

JTTRI-AIRO Opening Commemorative Symposium
Shifting Tourism for the Post-Pandemic Era:
How should Thailand and Japan work towards Quality Tourism?

Opening Remarks by JTTRI Chairman SHUKURI Masafumi

Hello everyone. I am SHUKURI Masafumi, Chairman of the Japan Transport and Tourism Research Institute (JTTRI).

I am very pleased to welcome you to the Opening Commemorative Symposium for the Japan Transport and Tourism Research Institute ASEAN-India Regional Office (AIRO), being held today in cooperation with the Ministry of Tourism and Sports of Thailand and the Embassy of Japan in Thailand, under the title “Shifting Tourism for the Post-Pandemic Era.”

First of all, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to His Excellency Mr. Phiphat Ratchakitprakarn, Minister of Tourism and Sports of Thailand; His Excellency Mr. Kazuya Nashida, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Japan to Thailand; and Mr. Yuichi Oba, Deputy Chief of Mission and Minister, Embassy of Japan in Thailand, for their generous support and cooperation in making today's symposium possible. I would also like to express my heartfelt gratitude to Mr. Mongkon Wimonrat, Assistant Permanent Secretary of Thailand's Ministry of Tourism and Sports, and Mr. Satoru Mizushima, Vice-Minister for International Affairs of Japan's Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism, for their special lectures today.

Furthermore, I would like to extend my gratitude to the following participants in today's panel discussion:

Dr. Jutamas Wisansing, Managing Director of Perfect Link Consulting Group,
Ms. Pattara-anong Na Chiangmai, Executive Director at the Tourism Authority of Thailand,
Mr. Suthiphong Pheunphiphop, Vice President of the Tourism Council of Thailand,
Ms. Rieko Nakayama, Executive Vice President of Japan National Tourism Organization, and
Mr. Tsuguhiko Sawanobori, Manager of Jalan Research Center at Recruit Company Limited.

I would also like to thank all of you for taking the time out of your busy schedules to come to the venue or to watch the symposium online.

Japan and Thailand have had a long history of exchanges spanning over 600 years, during which relations have deepened in a wide range of areas, including politics, diplomacy, economy, trade, culture, and tourism. Japan-Thailand relations have also become increasingly important in recent years in terms of achieving a free and open Indo-Pacific, with Thailand located in the center of the ASEAN region and in a position to lead neighboring countries.

At the same time, the global community and the economy have been severely impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic since the beginning of 2020 and Russia's military invasion of Ukraine last February. Both pose a threat to the post-Cold War international order.

As the world faces deepening global uncertainty and conflict, multi-layered and wide-ranging human exchanges are becoming more important than ever, and I feel that tourism holds the key to making these exchanges possible.

Additionally, from the social and economic perspectives of revitalizing local communities and increasing employment, tourism is a sector with great potential for continued growth.

After three years of the COVID-19 crisis, we are finally in the “post-pandemic era” and have the perfect opportunity for tourism to take the first step towards a new stage. We must rebuild tourism and the tourism industry in the post-pandemic era and aim for new developments in the tourism sector.

To this end, I hope to deepen mutual understanding of the initiatives taken by Japan and Thailand, and to further deepen our cooperative and collaborative relationship to develop tourism in both countries. We will try to achieve this through discussions on the challenges that we must overcome in order to realize quality tourism that takes sustainability into account.

Both countries are working on initiatives for “quality tourism”, which aims to realize sustainable tourism and responsible tourism that firmly respond to issues such as decarbonization in the tourism sector and harmony with the daily lives of local residents. As the host of this symposium, I hope that the discussions today will be of some contribution to both countries' efforts.

Last but not least, AIRO, the host of today's symposium, is the second overseas office of JTTRI, a Japanese policy think tank for the field of transportation and tourism. It opened in Bangkok, Thailand in April 2021, and is nearing the end of its second year.

I would like to conclude by saying that JTTRI and AIRO are committed to ensuring a practical cooperation and collaboration in the areas of transportation and tourism and will continue to work towards the development of tourism in both countries and strengthening ties between two countries. I would be most grateful for your continued support and cooperation from both Japan and Thailand.

Thank you very much for your participation today.