

CLOSING REMARKS

by

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Distinguished Scholars, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my great pleasure to attend the final session of the Round-Table Meeting on Law Development and Socio-Economic Change in Asia (II) and also to give closing remarks for this meaningful Meeting.

I am very delighted that IDE-JETRO has co-operated with the Faculty of Law, Thammasat University and the Central Intellectual Property and International Trade Court in organising the Round-table Meeting on this occasion. Indeed, the topics of discussion selected for all the 4 sessions are of great interest and gaining momentum in Asian countries during the present decade.

With regard to the topic “*Dispute Resolution in Asia: Theory and Reality*”, all countries including Asian nations have had profound concerns for Alternative Dispute Resolution (or known as “ADR”). In effect, we have witnessed much enactment of special legislation in this sphere. This Round-Table Meeting has proved to be a very intriguing forum for exploring the effectiveness of ADR mechanisms in place in Thailand as well as in other Asian corners. It is very fortunate that this year we had distinguished speakers from extensive jurisdictions, namely, from the Philippines, Japan, India, China and Malaysia, whose views and ideas on ADR in their countries threw much light on the meaningful ways in which ADR can be developed and ameliorated. I am very pleased that discussions on dispute resolution yesterday were actually extended to ADR in such particular areas as labour and environment as well. In fact, dispute settlement with regard to environmental issues seems to be rather new for some Asian jurisdictions. I, therefore, trust that rich experience vividly brought out yesterday would be of significant value to all participants.

Now, with respect to the session involving “*Political and Administrative Reform in Asia*” and the session surrounding the “*Rule of Law in Asia*”, I believe that every participant finds them very much intriguing, too. Speaking of political and administrative reform, it has, in the Thai context, received tremendous attention following the New Constitution. Indeed, this morning, our speaker from Thailand has rightfully reflected some thoughts and remarks about local government reform under the present Constitution. However, it must be realised that political and administrative reform in Thailand is enshrined in many parts of the new Constitution of Thailand, including, of course, the establishment of Administrative Courts. From other speakers, we have learned a great deal about “people power” and transparency. I am confident that all this will be a very worthwhile contribution to Asian development.

Now, some remarks on “*The Rule of Law*”. I am sure that this concept has been very familiar to lawyers everywhere and, at all times, constitutes a benchmark of governance. We are today very much benefited by very valuable remarks as reflected from the experience of Indonesia and China.

The discussions of all the selected topics have now come to an end. I hope that the experience and ideas we have shared and learned together from this Round-Table Meeting will not just be short-lived but will last long and be put into practical use for the benefit of our Asian countries.

Finally, I am very pleased that this forum has brought together many distinguished speakers from several Asian jurisdictions. I hope that the friendship we have created will be very long-lasting and that we will in the future enter into other meaningful forms of co-operation. I should also take this opportunity to extend my most sincere thanks to IDE-JETRO for making this form possible and I trust that we will receive this type of kindness again on next occasions.

Thank you.