

## **Opening Statement**

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Distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen

It is my great honor to have this opportunity to present an opening statement at the Regional Workshop of TAU Project.

At the second ASEAN+J TELSOM held in Siem Reap, Cambodia on 21 August, this project received special attention of the high-level officials and recognized as an ongoing successful partnership between ASEAN and Japan in the field of ICT.

Japan is an exceptional country in which the Universal Service Fund is used only to maintain existing rural services. However, I am of the view that our technical expertise and studies on the global ICT market would help ASEAN countries establish their own universal service obligations. In particular, Ms. Kyoko Koizumi, who is serving this project as the consultant, is my old friend and worked together in the International Telecommunication Union a few years ago. With her experiences in the international arena, I am quite confident that she will contribute to make this project a success.

I hope this workshop provides many useful and valuable suggestions and comments to make this project more successful. As Japan committed to assist ASEAN in developing the Practice Guidelines for the Management of USO Fund last month, I hope the outcomes of this project will be a basis of the research on universal services in ASEAN.

I look forward to the final report in the near future.

Thank you.