

**JTTRI International Seminar on
"Railway and Area Development in Thailand"
Mr. Arkhom's speech**

Dear Dr. Pailin Chuchottaworn, Former Deputy Minister of Transport Thailand, Mr. Noboru Sekiguchi, Minister, Chief of the Economic Section, Embassy of Japan in Thailand, Mr. Yasuhiro Okanishi, Director-General for International Affairs, MLIT-Japan, Mr. Shukuri, Chairman, JTTRI, and Director-General of the Department of Rail Transport, distinguish speakers and guests.

I was asked to give guest remarks, in this seminar.

There are only 5 minutes so I will make a comment in brief.

Actually, I wanted to make a presentation too, but did not have the opportunity. So I will only address the closing remarks. The contents of the discussion at this seminar is that I have been working, when I was the Minister of Transport for five years. I have been working on a number of projects with Dr. Pailin, Former Deputy Minister of Transport Thailand at that time. This period can be considered as the second biggest railway investment in Thailand since the first start of railway construction during the King Rama 5 reign. All types of railways, including high-speed rail, inter-city railways, intra-city railways, commuter trains and local trains have been developed, as suggested by Dr. Muto and Mr. Sorapong, Director-General of the Department of Rail Transport, MOT Thailand earlier.

So this can be considered as the first JTTRI seminar in Bangkok by Mr. Shukuri. Actually, there will be another seminar by JTTRI tomorrow. I think that the content of the today's seminar on Railway and Area Development or RAD is the same as we call TOD in Thailand. I would like to briefly explain how this idea can be applied to the planning and operation of Thai railways. Both the presentations of Prof. Morichi and Dr. Muto are very detailed information. Both presentations have shown us that Japanese have been studying railway systems in Thailand in very detailed. Therefore, the benefit from today's seminar is information based on Japan's experience, which we have to accept that there are both successful and failure cases as Prof. Morichi mentioned. As for us we can just copy the best practices from Japanese to save time, rather than learning everything from the beginning. Our previous five years is just a short period of time that we have been extensively promoting railway developments.

According to the presentation, in Japan, railway masterplan has been planned since 1956 or the year I was born. Since then the masterplan has been continuously developed. On the other hand, our masterplan, which is called the M-MAP, was developed around 20 years ago since when the OTP was still under the former name with the support from JICA. M-MAP was fulfilled in 2015 or the year which I started my position as Minister along with Dr. Pailin. It can be said that our masterplan became in effective with the gap of 60 years later from Japan. Thus we have to make more efforts to catch up with Japan. As shown in the presentation, our masterplan covers most of the main urban railway network in Bangkok, but I think there are still insufficient plans for secondary network or alternatives transportations.

The reason I was late this morning was that there was heavy traffic congestion. So I decided to take a ride on the Blue Line from Lak Song Station. As Prof. Morichi mentioned earlier, there is a shopping mall called The Mall, which is all connected by a skywalk to Lak Song Station. However, the station square is not yet planned. As mentioned, our masterplan was planned 20 years ago. At that time, only railway network expansion was focused. We did not consider about the development around the station or the inside the station itself.

In addition, there was no coordination with the urban development, and I had no time to talk with the urban planning staffs during the past five years in my office. People were expecting railways, so we had focus on railway development first. In fact, there is still a traffic congestion around the Lak Song station. We thought people would not use cars if they had a rail transport. However, there are still many car users. The advantage here at Lak Song station is that there are park and ride facilities on both sides of the road. I decided to park in the park and ride facility and ride the train.

On the train, I saw people using their mobile phones, using LINE, and they looked satisfied on the train service.

I am really convinced that 99.99% of train passengers are using mobile phones in trains. So this is a topic of the tomorrow's seminar. The seminar of tomorrow is about mobile big data. This is one of the newest topics. I would like to thank JTTRI for introducing seminars in Bangkok with two different topics.

We would like to thank JTTRI again. Through this seminar, we were able to learn the experience of the Japanese, which was very useful. I would like to ask Mr. Shukuri to continue arranging the seminar like this regularly, although two

seminars are held this time. Also, I would like you to ask Ministry of Transport, all organizations and professors to cooperate in the activities as they are very beneficial to us because we can hear all opinions from academia, government, developers and operators, which I believe that these opinions should be carefully considered for our future development.

Finally, there are four issues which I would like to point out.

First, the plan must be continuously improved, and the policy implementation must also be continued without being stopped.

Second, we must change our mindset. As with today's topic, railway development is not just about railway, but the land must be also developed in order to get the benefit to compensate the cost.

Third, railway services must be provided in an integrated manner. For example, we have Bang Sue station as a central station, which all railway systems, including high-speed train, inter-city train, commuter train and urban railway must be coordinately developed.

Finally, rules and regulations. Today, our starting point is from the establishment of the Department of Rail Transport. Hopefully, the Department will continue to grow up in the future.

The information from this seminar is very useful. During my position as the Minister of Transport, working with Japanese was one of my priorities. I really appreciate the support from MLIT Japan. I often met Mr. Okanishi on many occasion such as road safety and railway development. There are many MOUs signed between MOT Thailand and MLIT Japan. JICA is also an another counterpart which constantly support us especially on the studies. Although Thailand is already not the recipient country, we still continue to receive support from JICA from our poor traffic performance and from environmental problems. Hopefully, we can learn from today's discussions and presentations for our future work.

Thank you very much.