

DỰ THẢO BÀI PHÁT BIỂU
CỦA THỨ TRƯỞNG BỘ GTVT LÊ ĐÌNH THỌ
tại Diễn đàn GTVT khu vực tiểu vùng Mekong mở rộng lần thứ 24 (STF 24)
(21/01/2021)

*Dear Mr. Hiroaki Yamaguchi, Director of Transport & Communications
Division, Southeast Asia Department, Asian Development Bank (ADB)*

Dear distinguished guests

Ladies and gentlemen,

Hôm nay tôi rất vinh dự và vui mừng được thay mặt Việt Nam - nước chủ nhà của Diễn đàn GTVT khu vực tiểu vùng Mekong mở rộng lần thứ 24 có bài phát biểu chào mừng Hội nghị.

Today I am very honored to represent Vietnam - the host country of the 24th Greater Mekong Subregional Transport Forum to deliver a welcome remarks.

Trước hết tôi xin nhiệt liệt chào mừng và gửi lời chúc mừng năm mới 2021 tới toàn thể Diễn đàn và cảm ơn các quý vị đại biểu đã tham dự Diễn đàn ngày hôm nay do Ngân hàng Phát triển Châu Á (ADB) và Bộ Giao thông vận tải Việt Nam phối hợp tổ chức theo hình thức trực tuyến.

First of all, I would like to warmly welcome and congratulate the new year 2021 to all the Forum and thank you for participating in today's Forum hosted by the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and the Ministry transport of Vietnam transportation through online meeting.

Thưa quý vị,

Ladies and gentlemen,

Như các quý vị đã biết, GTVT là một trong lĩnh vực quan trọng và ưu tiên của hợp tác Tiểu vùng Mekong. Trong thời gian qua, với sự hỗ trợ của các đối tác phát triển, đặc biệt là Ngân hàng Phát triển Châu Á – ADB và sự tích cực, chủ động của Chính phủ các quốc gia GMS, hợp tác GTVT trong GMS đã đạt được nhiều kết quả ấn tượng, có thể kể đến như:

As you all know, transport is one of the important and priority areas of Greater Mekong Subregion cooperation. In recent years, with the support of development partners, especially the Asian Development Bank - ADB and the proactive of the GMS countries government, transportation cooperation in the GMS has been achieved many impressive results, such as:

- Thống nhất thực hiện “Thu hoạch sớm” Hiệp định Tạo thuận lợi vận chuyển người và hàng hóa qua lại biên giới các nước Tiểu vùng Mekong mở rộng: Việc triển khai “Thu hoạch sớm” đã được thực hiện từ tháng 08/2018 với sự tham gia của các quốc gia: Cam-pu-chia, Lào, Trung Quốc, Thái Lan và Việt Nam nhằm hỗ trợ, tạo thuận lợi hơn nữa cho hoạt động vận tải hành khách và hàng hóa qua lại biên giới giữa các quốc gia Tiểu vùng, góp phần phát triển kinh tế - xã hội giữa các quốc gia. Riêng với Mi-an-ma, dự kiến sẽ tham gia chính thức triển khai “Thu hoạch sớm” vào năm 2021.

- Regarding the implementation the "Early Harvest" of the Greater Mekong Subregion Cross-Border Transport Facilitation Agreement: The implementation of "Early Harvest" has been implemented since August 2018 with the participation of Cambodia, Laos, China, Thailand and Vietnam in order to support and create smoother cross-border passenger and cargo transportation, contributing to socio-economic development among countries. As for Myanmar, it is expected to participate officially in the implementation of "Early Harvest" in 2021.

- Đã thực hiện nhiều dự án đầu tư phát triển cơ sở hạ tầng giao thông quan trọng: Trên cơ sở kế hoạch phát triển cơ sở hạ tầng của các quốc gia GMS và

Khung Đầu tư Tiểu vùng GMS giai đoạn 2018 – 2022, 53 dự án cơ sở hạ tầng giao thông với tổng mức đầu tư 48.9 tỷ USD đã được triển khai, kêu gọi đầu tư theo nhiều hình thức và giai đoạn khác nhau. Đến nay, đã có 12 dự án với tổng mức đầu tư 641 triệu USD được hoàn thành và nhiều dự án quan trọng khác đang triển khai, ví dụ như: Dự án Đường cao tốc Pnôm-Pênh – Si-ha-núc Vin (Campuchia); Dự án Phát triển Kết nối đường bộ Vùng Vân Nam – Phô Nhĩ (Trung Quốc); Dự án bảo trì và nâng cấp Quốc lộ 13 đoạn Viên-chăn – Phôn Hồng (Lào); Dự án kết nối GTVT các tỉnh miền núi phía Bắc (Việt Nam)...

- Regarding the implementation of various investment projects to develop important transport infrastructure: On the basis of infrastructure development plans of GMS countries and GMS Regional Investment Framework period 2018 - 2022, 53 transport infrastructure projects with a total investment of 48.9 billion USD have been deployed, calling for investment in many different phases and stages. Up to now, 12 projects with a total investment of 641 million USD have been completed and many other important projects are underway, for example: The Phnom Penh – Sihanoukville Expressway Project (Cambodia); Yunnan Pu'er Regional Integrated Road Network Development Project (China); Project on maintenance and upgrading of Highway 13, Improvement and Maintenance Project Vientiane to Phon Hong (Laos); Northern Mountain Provinces Transport Connectivity Project (Vietnam) ...

- Về hợp tác trong kết nối đường sắt: Trong khuôn khổ Hiệp hội Đường sắt Tiểu vùng Mekong mở rộng, ngành Đường sắt các nước GMS đã bước đầu xác định 09 tuyến ưu tiên nhằm kết nối hoàn chỉnh hệ thống đường sắt GMS và tiến hành hợp tác nghiên cứu, xây dựng Hiệp định khung về kết nối đường sắt qua biên giới trong GMS với sự hỗ trợ của ADB.

- Regarding cooperation in railway connectivity: In the framework of the Greater Mekong Railway Association (GMRA), the railway sector of GMS countries has identified an initial assessment of the viability of 9 priority railway links to complete GMS rail connectivity and collaborative research,

development of the Agreement on Cross-Border Railway Transport Connectivity in the GMS with ADB support.

Thưa quý vị đại biểu,

Ladies and gentlemen,

Năm 2020 là một năm đặc biệt, chúng ta đã chứng kiến đại dịch COVID-19 tác động tiêu cực tới mọi mặt của đời sống kinh tế - xã hội với gần 100 triệu ca nhiễm và 2 triệu người tử vong. Trong lĩnh vực GTVT, COVID-19 đã gây ra những tổn thất nghiêm trọng cho hoạt động vận tải xuyên biên giới, trong đó có các quốc gia GMS.

2020 is a special year, we have seen the COVID-19 pandemic negatively impact all aspects of socio-economic life with nearly 100 million cases and 2 million deaths. In the transportation sector, COVID-19 has caused serious losses to cross-border transport, including the GMS countries.

Trong bối cảnh đặc biệt đó, Diễn đàn ngày hôm nay là một cơ hội đặc biệt để các quốc gia GMS thảo luận, đưa ra các giải pháp nhằm thúc đẩy phục hồi lĩnh vực GTVT sau đại dịch, đặc biệt trong phục hồi hoạt động vận tải xuyên biên giới trong GMS trên cơ sở Kế hoạch ứng phó và phục hồi COVID-19 giai đoạn 2021 – 2023 đã được Hội nghị Bộ trưởng GMS lần thứ 24 thông qua. Tôi hi vọng rằng Diễn đàn GTVT khu vực Tiểu vùng Mekong mở rộng lần thứ 24 sẽ đóng góp được nhiều sáng kiến, chính sách nhằm giúp các quốc gia GMS sớm nối lại hoạt động vận tải hành khách, hàng hóa xuyên biên giới, thúc đẩy kết nối có hiệu quả các hành lang kinh tế: Bắc – Nam, Đông – Tây và Hành lang kinh tế phía Nam hiện có, góp phần hỗ trợ phục hồi phát triển kinh tế hậu đại dịch.

In that context, the Forum today is a special opportunity for GMS countries to discuss and propose solutions to promote the recovery of the transport sector after the pandemic, especially in rehabilitation of cross-border transport in GMS with the instruction from the COVID-19 Response and Recovery Plan for the

period 2021 - 2023 approved by the 24th GMS Ministerial Meeting. I also hope that the STF-24 will contribute many initiatives and policies to help GMS countries to resume cross-border passenger and cargo transport activities, effectively connect the existing North - South, East - West economic corridors and the Southern Economic Corridor, contributing to the post-pandemic economic development.

Ngoài ra, tôi cũng đề nghị quý vị đại biểu tham dự Diễn đàn ngày hôm nay tiếp tục rà soát, cập nhật tiến độ triển khai các dự án kêu gọi đầu tư trong lĩnh vực giao thông trong khuôn khổ Khung đầu tư Tiểu vùng GMS 2018 – 2022 nhằm hoàn thiện việc xây dựng Khung chiến lược dài hạn GMS 2030 làm cơ sở tiền đề để thúc đẩy hợp tác tiểu vùng từ nay tới năm 2030, tầm nhìn 2050.

In addition, I also suggest that the Forum today continue to review and update the progress of implementing projects calling for investment in the transport sector under GMS Regional Investment Framework 2018 - 2022 in order to develop the GMS 2030 Long-Term Cooperation Strategy Framework as a basis for promoting sub-regional cooperation from now to 2030, with a vision to 2050.

Thưa quý vị đại biểu,

Ladies and gentlemen,

Nhân cơ hội này, tôi xin trân trọng cảm ơn ADB và các đối tác phát triển đã hỗ trợ và giúp đỡ Việt Nam nói riêng và các quốc gia tiểu vùng nói chung trong thúc đẩy, phát triển kết cấu hạ tầng giao thông cũng như hỗ trợ thực hiện các chính sách tạo thuận lợi trong vận tải, giao thương qua biên giới. Bộ GTVT Việt Nam cam kết sẽ tiếp tục là một thành viên tích cực, chủ động trong hợp tác GTVT Tiểu vùng GMS và mong muốn tiếp tục nhận được sự hỗ trợ, hợp tác từ phía ADB, các đối tác phát triển và các quốc gia thành viên GMS.

Taking this opportunity, I would like to thank ADB and other development partners for their support and assistance to Vietnam in particular and the GMS countries in general for the promotion and development of transport infrastructure as well as support the implementation of policies to facilitate cross-border transport and trade. The Ministry of Transport of Vietnam is committed to continue to be an active and proactive member in GMS transport cooperation and looks forward to continuing to receive support and cooperation from ADB, development partners and GMS countries.

Cuối cùng, tôi xin chân thành cảm ơn quý vị đại biểu đã tham dự Diễn đàn và xin chúc cho quý vị luôn mạnh khỏe, an toàn trong đại dịch và hi vọng sẽ sớm gặp lại Quý vị trong thời gian gần nhất.

Last but not least, I would like to sincerely thank you who attended the Forum and wish you always healthy and safe during the pandemic and hope to see you in the soonest

Chúc diễn đàn của chúng ta thành công tốt đẹp.

Wish our Forum a great success.

Xin trân trọng cảm ơn.

Thank you.

**OPENING REMARKS BY
DIRECTOR GENERAL LE TUAN ANH – CO-CHAIR OF STF-24**

*Dear His Excellency Mr. **Le Dinh Tho** – Deputy Minister of Transport of Vietnam;*

*Dear Mr. **Hiroaki Yamaguchi**, Director of Transport and Communications Division, Southeast Asia Department, Asian Development Bank (ADB) - Co-chair;*

Ladies and gentlemen,

First of all, I would like to extend my sincere thanks and warmly welcome you for taking the time to participate in today STF-24 Forum. I also would like to thank ADB for your support and cooperation to organize the Forum today through online meeting.

As Mr. Le Dinh Tho - Deputy Minister of Transport of Vietnam mentioned earlier, in recent years with the support of ADB, we have achieved many satisfied achievements, specifically:

- (i) With regard to the “Early Harvest” implementation of GMS-CBTA: The countries participate in the Early Harvest have issued the multi-trips GMS Road Transport Permits and Temporary Admission Document (TAD) for international transport operators. Moreover, with the technical support from ADB, GMS countries have continued to improve customs transit points and implement globally recognized customs management systems
- (ii) Regarding the promotion of the implementation of the GMS Regional Investment Framework (RIF): Transport infrastructure remains a priority under the GMS Program. Under the RIF-2020 framework, we have proposed 53 transport sector projects and 12 of

those had been completed. However, there are still some projects being postponed or replaced by other projects due to the change of priority order or difficulty in calling for investment

In the coming period, GMS transport sector will continue to be the key factor to support the successful implementation the GMS Economic Cooperation Program Strategic Framework 2030 (GMS-2030). The GMS–2030 transport program will seek innovative strategies in six new areas, as follows:

- Regarding railways, strategies and masterplans will be developed with prominence given to private sector investment, concessions, maintenance, and operations.
- Shift emphasis toward developing and expanding capacity in sea, river, and dry ports.
- Promote inland waterways, coastal shipping, and passenger services.
- Promote the development of international and secondary airports.
- Help to integrate urban transport into urbanization strategies and planning.
- Considerations for the social, environmental, and resettlement effects of transport projects, as well as road safety, will be priorities.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

This STF-24 Forum will focus on discussing important issues in order to develop and improve towards the effective implementation of the above-mentioned GMS-30 strategy, such as:

- Review and Update the Pipeline of GMS Transport Sector Projects in the GMS Regional Investment Framework (RIF);
- Report on the Progress of the CBTA “Early Harvest” Implementation and other plans for the field of transport and trade facilitation

- Updates on the Greater Mekong Railway Association (GMRA) and the progress on the proposed Framework Agreement on Cross-Border Railway Transport Connectivity in GMS and information on the ADB's new support projects aims to enhance the effectiveness of GMRA, prepare modern GMS railway network development plan and update GMS railway strategy;

- Initiatives to improve road safety in GMS countries;

- Experience sharing from GMS countries in railway planning and financing

- Progress of implementation of activities/projects to support and promote transport operations in the GMS from the development partners;

- As Deputy Minister of Transport of Vietnam Le Dinh Tho said, this STF-24 forum will be a very special opportunity for us to discuss, share experiences, and propose initiatives to counter the impacts of COVID-19 in the transport sector of GMS countries. We will hear the presentation by ADB on the COVID-19 Response and Recovery Plan (GMS COVID-19 Plan) and discuss the impacts of COVID-19 on future priorities and activities.

Once again, I would like to thank you all for joining STF-24 today and wish the Forum a great success.

In order to continue the program, I would like to give the floor to Mr. Hiroaki Yamaguchi - Co-chair who will deliver the opening speech.

Please, Sir

**Greater Mekong Subregion
Twenty-third Meeting of the Subregional Transport Forum (STF-24)
(Virtual meeting Viet Nam is host)
21 January 2021**

Opening Statement

Mr. Hiroaki Yamaguchi

**Director, Transport and Communications Division
Southeast Asia Department, Asian Development Bank**

Mr. Le Tuan Anh, Director General, International Cooperation Department Ministry of Transport Socialist Republic of Viet Nam and Meeting Chair; Excellencies, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen:

I would like to thank the government of Viet Nam for graciously hosting this 24th Meeting of the GMS Subregional Transport Forum. I wish to thank in particular His Excellency, Mr. Le Dinh Tho for sharing with us his precious time as well as his valuable ideas. My special thanks also go to Mr. Le Tuan Anh for chairing our Forum, as well as other officials and staff of the Ministry for their excellent work in organizing this Forum.

I am very happy and honored to co-chair this important meeting. 2020 was a challenging year for us all. 2021 will, I expect, be equally challenging as we banish COVID-19 from our populations and continue to rebuild the economics of the GMS. As we all know so intimately, public infrastructure is the backbone of economic growth.

The theme of STF-24 is *“Forging Greater Transport Connectivity Toward the Visions of GMS-2030”*. This is in line with the new GMS Long Term Strategic Framework 2030. The GMS 2030 has been commented upon at the Ministerial Conference last year and is due to go to the Leaders’ Summit in March this year for endorsement. The Strategy recognizes the challenges facing the region encompassed in its vision of a to develop a more integrated, prosperous, sustainable, and equitable subregion. The transport sector features prominently in the strategy. Through its fundamental strengths of community, competitiveness, and connectivity. Most importantly for our consideration are the core principles of environmental sustainability and resilience, internal and external integration, and inclusivity.

As our countries and the region begin to recover from the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, rebuild our economic base, protect our people, livelihoods and industry from this pandemic, the transport sector remains important. This is particularly true in the urban transport area, where countries are targeting better public transport that is environmentally sustainable and resilient. But new challenges arise for the sector. Public expenditure is less focused on large public infrastructure projects as governments focus on social protection and health. Within the region, there is a sense of optimism and opportunity. Despite a global shift to unilateralism, the GMS has a deep understanding of the need to work together for a path to recovery. Governments are more open to change in the way we do things. The introduction of digital technology. The approval of subregional agreements that improve efficiency and promote growth. The adoption of international standards. It is our job in this forum to identify and deliver key elements of change that will launch the region into the next decade.

This Forum will review, as always, the progress of the mostly infrastructure-focused projects in the regional connectivity-related pipelines of the GMS member countries, under the GMS Regional Investment Framework 2022. Unlike other years however, 2021 will witness the development of a new RIF which will adopt more universally accepted project preparation criteria. In responding to the demands of government, the private sector and our development partners, projects in the RIF should incorporate a higher level of preparation if they are to be of interest to internal and external sources of financing. There will be more on this later in the year.

2021 will be a year of recovery. One of the fundamental elements for the GMS will be the strengthening of inter and intra regional value chains. The transport sector plays a key role in this effort. The region has already pioneered the GMS Cross-Border Transport Facilitation Agreement, or CBTA. Through the early harvest program this has already begun effective implementation. However, due to technical, legal, institutional, physical capacity, and coordination issues, overall CBTA implementation has fallen short of expectations. The restrictions in movement mean 2021 provides us the opportunity for real change in cross border transport arrangements such as extending permit arrangements, moving to digital trade documentation. In today's meeting, we will

be briefed on the progress of this program, as well as on further activities moving forward.

GMS 2030 also focuses on multi-modalism and inter-modal links, with particular emphasis on railway development and connectivity as an efficient, safe and environmentally sustainable transport mode and integrated urban transport development in border towns and cities. The key regional institution that has been established toward this goal is the Greater Mekong Railway Association, or GMRA. Since its establishment in 2013, the GMRA has worked diligently towards the ultimate goal of a wide-reaching, inter-connected and efficient GMS railway network. The Forum will also be briefed on the latest developments and plans in these efforts.

The stark and unpleasant truth is that road deaths in our region far exceed deaths from the corona virus disease. Our regional projects must continue to include elements for road safety in design and well as compliance and public awareness. This is a global problem and increasingly there is stronger coordination and resources dedicated to mitigating these deaths. We have dealt with this topic in our last STF, where the broad findings of recent studies on the status of road safety in certain GMS countries were discussed. Today, we will again look into this important subject, with a focus on further efforts and possible next steps.

Toward the end of our meeting today, we will be briefed on a major GMS-wide undertaking that will impact on all sectors of cooperation in the GMS Program, including the transport sector. A new long term GMS Strategic Framework covering the period up to 2030 is now under preparation. This has been necessitated by a recognition that rapid changes and critical new trends are taking place in the regional and global context. These present challenges as well as opportunities for the GMS cooperation program, requiring a refocusing and recalibration of our strategic directions and actions to ensure the continued strength and relevance of the Program.

As mentioned, financing of large infrastructure projects is becoming increasingly challenging. Today we will hear one example, that of Viet Nam, and how they are

4

working towards an integrated rail network and urban rail solutions. It is an impressive effort and they are coordinating with other GMS members to ensure effective cross border integration. I am sure the session will be inspiring.

Last but not the least, we will hear from our development partners on updates on their activities in the region's transport sector and hopefully also we will have the chance to explore further potential collaborations with them.

We therefore have a full plate before us. But I am sure we will be able to handle this substantive agenda quite well.

I therefore look forward to an interesting and productive STF-24. Thank you.