

**JTTRI International Seminar on
"Railway and Area Development in Thailand"
Chairman Shukuri's speech**

Sawadee kap. I am Masafumi Shukuri, Chairman of JTTRI.

For all participant from the Thailand and Japan, thank you very much for attending today's international seminar, "Railroad Development and Railway Development".

First of all, I received a great deal of support and cooperation for today's seminar, from Mr. Arkhom, Former Minister of Transport, Thailand, Dr. Pailin, Former Deputy Minister of Transport, Thailand, MOT, Thailand, the Embassy of Japan, MLLT-Japan, JICA and the Japanese Chamber of Commerce in Thailand. I sincerely appreciate all of them.

In addition, we will receive the Honorable Guest Remarks later from Mr. Arkhom, Former Minister of Transport, Thailand, Mr. Sorapong Paitoonphong, Director-General of the Department of Rail Transport, MOT Thailand, Yasuhiro Okanishi, Director-General for International Affairs, MLIT-Japan and Mr. Noboru Sekiguchi, Minister, Chief of the Economic Section, Embassy of Japan in Thailand. I really thank them for their cooperation today.

By the way, in 1968, when Japan was in the midst of rapid economic growth, Minister of Transport was Mr. Yasuhiro Nakasone. At the time, the JTTRI was established as a think tank in the transportation and tourism fields with the cooperation of the business and academic circles. For the past 52 years, JTTRI has been actively engaged in policy proposals, researches, and holding seminars on transport and tourism. In the meantime, JITTI USA (Japan International Transport and Tourism Institute, USA) was established in Washington, D.C. in 1991, and since then we have been focusing on international activities in the field of transportation and tourism.

It has been a 600-year history of exchanges between Thailand, as the major ASEAN country, and Japan. In 2018, 1.14 million travelers from the Kingdom of Thailand to Japan and 1.64 million travelers from Japan to the Kingdom of Thailand, totaling 2.78 million people, an even larger figure last year . In this way,

exchanges have become more active in recent years.

Moreover, based on the close relationship between the Japanese imperial family and Thai royal family for many years, a close and multilayered relationship has been established between Japan and the Kingdom of Thailand in a wide range of politics, economy, culture and so on.

On the other hand, in the field of transportation in the Kingdom of Thailand, there are a lot of cases showing close and good cooperation between the two countries, such as the development of Laem Chabang Port and Suvarnabhumi International Airport, the Blue Line, Purple Line and Red Line, the high-speed rail development plan connecting Bangkok and Chiang Mai, and the Asia-Japan Safety Network Project in the field of road traffic safety.

In today's seminar, in the good cooperation between the two countries, Prof. Shigeru Morichi, Director of Policy Research Center of GRIPS who is former director and a research advisor of the JTTRI will give a keynote speech of the very important policy theme, Railway and Area Development.

Dr. Masai Muto, Senior Research Fellow of JTTRI will report on the results of JTTRI's Walking Group on ""Railway and Area Development"", chaired by Prof. Morichi.

In the latter half of the panel discussion, Mr. Sorapong, Director of the Railway Bureau founded in the MOT-Thailand in April 2019, Prof. Atsushi Fukuda, Department of Transportation Systems Engineering, College of Science and Technology, Nihon University, Prof. Shigeru Morichi will be on the stage and Associate Prof. Naohiko Hibino will be a moderator to discuss issues and future prospects of Railway and Area Development in Thailand.

We strongly hope that this seminar will be helpful for all participants and also for the future Railway and Area Development in Thailand.

JTTRI plans to establish an office in Bangkok in this year to continuously strengthen international activities in the ASEAN region.

We would like to ask for the understanding, support and cooperation of MOT-Thailand, Thailand's officials, the embassy of Japan in Thailand and many other parties concerned regarding preparations for this and full-scale activities

after the establishment.

I would like to say that the JTTRI activities are carried out with the special support of the Nippon Foundation and finish my opening remarks.

Khob khun krab.