

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

My name is Tetsuya Okuda. I am the Executive Director of the Japan Transport and Tourism Research Institute (JTTRI).

Today, we invited His Excellency Arkhom Termpittayapaisith, former Transport Minister of Thailand to join us and held a seminar under the theme of "Current and Future Japan-Thailand Relations in the Transportation Field". Thank you very much to all the participants. We would also like to thank former Transport Minister Arkhom, Professor Atsushi Fukuda, and Ms. Tuenjai Fukuda, Secretary-General of ATRANS, for giving very significant lectures and for participating in this important dialogue.

In his opening remarks, Chairman Shukuri mentioned my assumption of the position of Executive Director of JTTRI at the beginning of this month. Before I assumed this position, I had been working for the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism (MLIT) until this summer. While in MLIT's Railway Bureau and Road Transport Bureau, my work involved urban development, which covered railway development, traffic safety and public transportation, all of which were discussed in today's lectures. During my years at MLIT, I often heard the name of former Transport Minister Arkhom, who is a very well-known person in MLIT, as was also mentioned by Vice-Minister Fujita in his introductory remarks. I believe that former Transport Minister Arkhom is probably the most prominent person among all the Transport Ministers around the world. As an example of the close relationship between Thailand and Japan, MLIT's Action Plan for the Overseas Development of Infrastructure Systems lists 83 projects in 30 countries around the world. Of these projects, nine are located in Thailand. This is the largest number of projects in a single country, a fact which has contributed to the development of the current close relationship between Japan and Thailand.

I am optimistic that these projects will progress smoothly. A book was recently published entitled "A Record of 1,775 Days in Office" about the projects overseen by former Transport Minister Arkhom during his time in office. In that book, "One Transport for All," the key phrase used in former Transport Minister Arkhom's lecture today, was translated into "Transport for Happiness of All Thai People". The

conclusion of the book states that "I believe that Thailand will become a more convenient country for children to live in through the use by more people of the infrastructure delivered through the results of my 1,775 days in office". I was very impressed when I read the intentions of "Mr. Arkhom," in which he hoped that his performance would be beneficial for children. I believe these intentions are a reflection of his personal character.

I daringly called the former Transport Minister "Mr. Arkhom" just before. This is because before the seminar started, when the Chairman, Professor Fukuda and I were holding a serious discussion on whether to introduce Mr. Arkhom as "former Minister Arkhom" or "His Excellency, Arkhom, former Minister of Thailand" in Chairman Shukuri's opening remarks, former Minister Arkhom recognized the situation, looked at us, and stated, in Japanese, to simply call him "Mr. Arkhom". Again, to show his character, this is why I daringly called him "Mr. Arkhom".

In conclusion, I hope that this seminar was productive for all participants. I would also like to express my gratitude to the three speakers who gave lectures and also participated in the dialogue, and wish continued success to all of today's participants.

Thank you very much.