

Opening Remarks

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H.E. Mr. Raymond Lim, Minister for Transport, Republic of Singapore,
Mr. Junichi Shiraishi, Deputy Director General, Ministry of the Environment, Japan,

Excellencies, participants, international experts, colleagues and ladies and gentlemen,

It is my great pleasure that I can welcome all of you to this Third EST Regional Forum at Singapore, today.

I am in particular pleased to be able to welcome new 8 members from South Asia to this Forum for the first time in the history of the EST activities of UNCRD which was initiated with the participation of 14 South East and North East Asian countries in 2005.

Transportation related problems, including traffic jams, air and noise pollution in cities and accidents are quite common around the world regardless it is a developed country or developing one, and many countries and big cities are tackling on this problem with various approaches but without finding satisfiable results. This is why we have unanimously agreed the Aichi statement as a comprehensive and fundamental bases for our approach on EST with the identification of 12 related subjects at its first EST Regional Forum organized in Nagoya, the home-ground of UNCRD.

This activity was followed up by another round of Regional Forum in Yogyakarta in 2006, and the Mayor's Dialogue on EST in Kyoto in 2007, with the participation of 22 Asian Cities, including those from South Asia. This Mayors' Dialogue gave a birth of Mayors' Declaration on EST signed by participating 22 mayors officially, and at the same time, paved the way to interlink the activities at central government level and those at city or municipality level.

Ladies and gentlemen,

For the materialization of the concept of EST, it is essential to take concrete steps with the participation of all the stakeholders concerned, including the central governments, local municipalities, general public, and the people working for the transport, environment as well as for the health together.

UNCRD has been providing country specific assistance for the development of national EST strategies in the countries of South East Asia. It is my pleasure that this activity is going to expand its coverage to South Asian countries soon.

However, development of the strategy itself is not the final goal of our activities. Without the

implementation of the developed strategies, we cannot achieve our goal. It is why we have continuously requested participation of various donors and international, regional and national aid agencies to this activity from the outset of this Forum. I appreciate the continued support of WHO, SIDA, GTZ, AWGESC, SACEP and others. In addition, I will welcome the participation of JICA and JBIC (Japanese Bank for International Cooperation) together in this Forum this time which is symbolic for us to see further harmonized financial and technical contribution of the Government of Japan to the work on EST.

It is also encouraging for us that JICA has just announced new collaboration for Indonesia for the support of urban transportation related comprehensive project which exactly coincide with the concept of our EST.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Technology transfer and new and additional funding have been the continued requests of developing countries since the preparatory stage for the UNCED organized in Rio de Janeiro in 1992. While the international discussion on the climate change is still going on, CDM (Clean Development Mechanism) is one of the already available mechanisms, introduced under the Kyoto Protocol which will provide us with technical and financial assistance at the same time. It is encouraging for us that the Transmilenio, Bus Mass Transit System in Bogota, Colombia, has been officially authorized as the first CDM project which opened the way for similar projects in other parts of the world as well.

Also the concept of co-benefit which will try to materialize the win-win stories between the economic development and the good management of the environment can be considered as a good driving force for our EST activities as well. It is why we have prepared a special session on co-benefit in this Forum which is planned on the afternoon of tomorrow so that we can benefit from this concept for the materialization of our efforts.

It is symbolic that we are going to start new era of our activities on EST with the participation of new members at the city of Singapore which all the people agree as the best example city of EST in Asia, not only because of the infrastructural development but also its operations of the systems developed. On behalf of all the participants in this Forum, I would like to take this opportunity to highly appreciate Land Transport Authority and National Environment Agency of Singapore for their generous support and kind hospitality this time. Thank you very much.

Finally, but not least of course, my appreciation goes to the Government of Japan for its continued support to this activity without which we could not materialize any movement on this subject, EST.

Excellencies, Ladies and gentlemen,

I would like to invite all of you to the active discussion and participation in this forum for the promotion of EST in all the parts of Asia.

Thank you very much.