

**Welcoming Speech by H.E U Kyaw Myo, Deputy Minister,
Ministry of Transport and Communications
22nd Meeting of the GMS Sub-regional Transport Forum
21st June, 2018
Mandalay Hill Resort Hotel, Myanmar**

**Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen
Good Morning - *Mingalabar!***

It is my great pleasure to address this accomplished gathering on the auspicious occasion of the opening session of the 22nd GMS Subregional Transport Forum. On behalf of the Ministry of Transport and Communications of Myanmar and on my own behalf, allow me to extend our warmest welcome to all Heads of Delegation and delegates from GMS Member Countries, executives and officials from the Asian Development Bank, ADB, and other Development Partners to Mandalay, which was the last royal capital of the Konbaung Dynasty and is Myanmar's second largest city as well as the commercial hub of Upper Myanmar.

I believe that the discussions during this forum will pave the way for the full implementation of the Ha Noi Action Plan (HAP) 2018-2022 and the operationalization of the priority projects of the Regional Investment Framework 2022 (RIF 2022). We may say that the timing of this Forum is very significant because it follows the adoption of the HAP 2018-2022 and the RIF 2022 at the 6th GMS Summit held recently in Ha Noi from 29th to 31st March.

As we are all aware, trade and investment are driving forces for the economic development of a nation. Consequently, it is vital to facilitate transport for trade growth, tourism development and regional integration. In that regard, Early Harvest Implementation of the GMS Cross Border Transport Facilitation Agreement (CBTA) and development of the economic corridor approach will greatly benefit the economy and people of our Sub-region.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Please allow me to take the opportunity on this occasion to briefly outline the current developments in Myanmar. Myanmar is actively participating in both regional and international cooperation programs including those in the transport sector. On the domestic side, our government is striving to ensure the progress of education, health, agriculture, rural development, electricity, water supply, SME development, law enforcement, peace and democracy. We believe that efficient and low-cost transportation is essential in order to expedite the achievement of these objectives.

Currently, we are upgrading our main rail lines such as Yangon-Mandalay, Yangon-Mawlamyine, Mandalay-Myitkyina and Yangon-Pyay with the assistance of development partners. We are also upgrading our expressways, highways, bridges and rural road access. In the maritime sector, we have established six port terminals within two years. At the same time, we are also expanding the port terminals in the Thilawa SEZ area with the aim to increase our sea freight handling capacity in order to accommodate the anticipated future demand. In the air transport sector, we are taking measures to upgrade airports important for tourism and commerce such as Kawthaung, Mawlamyaing, Heho and Muse domestic airports with private participation. However, Myanmar has still missing links in some domestic and cross-border transport corridors but we believe that we can overcome these challenges through regional and sub-regional cooperation and support from our development partners.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I note that there will be eight meeting sessions over the two days of this forum which will cover *inter alia*, respective reviews of the pipeline of GMS transport projects in the RIF 2022 and the progress of member countries, the state of development of GMS economic corridors, progress of the priority GMS railway links, implementation of CBTA “Early Harvest”, and status of road safety. I believe that our development partners will be also giving updates on cooperation in the GMS transport sector. I believe that all these

topics are particularly relevant for the successful implementation of the transport sector strategies and priorities in both HAP (2018-2022) and RIF 2022 as well as the realization of our goals in the Transport Sector Strategy 2030. I am confident that the discussions at this meeting will be very productive with most fruitful outcomes for the future of our GMS transport sector.

Finally, I would like to express my utmost appreciation to ADB for its valuable support, the Meeting Secretariat and Coordinators for their excellent facilitation, all the concerned officials from MOTC for their efficient organization, all of which will surely go towards the successful holding of this meeting.

I wish all the delegates a very pleasant stay in Mandalay and hope that you all have time for shopping and sightseeing.

Thank you!

**Opening Remarks by U Win Khant, Permanent Secretary,
Ministry of Transport and Communications
Twenty Second Meeting of the GMS Subregional Transport Forum
21– 22 June, 2018
Mandalay Hill Resort Hotel, Myanmar**

**Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,
Auspiciousness to you all!**

I am very pleased to make the opening remarks at this forum. First and foremost, I would like to extend my deep appreciation to you all for attending here today. I am also very grateful to Asian Development Bank for the kind assistance to hold the forum successfully in Mandalay.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The Theme of STF-22 is "**Committed to Moving Forward along the Path of the New GMS Transport Strategy**". So, as addressed by our Deputy Minister, this is the first discussion after endorsement of Transport Sector Strategy (2030) at 6th GMS Summit held in Vietnam from 29 to 31 March this year. As you all know, Transport Sector Strategy (2030) is mainly a strategic document for a common framework of GMS cooperation in the transport sector. It is also the identification of prioritized projects which reviewed the GMS Strategic Framework (2012-2022) under Regional Investment Framework (RIF).

Besides, I think these are living pipeline projects and align with regional and national plan. And also they will be marketing tool to rouse new financing for project implementation. Today, we will hear the presentations made by member countries for the projects in RIF.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let me recall the outcomes of the 6th JCM meeting held in Vietnam from 14 to 15 March this year. Member countries recognized that the reduction of non-physical barriers to transport and trade is the key to have the benefits from improved connectivity among the members, boosting trade, tourism investment, and etc. In this regards, we will continue to cooperate towards the common goals of transforming transport into economic corridors.

So, we will pay attention to review the development of GMS economic corridors in the meeting. It can guide us further efforts in economic corridor development by sharing knowledge; identifying gaps and bottlenecks which need to be addressed and proving a benchmark for monitoring the progress in GMS economic corridors.

For facilitation of the movement of goods and people in the GMS and development of efficient transport and communication system, our member countries have already drafted the MoU on the additional routes and border crossing of Protocol-1.

Continuously, most member countries have started 'Early Harvest' Implementation in 1st June 2018 after signing the MoU on the 'Early Harvest' Implementation of the CBTA. Myanmar will join it through initial implementation with neighboring countries during a grace period until 1st June 2020. Initially, as you are aware Myanmar will commence IICBTA with Thailand in this August. Now we are now under process to finish our internal procedures.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

GMS Strategic framework emphasizes the importance of connecting all member countries by rail and promoting a seamless GMS rail network. The Greater Mekong Railway Association (GMRA) was established and I would like to express my appreciation to ADB for Technical Assistance to review the

nine priority rail links agreed at the GMRA meeting in 2015. On the other hand, Framework Agreement for Cross Border Railway Transport Connectivity in the GMS is being finalized for the formulation and operationalization of GMRA. One of BOD will brief the progress of the priority GMS railway links in the meeting.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

As you have noticed, in Asia- Pacific Region, one person is being killed on the road in every 40 second. So, road accident fatality is an important problem and it may cause a great loss in socio – economic development of the country. So, for Myanmar, to reduce the loss of lives, accidents, environment impacts and traffic congestion, we have launched Myanmar Road Safety Action Plan (2014-2020) which intend to reduce 50% road accident fatality rate.

To sum up, I do believe and hope that this meeting will have the fruitful results for regional integration.

Thank you for your kind attention.

**Greater Mekong Subregion
Twenty-second Meeting of the Subregional Transport Forum (STF-22)
Mandalay, Myanmar
21-22 June 2018**

Opening Statement

By

Mr. Hiroaki Yamaguchi

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

His Excellency, Kyaw Myo, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Transport and Communications, Republic of the Union of Myanmar; Mr. Win Khant, Permanent Secretary, MTC, Myanmar; Excellencies, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen:

I am very pleased to co-chair this 22nd Meeting of the GMS Subregional Transport Forum. This is the first time that I have the honor of co-chairing this important Forum as I have just been recently appointed as Director of ADB's Southeast Asia Transport and Communications Division, as the successor of Mr. Hideaki Iwasaki whom you may know very well as he has been the co-chair for this forum for the past 4 years. Previously I have been involved in ADB's transport-related operations in South Asia. I am therefore very much interested and excited to participate in this Forum, which is the key venue for the highly regarded and fruitful GMS cooperation in the transport sector.

I would like to thank the government of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar for graciously hosting this important event. I wish to thank in particular His Excellency, Deputy Minister Kyaw Myo of the Ministry of Transport and Communications for sharing with us his precious time, as well as his valuable ideas. My special thanks also go to Mr. Win Khant, Permanent Secretary of the Ministry for chairing our Forum, as well as other officials and staff of the Ministry of Transport and Communications for their excellent work in organizing this Forum.

The theme of our Forum is "*Committed to Moving Forward along the Path of the New GMS Transport Strategy*". You will recall that in previous STF meetings, the countries

directed that a new strategy be prepared to succeed the then prevailing GMS Transport Sector Strategy 2006-2015. It was recognized that a new strategy would be needed to ensure that progress in the sector is sustained beyond 2015 and that cooperative activities and interventions in the sector would better respond to the new challenges and opportunities from a very dynamic regional and global context. Such a new strategy has since then been formulated and has gone through several rounds of consultations, in the STF, as well as the other GMS institutional mechanisms, such as the Senior Officials' Meeting and the GMS Ministerial Conference. The new GMS Transport Sector Strategy, or TrSS 2030, was subsequently endorsed by the GMS countries' transport ministers and officials and has gained the support of the GMS Leaders in their 6th Summit in March 2018.

The TrSS 2030 has set the medium-to-long term strategic thrusts and operational priorities for GMS transport sector development. These strategic directions are what we will tackle in this two-day Forum. The TrSS 2030's broad strategic directions are quite simple and straightforward but have great significance and depth. We will have the chance to see these again in Session 1 of our forum, but I would like to mention these strategic thrusts now, to help explain our agenda.

- First, completing the GMS economic corridor network and improving links with South Asia and the rest of Southeast Asia,
- Second, facilitating cross-border transport,
- Third, strengthening intermodal links,
- Fourth, promoting the development of logistics,
- Fifth, improving road asset management, and
- Sixth, enhancing road safety.

In the very first session this morning, the countries will present the progress on their transport projects in the GMS Regional Investment Framework, or RIF, 2022, which of course all aim to contribute toward realizing these strategic thrusts. Needless to say, we can only be certain that we are succeeding toward achieving the overall goals set in the

strategy when we see progress in implementing the specific projects and interventions aimed at them.

In the second session, we will be briefed on the findings and recommendations of an important study assessing the actual state of development of the GMS economic corridors. Economic corridor development has been recognized as the effective lynchpin of GMS subregional development. It has been said that the network of transport routes forming the backbone of the GMS economic corridors is now virtually complete. However, the actual state of each segment of the corridors has not yet been made very clear. This study tries to assess in detail this actual state, focusing on the physical infrastructure but also looking into the economic potential of areas along and around the corridors. Thus, the study provides a useful guide for identifying and designing further interventions to address needs and gaps in the development of the corridors.

The third session is focused on completing the transport corridors and strengthening intermodal links through the development of a key transport mode, which has generated great interest among GMS countries for its being efficient and more environment-friendly. I am of course referring to railways. In this session we will be briefed on the progress of work being done in the Greater Mekong Railway Association toward developing and interconnecting the GMS countries' railway network.

The fourth session is focused on the strategic thrust of facilitating cross-border transport. The primary software for facilitating cross-border flows of vehicles, goods and people in the GMS is the GMS Cross Border Transport Facilitation Agreement, or CBTA. In this session, we will be briefed on the progress being made under the Memorandum of Understanding among GMS countries on the "Early Harvest" implementation of the CBTA.

In the fifth and last session today, we shall be looking into a relatively new focus area in the TrSS, namely, road safety. GMS transport development does not only aim at faster and smoother travel across the length and breadth of the subregion but also at making it

safer. In this session, the broad findings of the current status of road safety in GMS countries, and the importance of this common issue will be presented, including some recommendations and next steps toward this goal.

Just before we conclude our Forum, we will devote a session to the important role of our development partners in GMS transport cooperation. We will hear updates from a number of them on their activities in the region's transport sector, and hopefully have the chance to explore further potential collaborations with them toward the development of the sector.

Excellencies, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen:

We therefore have very significant and challenging issues to address in this Forum. Our discussions in these two days will hopefully contribute toward the realization of a "seamless, efficient, reliable and sustainable GMS transport system", the vision set by the GMS Transport Sector Strategy 2030. This in turn is a key ingredient in the overall GMS vision of an integrated, prosperous and harmonious subregion.

I therefore look forward to a very meaningful and productive STF-22. Thank you.