehensive interaction amongst regional development strategies**

1. The Participants of the ASEM Seminar on the Role of Water in Sustainable Regional Development Strategies held in Budapest, Hungary on 20-22 June, 2012

Recognizing the global character of the numerous non-traditional security challenges the nations and communities of the world face today, which due to their transnational character have substantial and inevitable implications for the prosperity, security and stability of every country;

Admitting that the adverse effects of these non-traditional security challenges, posing grave threat to regional as well as global economic growth and to people's livelihood, require joint, global responses as the level of interdependence among nations has increased to an extent that never existed before;

Acknowledging the complexity of non-traditional security challenges, be of a political, security, economic, social or environmental nature, turning the efforts of combating these global phenomena into a strategic question for foreign policy in terms of security and stability;

Emphasizing that international initiatives aimed at responding to non-traditional security challenges, including the social impact of scarce food-, energy- and water-resources, terrorism and transnational organised crime, cyber security and the impairment of human security by climate change, the consequences of natural disasters, the efficiency of international cooperation on humanitarian aid and disaster preparedness as well as disaster relief and management, are not stand-alone targets, they need to be shaped with due regard to the interrelated dimensions of sustainable development objectives;

Stressing on the important role of international fora such as the UN and in particular the UN Rio+20 Conference on sustainable development, being organised in parallel with the ASEM Seminar in Budapest, which provides a unique opportunity to lay the foundations for common international efforts in the next decades;

Acclaiming the substantial, forward-looking and unique role of the multifaceted partnership of the Asia–Europe Meeting (ASEM) and the importance of ASEM in putting an emphasis on the relevant and highly interconnected issues of sustainable development in the context of interregional cooperation between Asia and Europe, two increasingly significant actors of international affairs;

Discussing the crucial role of water in sustainable development objectives as an essential ingredient of life, ecosystems, global cycles and economies, being an overarching issue through several different areas of regional and interregional cooperation such as regional connectivity, energy, economic integration, disaster preparedness, climate change and environment, agriculture and aquaculture, water management and food security including the accessibility of drinking water and even poverty reduction;

Sharing information and exchanging views on the challenges and benefits of integrated regional development strategies of great river basin sub-regions and the impact of water-security and the role of transboundary rivers in sustainable development and regional cooperation aiming to strengthen economic, social, environmental and development cooperation as well as sharing experiences and best practices between macro-regional development programmes;

have come to the conclusion that sustainable development issues require greater attention and enhanced co-operation of ASEM partners, while ASEM could have a forward-looking and substantial role in international efforts of combating non-traditional security challenges.

2. The Participants of the ASEM Seminar on the Role of Water in Sustainable Regional Development Strategies in Budapest therefore are of the opinion that the support of all ASEM Partners would be needed to launch the initiative of an ASEM Sustainable Development Dialogue establishing a sequence of annual seminars to be held in Asia and Europe in order to enable ASEM Partners to regularly discuss issues related to Sustainable Development objectives and other topics of common interest.
3. The Participants recognise the Budapest Seminar on the Role of Water in Sustainable Regional Development Strategies as the first event of the ASEM Sustainable Development Dialogue. The Host of the Budapest Seminar on the Role of Water in Sustainable Regional Development Strategies recommended the ASEM Sustainable Development Dialogue to be reflected at the 9th ASEM Summit of the Heads of State and Government to be held on 5-6 November 2012 in Vientiane, Laos as an ASEM-initiative.
4. Vietnam and Romania have already signalled their intention to host the following events of the annual ASEM Sustainable Development Dialogue in 2013 and in 2014 respectively, while Thailand also offered to be the host of a future event of this initiative.