Mr. Prayut Chan-o-cha, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Thailand, Distinguished Guests,

I welcome the Second Asia Cooperation Dialogue (ACD) held for the first time in four years under Prime Minister Prayut’s leadership.

ACD

ACD is a unique framework that includes the members from all over Asia and has diverse religious and cultural background. The member states have the potential to be the world growth center as many member states maintain high economic growth even when the prospect of the global economy is unclear.

It is important to leverage its diversity and potential to enhance the ACD’s role which strengthens and complements existing regional frameworks.

Today, in this context, I would like to make remarks focusing on “Sustainable Development Goals”, Connectivity and Human Resource Development.

SDGs

Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are ambitious targets which inform our efforts to ultimately eradicate poverty from the earth and to realize a sustainable world by 2030.

It is imperative that all stakeholders, including all countries, the private sector, civil society, women and people with disabilities must play their respective roles to achieve the goals. We highly appreciate the fact that the ACD priority areas were revised in line with the SDGs.

ACD member states have various experiences and lessons on development issues given its diversity and background. I am certain that ACD can play a significant role in achieving SDGs by sharing these lessons among the member states.

In order to take lead in the implementation of the SDGs worldwide, Japan announced to extend around 1.1 billion assistance to international health organizations with a view to achieving Universal Health Coverage (UHC). Given that the empowerment of women is essential to the realization of sustainable growth, Japan also expressed its intention to make further contribution to help develop the capability of human resource development for roughly 5,000 female administrative officers as well as improve the study environment for approximately 50,000 female students over within next three years from 2016 to 2018. Through these projects, Japan will promote ACD cooperation.

Connectivity

Asia has the high potential as the world growth center. Enhancement of connectivity is important in order to fulfill it. Invigorating the flow of goods and people by connecting the region through roads, bridges and railways is indispensable not only for promoting economic development but also for the regional security and stability.

Not only the sufficiency of the consideration the quantity but also consider quality of infrastructure investment is indispensable for sustainable growth. In providing infrastructure investment, it is important to sufficiently take into account the country’s development state and other circumstance as well as consideration on life cycle cost such as maintenance and management, safety, resilience, local job creation and capacity building while addressing social and environmental impacts.

Japan continues to contribute to enhancing connectivity in Asia by providing countries in Asia with quality infrastructure.

Human Resource Development

In addition to the improvement of infrastructure, development of human resources which will lead the industries in each individual country is also important for the growth in Asia.

As I mentioned earlier, Japan emphasizes local job creation and human resource development for quality infrastructure. Japan also promised in November 2015 to assist industrial human resources development of 40,000 people in Asia over the next three years.

Through Public Private Partnership (PPP), Japan will provide effective and fine-tuned support based on local needs.

I also emphasize on the importance to realize“vibrant and effective” connectivity by enhancing human connectivity through human resource development. In this context, Japan will start the “Innovative Asia” initiative, which aims to promote innovation in the whole Asia by enhancing the circulation of competent human resources between Asian countries and Japan. Through this project, we will invite 1000 students from Asian countries over the next five years from 2017.

Building on the outcome of the second ACD summit, I hope that cooperation under the ACD cooperation is more productive. Japan will further cooperate on it.