

Summary of the Preparatory Meeting of the Spatial Planning Platform

Preparatory Meeting of the Spatial Planning Platform (SPP) was held at Traders Hotel (32nd floor) from 13:00 on Friday, 9th February 2018 with the attendance of countries concerned. Ahead of the launch of the SPP in August, hearing was conducted to gather opinions from each country. Attendees and the summary of the meeting are as follows;

(Attendees)

Japan: Koichi YOSHIDA, Vice President, Minister of MLIT

Eiko TOYAMA, Director of Policy Planning Office, MLIT

Vietnam: Mr. Tran Quoc Thai, Urban Development Agency, Ministry of Construction

Thai: Mrs. Pochanie Kajonpredanon, Director, Department of Public Works and Town & County Planning, Ministry of Interior

Ms. Wiyada Songkittipakdee, Senior Professional, Department of Public Works and Town & County Planning, Ministry of Interior

Malaysia: Ms. ROKIBAH BINTI ABDUL LATIF, Director General, Department of Town and County Planning, Ministry of Urban Wellbeing, Housing and Local Government

Ms. Kamariah Binti Ibrahim, Deputy Director General, Department of Town and County Planning, Ministry of Urban Wellbeing, Housing and Local Government

Laos: Mr. Phomma VEORAVanh, Director General, Department of Water Supply, Ministry of Public Works and Transport

Cambodia: HE. Dr. Pen Sophal, Secretary of State, Ministry of Land Management, Urban Planning and Construction

Myanmar: Ms. Aye Aye Myint, Deputy Director General, Department of Urban & Housing Development, Ministry of Construction

Moderator: Toshiyasu NODA, Professor of Department of Law, Seinan Gakuin University

(Summary of the Meeting)

1. Opening Statement

Mr. Yoshida, Vice President, Minister of MLIT made an opening remark commenting that “balanced territorial development” based on a strategic spatial planning is indispensable for realizing societies where “no one is left

behind” and benefit of economic growth is delivered to all people. He expressed his wish to develop the SPP activities under collective efforts of the attendees. Further, he commented that the high-quality infrastructure which Japan advocates is realized through project implementation as well as comprehensive approach of each stage such as planning, implementation, operation and management. Also, support for the designing of the national spatial plans which is at the very upstream of overall process, is a part of the cycle that generates quality infrastructure. (Reference material 1)

Following the remark, Ms. Toyama, Director of Policy Planning Office, briefed the concept of the SPP (Reference material 2) while attending countries expressed their own views on the concept.

2. Malaysia

We quite like the idea of the SPP. In Malaysia, we call our special planning “National Physical Plan”.

Currently, the focus of our discussion is how we monitor the plan while preparing the database for monitoring is our challenge. Data in the SPP are also old and need to be updated. Our population size is currently 31.4 million and the urbanization rate is 74%. Under our current strategy, we want to keep it less than 85%. Planning system is established in three layers; the national government, federal government and local government. The current plan, NPP3 is for the period of 2016 to 2020. The latest focus of our policy is on climate change and our resilience towards it. We need to examine this, targeting at 2050.

We are discussing the relevance of current New Urban Agenda (NUA) and sustainable development goals as well. As it is duly encompassed in the current plan, we are now sorting out how they will match and interconnect with each other. We are paying attention to urban and rural dynamic growth, spatial sustainability, climate resilience, inclusive and livable community development. Environmental issues are especially important. By preserving the central forest spine of the national territory, we plan to maintain forest coverage at 50% even in 2050. For this, we need to reduce the carbon footprint. It is important to shift our transport from individual automobile to the public transportation such as LRT and MRT. Moreover, we are being attentive so as to realize balanced territorial development in connection with the development axes. Each region has its own issues. Therefore, the key is how we align regional plan with national plan. We basically agree on aiming at

the balanced territorial development so that we give consideration to strengthening the urban/rural connectivity, good accessibility between urban and rural and communication coverage of all areas (Reference material 3).

3. Myanmar

Urbanization rate is relatively low. Currently, it is approximately 30%. It is expected to rise to 40% - 50% by 2040. We need a spatial plan to cope with such urbanization. We have just drafted a spatial development basic plan. It is necessary for us to look at how urbanization will progress in the 7 regions of the country and how its regional centers may develop in the context of development axes, and in relation to the border cities along Thailand, China, and India. Also, it is of our great importance to move forward with balanced development. We are drafting relevant planning law in order to create a small cities development concept with an emphasis placed on urban rural alliance/linkage. We are aiming to submit this to the congress by the end of the year. Along side this, we are working on upgrading our planning system with the cooperation of University of Cologne and JICA. (Reference material 4)

4. Thailand

Spatial planning system of Thailand is similar to that of Malaysia. However, we do not have a national plan yet at the moment. We hope to formulate a national plan by the end of this year. It is important to note that our country is divided into 6 regions where development axes are being structured. Our challenge is how we coordinate and link all these policies into the national plan. Further, 10 special economic zones are being developed in the border regions while foreign direct investments are being promoted in those areas. Therefore, special attention may be required towards the possibility of widening economic disparity. In addition, we need to note that environmental destruction is progressing as a result of such developments. In the regions where their forest coverage used to be roughly 70%, now, it is dropping to 33% - 34%. Database is needed for taking grasp of such situations as well.

5. Vietnam

Vietnam also has a slightly different name for national physical plan. We call it "Orientation Master Plan of National Urban System". In Vietnam, 70% of its population is concentrated in 5 major cities such as Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh. Consequently, there is a great disparities with other small cities.

Although we are monitoring the situations of 813 small cities, it is difficult to come up with a standardized plan. Furthermore, with the influence of climate change, regions that had never experienced a typhoon were recently hit by that directly and people called for necessity of reviewing our resilience issue. Just as Malaysia pointed out, unless we have an appropriate monitoring system in place, it is concerned that we will inevitably end up with cities without enough drinking water or adequate urban service. The SPP is a good concept, but I have three questions; firstly, which organization should attend the conference as a representative of each country? Secondly, who will be the focal point for the SPP? Thirdly, what is the benefit of taking part in the SPP?

6. Laos

We have national planning institute within our government, but its quality is not so high. In reality, we do not have enough experience and knowledge on urban planning. Further, as there is not enough coordination within the government, especially in budget allocation, we have not been able to make investments systematically. Currently, we are concentrating on poverty reduction program so as to outgrow the "least less developed country" status by 2030. However, there is no coordination mechanism for systematic distribution of various budget so that no improvement is being made in the poor areas. I am a Director General of Department of Water Supply. With assistance from UN HABITAT, I am working on collecting necessary data and disseminating the influence of climate change. It is very difficult for me to make appropriate coordination with three different ministers. I am not sure at this stage who will be the focal point of the SPP, but I would strongly request for your assistance to formulate effective plans. We want to understand what needs to be done for improvement of people's quality of life, establishing evidence-based decision making system for urban infrastructure/water supply and dealing with assessment of our vulnerability to climate change. (Reference material 5)

7. Cambodia

Spatial Planning is an indispensable administrative means for encouraging industries and preserving environments. It is also vital for creating economic development hub and development axes for boarder regions. Cambodia developed national spatial plan in 2011, but we are in the process of reviewing the plan from the perspective of New Silk Road Economic Initiative, Asian Highway, Southern-Development Axis and improvement of infrastructure.

Although we are now in phase-III of our spatial planning, it should be reviewed every 5 years from the standpoint of economic growth, employment, equality and productivity etc., as it is influenced by political commitments. We believe that review of the plans from different levels such as national, regional, basic autonomous body and community is required. Moreover, we need to consider the legal status of the spatial planning. Cambodia is going through a rapid growth, but on the other hand, we are faced with challenges such as tight land demand/supply market, delay in eliminating poverty, lack of human resources and innovation of rural /urban areas. We truly wish to improve the current situation through the SPP.

8. Closing comment (Moderator)

I trust that we have core members of the SPP in the today's session. To answer some of your questions that had been raised along the way, firstly, I will be the focal point for the time being, so please do not hesitate to contact me should you have any further questions. For the forthcoming meetings, I would like to have the representatives of your government. As for the benefit of the SPP, I wish to discuss how actual support structure should be, rather than limiting it to simply information sharing and learning from each other. In preparation for the coming up meeting in August, we will brush up the SPP concept paper. Reflecting the comments we had today such as needs for monitoring and handling of climate changes, I wish to take these points into consideration. Additionally, I want to prepare an agreement paper for establishment of the SPP so that participating countries could sign it in the Fukuoka meeting this August.

