

ERIA ED Speech to ACCC Luncheon Meeting
April 2011

His Excellency Ambassador Ngurah Swajaya, the Chairperson of ASEAN Connectivity Coordinating Committee, Honorable members of ASEAN Connectivity Coordinating Committee, Participants from international organizations, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Firstly, apart from my designation as the Executive Director of ERIA, I, as one single Japanese Citizen, would like to express deepest gratitude for all the help extended by ASEAN and its member countries to the last major earthquake and tsunami. I could see real regional people to people connectivity by all the assistance in the recovery efforts in Japan. Japan will sure to recover from this disaster, and will surely contribute more to ASEAN Community building ever than before.

It is a great honor for ERIA and myself, to be able to attend this luncheon meeting of the first ACCC. Following our drafting support for the Master Plan on ASEAN Connectivity last year, ERIA is strongly committed to continuously support the activities of ACCC to bring the plan into reality. The successful implementation is the key to the achievement of ASEAN Economic Community in the year 2015, especially bringing the merit of integration to the majority of people in ASEAN. ERIA will exert itself to do its best to provide its knowledge and resources to bring successful result to the Master Plan.

Today, I would like to introduce our approach to support implementation of MPAC. As you all are quite familiar, connectivity can be divided into three categories, which are institutional connectivity, physical connectivity and people to people connectivity.

For the institutional connectivity, ERIA will continue to conduct studies to examine the progress of implementation of AEC Blue Print, through its

work of improvement of AEC Scorecard. Also ERIA was just tasked out to provide analytical works for the Mid Term Review of AEC Blue Print. During the course of the above mentioned activities, ERIA will carry out intensive discussions with business, government officials and other related stakeholders on key issues related to improvement of trade facilitation in the region, enhancement of border management capabilities and other key issues to facilitate institutional connectivity, and prepare concrete and implementable policy recommendations. For this major task, ERIA will utilize its strong ties with its regional institution network, and try to keep its relevancy to policy and business.

For the physical connectivity, there are 3 key elements for the successful implementation of the development plan.

First is the strong commitment of each member countries for carrying out the projects. For this, national coordinator will play very significant role in rallying related ministries and agencies to cooperate together for implementation of priority projects in MPAC and CADP. That will further facilitate funding from donor agencies and dialogue partners to come into these projects. For this aspect, ERIA has already formed its internal expert team to follow up and consult with key national agencies to implement important projects and they will contemplate how to solve existing problems and provide appropriate solutions.

Second is to select key projects that will give greater impact to regional development, and concentrate various resources into the implementation of such projects. In other words, it is imperative to secure appropriate Funding source and inject the funding for key projects. For this, ERIA is already included in the Indicative List of Funding Sources for Technical Assistance in the Chapter 4 of the Master Plan, together with ADB and World Bank. This year, ERIA will establish a special account for the implementation of detailed feasibility studies and save 500thousand USD for seed money to secure the basis of operation of this fund, and also seek

other funding resources to carry out detailed Feasibility Study and conduct necessary follow-ups.

Third is to nurture human resources to carry out projects, especially PPPs. Projects can succeed only after they get money and human resources. PPP is a very complicate scheme and such projects need a highly competent manager, who has deep understanding of management and engineering. Also they have to have good coordination skills to connect government and various private sectors. It is very important to nurture this kind of experts within the region. For this purpose, ERIA is now preparing a major Project Meister scheme. This is intended to establish a network of educational institutions that have strong background in management and engineering, and prepare common educational curriculum and mutual recognition system of credits and degrees. ERIA is going to certify 20 Project Meisters every year for coming 10 years, that will create 200 Project Meisters in this region. It will also contribute to the people to people connectivity, paving the way for smoother movement of skilled labor. ERIA has already started discussions with University of Indonesia, Japanese Advanced Institute of Industrial Technology and other various educational institutions in this region and planning to launch the program within this year.

ERIA is ready to provide any necessary support of ACCC just as we did last year. ERIA is planning to hold a symposium on Connectivity just around the next ASEAN Foreign Ministers Meeting, and promote communication between policy makers, academia and private sectors. If there are other occasions to host such interfaces among stakeholders, ERIA is strongly committed to extend support.

Lastly, I would like to express deepest appreciation for inviting ERIA to this meeting, and I strongly hope the great success of this meeting.

Thank you very much for your attention.