

# Opening Remarks

by Dr. Oulay PHADOUANGDETH  
STF 21, 19-20 July 2017  
Luang Prabang

Excellency, Viengsavath Siphanhdone, Vice Minister of Public Works and Transport

Excellency, Vongsavanh Theppachanh, Vice Governor of Luang Prabang Province

Excellency, Math Sounmala, Assistant Minister of Public Works and Transport

Mr. Hiedeaki Iwasaki, Country Director Resident Mission, ADB, my co-chair

Distinguished head of delegations,

Development Partners,

Ladies and gentlemen,

It is indeed my honour and great privilege to have an opportunity chairing the Twenty-first GMS Sub-regional Transport Forum in this historical and charming city of Luang Prabang. I would like to take this opportunity to express my sincere thanks to ADB for their support in organizing this meeting along the side with Ministry of Public Works and Transport of Lao PDR. This morning, I believe you all have participated in the field visit to Lao-PRC Railway Construction Project, which is one of the top Lao transport priority projects in RIF-IP.

Excellencies,  
Distinguished participants,

In the Twentieth STF in Nanning, many of agenda items were raised and discussed. The successful outcomes can be clearly witnessed through the extension of and additional economic corridors through Myanmar and Lao capitals, which were endorsed in the Twenty-first Ministerial Conference in Chiang Mai last December. The 21<sup>st</sup> STF agendas are very relevant and closely linked with the previous meeting. This is the forum that will determine the 5 and 10 years of GMS transport sector future, since the topic like “the New GMS Transport Sector Strategy” will be introduced and discussed as a starting point leading to the introduction in the high level Economic Corridor Forum and the Twenty-second Ministerial Conference in Vietnam in a couple of months.

I would like to emphasize that Lao PDR attaches a great importance to GMS Transport Sector Strategy and Regional Investment Framework. This has been incorporated in the National Public Works and Transport Sector Vision until 2030 and our long-term Development Strategies. In other words, I would like to underline that transport projects in the RIF are prioritized in the national investment pipeline as well.

Another notable meeting agenda is Axle Load Control Practices in GMS countries. This is regarded to be one of the sector the most pressing issues that need to be urgently addressed. The lessons, practices and recommendations shared will be essentially valuable for Lao PDR, since we are under the implementation of 3 pilot weight station construction projects.

Ladies and gentlemen,

In my final notes, I would like to encourage all to exchange views and discuss each agenda item thoroughly. I wish the Forum delivering the productive outcomes and concrete directions to move forward the GMS Transport Sector and GMS cooperation as a whole. I wish you all having an enjoyable moment in Luang Prabang.

May I declar the Twety-First STF officially opened.

Thank you,

May I now call on my Co-Chair, Mr. Iwasaki to give us his Opening Remarks?

Please Iwasaki San,