

International Seminar with former Thai Transport Minister
Arkhom Termpittayapaisith
“Current and Future Japan-Thailand Relations in the Transportation Field”
Mr. Fujita’s Speech

I am Kozo Fujita, Vice Minister of the Japanese Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism (MLIT).

First of all, I would like to extend my heartfelt welcome to His Excellency Mr. Arkhom Termpittayapaisith, former Minister of Transport of the Kingdom of Thailand, and to thank him in advance for his lecture today. I would also like to express my sincere gratitude to former Minister Arkhom for his significant contributions to the strengthening of the relations between Japan and Thailand in the field of transport during his tenure as Minister of Transport.

Former Minister Arkhom had the opportunity to meet with many Japanese officials, including successive Ministers of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism, during his tenure at Transport Minister. I have a strong impression that he had a very good relationship with MLIT staff at that time. In fact, he still has many fans in MLIT. Last year, I attended a meeting of the transport ministers of Japan and ASEAN in Bangkok, and I remember that former Minister Arkhom, representing our host country, expressed very warm hospitality towards everyone.

As you know, Japan and Thailand have had very strong ties for a long time in various aspects of politics, economy and culture. With a huge number of Japanese companies operating in Thailand, Thailand also has long been a very popular tourist destination for the Japanese. In addition, the number of visitors from Thailand to Japan has been increasing rapidly in recent years. Over the past four to five years, the number of Thai visitors to Japan has more than doubled, and last year the number exceeded one million for the first time. Japan and Thailand also have various relationships in the field of transportation. We are cooperating in fields such as urban transportation, Shinkansen development, road traffic safety, and development of areas around stations. When I visited Bangkok last year, I had the opportunity to ride the Purple Line, as urban railway in Bangkok. I also had the opportunity to take a look at the development in and around the Bang Sue station. Gazing at the city of Bangkok from the Purple Line, I realized the difficulty of developing urban railways amid the advance of motorization. At the same time, I understood that the challenges

that Thailand faces are different from those experienced in my own country. As for the development of the area around Bang Sue Station, various plans have been made for a smart city, and I think the accomplishment of these plans will also be very useful for my country.

I have high expectations for today's lecture and sincerely hope that this lecture will provide an opportunity to further deepen cooperation between Japan and Thailand in the field of transportation.

Thank you very much.