

Congratulatory address

*H.E. Dr.AmpolSenanarong,
Privy Councillor, Privy Council Chambers*

Swasdeekrap.

Prof.Dr. Hideki Fukuda, President of Kobe University, Distinguished Guests, ladies and gentlemen, good afternoon.

I would like to extend a warm welcome to the participants from Japan. I am delighted to declare the Kobe University Global-link Forum in Bangkok open. It gives me great pleasure to be invited to this Forum.

The Kingdom of Thailand and Japan has a long history of close relations, starting with of course the close relationship between our two royal families and extending to cooperation in the fields of culture, academic activities and economic development.

On the academic front, Japan has accepted a large number of students from Thailand, and it is extremely pleasing to see there are now many Japanese specialists in the field of research on Thailand, with a growing number of younger researchers following in their path. Kobe University is playing a leading role in these activities by developing a wide range of academic exchange agreements and joint research projects. I would like to take this opportunity to thank Kobe University for holding this event here in the Kingdom of Thailand and recognize this event as a major step towards promoting exchange between our two countries.

The Kobe University Thailand Alumni has been active over a long period, with regular informal meetings between both Japanese and Thai graduates of Kobe University. In August of 2009 the 'Kobe University Alumni Association in Thailand 'was established through initiatives from Kobe University and cooperation between the Japanese and Thai alumni, culminating in the events we are participating in over these three days.

I would like to express my deepest gratitude to the alumni and staff at Thammasat University, and Mr.PraphanHetrakul, President of the Yakult Thailand Corporation and Honorary President of the Thailand Alumni, for their outstanding efforts to hold the Kobe University Fair. President Praphan was the

first student from Thailand to graduate from Kobe University in 1958, from the Faculty of Business Administration, and since returning to Thailand he has been one of the leading figures in contributing to development of the Thai economy and remains a key figure in the business arena.

I would like to express my deep appreciation to Kobe University for training many students who followed in the wake of President Praphan and now contribute to a wide range of activities throughout Thailand

I am also delighted to be able to once again meet with Prof.Dr. Hideki Fukuda, President of Kobe University and Prof.Dr.HisashiHorio, previous Vice president of Kobe University.It has been my pleasure to have worked with AchanHorio, Horio sensei for the past 10 years, and it is through him that I was able to meet Professor Dr.Fukuda during discussions on a joint project in which we were involved. I feel my meeting with Professor Dr.Fukuda, who is now President of Kobe University, here in Bangkok was somehow destined by fate.

Finally, I would like to extend my personal gratitude to the staff of Kobe University, and the members of the Thailand Kobe University Alumni who have worked in close collaboration to make this 1st Forum in Bangkok a reality. I sincerely hope that this 3-day forum will be a great success and am sure that it will contribute to a further deepening of the strong relations between Thailand and Japan. Thank you.