

**International Seminar with former Thai Transport Minister  
Arkhom Termpittayapaisith  
"Current and Future Japan-Thailand Relations in the Transportation Field"  
Chairman Shukuri's Speech**

Welcome. My name is Masafumi Shukuri, Chairman of the Japan Transport and Tourism Research Institute (JTTRI). Thank you very much for attending our International Seminar with former Thai Transport Minister Arkhom, entitled "Current and Future Japan-Thailand Relations in the Transportation Field".

First of all, we would like to express our sincerest gratitude to His Excellency Mr. Arkhom Termpittayapaisith, former Minister of Transport of the Kingdom of Thailand, responsible for transport policy in Thailand for five years until July of this year, for taking the time to come to Japan to participate in today's seminar.

In addition, I would like to express our gratitude to Mr. Kozo Fujita, Vice-Minister of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism (MLIT), and Mr. Naoki Fujii, MLIT's Vice-Minister for Transport and International Affairs, for attending this seminar despite their busy schedules.

Today, former Minister Arkhom will give a special lecture, after which he will hold a dialogue with Professor Atsushi Fukuda of Nihon University. Ms. Tuenjai Fukuda, Secretary-General of ATRANS (Asian Transportation Research Society), Thailand's transportation-related academic society, will serve as moderator.

ASEAN's major cities are currently experiencing rapid economic growth and population concentration and are working to improve urban transportation. In Thailand, work is ongoing to develop M-MAP2 (the second Mass Rapid Transit Master Plan in the Bangkok Metropolitan Region). Following the opening of the MRT's Blue Line and Purple Line, new urban railways such as the Red Line and the Orange Line are being vigorously promoted. In addition, the construction and examination of the north, northeast, and east high-speed railway lines are in various stages of development and construction. In the transport sector, infrastructure development, mainly railway development, is being strongly promoted, as I mentioned above.

Mr. Arkhom, who will be giving today's lecture, was appointed Vice Minister of Transport in 2014, and subsequently Transport Minister in 2015, serving in the latter capacity for 4 years until this July. In 2016, he opened the Bangkok Purple Line, which was the first instance in Thailand of a combined maintenance contract for both rolling stock and above-ground facilities by Japanese companies. Regarding the Red Line, which employs vehicles made by Japanese manufacturers, Mr. Arkhom tirelessly visited the Japanese vehicle factory many times to oversee the design of the vehicles.

He also worked with MLIT and JICA to formulate a master plan for urban development in the area around Bangkok's central station in Bang Sue and to redevelop that area as a smart city. Mr. Arkhom has also worked hard to reduce traffic accidents in Thailand. In 2016, he signed a memorandum of understanding on traffic safety with the previous Minister of MLIT, Mr. Ishii, and took the initiative to implement a traffic safety campaign in Thailand during the Songkran festival when traffic accidents increase, taking advantage of Japan's knowledge and experience.

These are just a few examples of Mr. Arkhom's tireless efforts. Former Minister Arkhom has played a leading role in the implementation of transportation policy in Thailand, often working closely with Japan. Through today's lecture and dialogue with Mr. Arkhom, we would like to share the latest information and issues on the present status of and future prospects for transport policy in Thailand, and also on the ideal manner of future cooperation between Thailand and Japan.

By the way, taking this opportunity, I would like to announce that Mr. Tetsuya Okuda has been serving as the Executive Director of JTTRI and the President of Japan International Transport and Tourism Institute USA since November 6th. Next year, JTTRI plans to establish a base for analysis and research activities in Bangkok, Thailand, serving as a hub for activities in the ASEAN and India region, along with continuing activities in Washington, D.C. We appreciate your further guidance and support as we endeavor to deliver our best to you through research activities, dissemination of information, and cooperation and exchanges with foreign governments and research institutions.

Finally, I would like to thank the Nippon Foundation for supporting today's seminar. I hope this seminar will be useful for the participants, and that it will provide a path to further strengthen the relationship between Japan and Thailand.

Thank you so much.