

Translation of Remarks
by
H.E. Mr. Abhisit Vejjajiva
Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Thailand
At the Official Inauguration of Nam Theun 2 Multi-Purpose Project
9 December 2010, Khammouane Province, Lao PDR

President of the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Mr. Choummaly Sayasone,
Secretary of State for Foreign Trade, the French Republic, Mr. Pierre Lellouche,
President of the Asian Development Bank, Mr. Haruhiko Kuroda,
Managing Director of the World Bank Group, Ms. Sri Mulyani Indrawati,
Distinguished Guests,

I am pleased to have the opportunity to visit the Lao People's Democratic Republic once again and to witness one of the most important successes of this country. I can recall vividly when I attended the opening ceremony of the 25th SEA Games in Vientiane late last year which was superbly organised by the Government of Lao PDR, and was highly praised internationally. Today, one year later, I am honoured to attend the inaugural ceremony of the "Nam Theun 2" project which is another exemplary success that would help further advance economic and social development of the Lao PDR as well as ensure energy security for the countries in this region.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would like to take this opportunity to extend my felicitations on the accomplishment of the "Nam Theun 2 Multi-Purpose Project," which reflects the cooperation among various parties: namely the Lao PDR, Thailand, and France together with several international organisations. This project underscores the need and importance of international cooperation especially in the era of globalisation where no one country can exist by itself. On the contrary, everyone needs to cooperate with one another in order to face challenges and take advantage of new opportunities. In addition, not only is the "Nam Theun 2" the hydroelectric dam with the highest capacity to generate electricity in the Lao PDR, but it is also an example of a well-managed project that promotes benefits to the local communities with internationally recognised standards for protecting the surrounding environment.

The Thai Government believes that being a partner in the development of the "Nam Theun 2" project and purchaser of the electricity it produces does not only promote trade and investment between the two countries, which are expected to be steadily increasing, but also serves as an example of successful sub-regional

co-operation. This will boost international confidence and attract more foreign investment, especially in the energy sector where the Lao PDR has tremendous potential. Furthermore, this will help the Lao PDR develop smoothly and realise its vision under the 6th economic and social development plan to become the “Battery of Asia,” or “an energy reserve hub for the region”, as well as to attain the United Nations Millennium Development Goals by the year 2015.

I am proud that Thailand, especially its private sector, is part of the success of the “Nam Theun 2” project. I would like to congratulate the Electricity Generating Public Company Limited (EGCO) and the Italian-Thai Development Public Company Limited, which have worked in close collaboration with the Laos authorities and the EDF International of France until a huge project like this one was completed successfully. I would like to reaffirm my wishes to see the Lao PDR develop with security, prosperity, and improvement of quality of life, and move forward in a sustainable manner. I would also like to affirm that the Thai Government’s policy is to encourage our private sectors and state enterprises to invest in the Lao PDR, while enhancing corporate social responsibility, which renders benefits to the local communities and protects the environment at the same time. In this regard, I am delighted to see that several Thai companies are conducting their businesses along this line and are widely accepted -- which I can say that it is one of the important factors that contribute to the success of Thai investors abroad.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The Thai-Lao relationship, which has long been established, and which is deeply rooted in the culture, tradition, religion, and language, is the basis on which the cooperation between our countries flourishes, with understanding and mutual support of one another. Not only does such cooperation help generate prosperity for Thailand and Laos on a bilateral level, but it also can be extended to a wider platform of cooperation with other countries, including creating prosperity to our region and sub-region. The “Nam Theun 2” project is a manifestation of how such cooperation can be implemented concretely in practice.

On the auspicious occasion of the 60th anniversary of the establishment of the Thai-Lao diplomatic ties, on 19 December this year, I would like to reiterate Thailand’s commitment to further enhancing and strengthening our long-standing bilateral relations, especially between the private sectors and peoples of our countries, so that it can serve as a strong foundation upon which we can create mutual prosperity, as well as benefits for this region and sub-region of our two countries for years to come.

Thank you.