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**PRESS RELEASE**

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No.45/2017 (O.32)

18 April 2017

**EEC Jumpstart Brings Thailand Closer to Become  
Key ASEAN Investment and Technology Hub**

The Thai government emphasized on its readiness to jumpstart the new regional's economic hub, the Eastern Economic Corridor (EEC), as infrastructure development under the EEC Scheme, including the capacity expansion of U-Tapao International Airport, is progressing as planned. The EEC Scheme is in the process of seeking approval from the National Legislative Assembly and will be soon implemented in later 2017.

The first meeting of the EEC Development Policy Committee, chaired by the Prime Minister Gen. Prayuth Chan-o-cha, agreed on the establishment of the "eastern aviation city," or "Aeropolis," in the vicinity of U-Tapao International Airport to help promote the EEC. There will be the development of three business groups in the future including Sattahip Commercial Port, a Specialized Medical Center, and defense technology. The meeting also agreed to have the State Railway of Thailand conduct the feasibility study on the development of high-speed train system linking Suvarnabhumi, Don Mueang & U-Tapao airports, to maximize the benefits of the "Aeropolis" to the country. The Policy Committee also endorsed the development plan for the Eastern Economic Corridor of Innovation (EECI) under the Ministry of Science and Technology in Wang Chan Valley and Rayong province and the Eastern Digital Innovation Park under the Ministry of Digital Economy and Society in Sri Racha, Chonburi.

In this occasion, Prime Minister Gen. Prayuth led a group of Thai and international media representatives to visit the new face of U-Tapao International Airport, which showcased the country's capability to become the aviation hub of the region. Developed under the "One Airport, Two Missions" concept, U-Tapao International Airport was initially built for national security purpose but later expanded its capability to serve commercial aviation services. The group later visited the Maintenance, Repair and Overhaul Center located at the airport.

Aviation is among nine target industries being promoted in the three provinces in EEC area, in which key focuses are those involving high technology and extensive research and

development, and crucial to the development of the country's infrastructure and logistics, and promotion of tourism destinations in the areas. Other target industries are Next-Generation Automotive, Smart Electronics, Eco-friendly Petrochemicals and Bio-Chemicals, Automation and Robotics, Medical Hub, Affluent, Medical & Wellness Tourism, Food for the Future and Digital industries.

Prime Minister Gen. Prayuth said that "The Thai government is keen to offer a full support to international investors in these target industries who strive to achieve sustainable development goals, bring a better quality of life to the local community and provide continuing opportunities for local SMEs. We have qualified workforce in the market, as well as utilized best efforts in mitigating investment obstacles and offering attractive privileges and incentives. Most importantly, the EEC Scheme, which was developed for constant and sustainable development, has now been approved by the Council of State and in the process of seeking the Cabinet's approval."

On the same day, the Prime Minister also met with 21 top business leaders in relevant organizations and industries including Amata Corporation Public Company Limited, The Japan External Trade Organization (JETRO), PTT Global Chemical Company Limited, Senior Aerospace (Thailand) Limited, BMW etc.

Amata affirmed the EEC development supported both local and international investment to align with Thailand 4.0 roadmap, through the recent collaboration with Yokohama Smart City Project provides the blueprint of development of smart city in Amata Nakorn Industrial Estate reduce power consumption and the ambition to build the city of education with a total of 7 educational institutes in the estate.

JETRO expressed that Japanese investors were confident on the clear direction of the EEC project and optimistic about the Thai government's recent announcement of Investment Promotion Act 2017.

According to Senior Aerospace, to be a part of the new EEC program is a good opportunity to educate local people as well as learn from them, while strengthening the mutual relationship, as well as marks the beginning of business expansion into the future where they foresaw more and more new players in the aviation sector.

PTTGC, as a veteran investor in the areas, expressed readiness to embrace new business partners in value-added industry sectors.

The Board of Investment (BOI) set new chapter of investment promotion - Investment 4.0 to align with the Thai government's Thailand 4.0 policy, which takes into account the shifting to value-based, innovation-driven economy, the development of human capital, and the creation of high value service. BOI's mission to promote investment in the EEC focuses on core technologies that Thailand has strong potential, including biotech, nanotech, advanced material and digital technology. This is in line with BOI's

According to the BOI, those investing in EEC area will enjoy special incentives that are highly competitive and considered 'most enticing ever' offered in Thailand. These include 50% deduction on corporate income tax (CIT) for five years in addition to a CIT exemption of 13 years and other incentives granted in line with the Competitive Enhancement Act, which includes a maximum corporate income tax exemption of 15 years, among others. The government will also provide other supports including eliminating barriers, rules and regulations in order to generate real, high-value investments as well as One Stop Service to facilitate investment in the area.

The EEC, consisting of three Eastern provinces Chachoengsao, Chonburi and Rayong, is expected to be a flagship investment and technology hub of Thailand and reshape the future of the country. The development of EEC will bring a great deal of benefits to other regions of Thailand as it directly connects to other Eastern provinces including Prachin Buri, Srakaew, Chantaburi and Trad, as well as serve as economic link between upper and lower Northeastern region, and the Gulf of Thailand.

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