

Opening Remarks by Mr. SHUKURI Masafumi
for the Japan-U.S. International Aviation Symposium

Good afternoon, everyone.

I am SHUKURI Masafumi, Chairman of Japan Transport and Tourism Research Institute or JTTRI and Japan International Transport and Tourism Institute, USA, or JITTI.

First, I would like to express my utmost appreciation to you all who are attending this symposium in person and to everyone who is watching online, especially from Japan and other Asian countries, despite the time difference.

Second, I would like to extend my sincere gratitude to

His Excellency Mr. YAMADA Shigeo,
Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Japan
to the United States of America,
for joining us today during his tight schedule to play a crucial
role in Japan-U.S. relations.

Next, I would like to express my special thanks to the keynote
speakers:

- ✓ Ms. Heidi Gomez,
Deputy Assistant Secretary for Transportation Affairs at the
U.S. Department of State;
- ✓ Ms. NAKAYAMA Rieko,
Assistant Vice-Minister for International Aviation at
the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism
of Japan; and
- ✓ Ms. Cindy Baraban,
Deputy Assistant Secretary for Aviation and International
Affairs at the U.S. Department of Transportation.

In addition, I am most grateful to:

- ✓ Mr. Yap Ong Heng, Senior Advisor of the Ministry of Transport of Singapore, who served as Director General of the Civil Aviation Authority of Singapore from 2009 to 2015 and has been actively involved in the international transport arena;
- ✓ Mr. TAMURA Akihiko, President and CEO of Narita International Airport Corporation; and
- ✓ all the panelists from the public and private sectors for joining us here from Japan, the United States and ASEAN.

The panel discussions will be moderated by Mr. Naveen Rao, who is well versed in Japan-U.S. aviation relations and currently works as a policy expert in Washington D.C.

Thank you very much.

Today's symposium will be hosted by JITTI USA, which was established by JTTRI, and held as an official participating event of the National Cherry Blossom Festival in Washington D.C. It is a magnificent pleasure that this symposium will be held in such a beautiful season.

On the other hand, it is truly unfortunate that there have been a series of aircraft accidents around the world recently. On January 29th of this year, there was a major accident involving an aircraft and a helicopter near here, resulting in the loss of many lives. Along with the cherry blossoms on the banks of the Potomac River, we sincerely pray for the repose of the souls of those who lost their lives.

In 2019, JITTI held two international aviation symposiums in Washington D.C. and Tokyo and discussed the evolution of aviation networks in the Asia-Pacific region and the roles of Japan and the United States in that evolution.

In 2023, JITTI held another international aviation symposium in Washington DC and discussed the realization of aviation sustainability, focusing on:

- ✓ the significance of de-carbonization policy, and
- ✓ the supply of sustainable aviation fuel (SAF),

which are still the most urgent and greatest issues for aviation stakeholders around the world today.

While the COVID pandemic has severely constrained global human interactions, today's air travel demand has already exceeded pre-pandemic level in many regions. The air travel demand in the Asia-Pacific region, which has been relatively slow to recover, will soon return to pre-pandemic levels and will account for more than half of the increase in global seat capacity by 2025, driving economic expansion worldwide.

Meanwhile, with the shift in the global power balance, the situation in Ukraine has brought ongoing constraints on the number of flights between the United States and China. It is said that the circumstances around the aviation industry have become increasingly complex and uncertain. Therefore, strengthening aviation connectivity in this region is of vital importance to any party involved, from the viewpoint of coping with such geopolitical risks, as well as ensuring economic security.

Against this backdrop of the rapid expansion of the aviation market in ASEAN -- a key engine of global economic growth, today's symposium will discuss diverse topics, such as:

- ✓ the policies of aviation authorities to meet the growing traffic demand in the Asia-Pacific region;
- ✓ the development of airport infrastructure;
- ✓ the initiatives and strategies of airlines,

keeping in mind the keywords “aviation connectivity powered by Japan-US-ASEAN collaboration.”

Toward that objective, we should also consider other essential elements, including:

- ✓ ensuring safety, first and foremost;
- ✓ improving air traffic controller capacity -- a shortage being focused on both in Japan and the United States;
- ✓ securing human resources for airport-related operations, such as ground handling and refueling services, and
- ✓ ensuring sustainability and reducing environmental impact through the use of SAF.

I would be grateful if the public and private sectors here with us today could earnestly discuss those issues in a concerted manner.

In closing, I hope that this symposium will contribute to solving urgent issues which the international aviation sector currently faces, and lead to enhanced trilateral connectivity -- Japan, the United States and ASEAN, in an open manner. I believe it is in line with the vision: “Free and Open Indo-Pacific” -- the inclusive initiative to be realized through cooperation with like-minded countries, based on shared values and principles.

Thank you very much.