

**JFCCT-BOI Consultative Meeting**  
**Wednesday 31<sup>st</sup> January 2018, 12.30 – 16.00 hrs.**  
**Vimarn Suriya Room, Dusit Thani Bangkok Hotel**

**JFCCT Chairman's Responding Remarks**

Your Excellency Dr. Kobsak Pootrakool, Minister Attached to the Prime Minister's Office

Khun Duangjai Asawachintachit, BOI Secretary General

Representatives from government agencies

Members of the JFCCT; other members of the foreign business community.

We are privileged, due to a long tradition of close collaboration with the Thailand Board of Investment. In particular for many years the Secretary-General has championed trade and investment with Thailand and has been open and welcoming of our recommendations through dialogue and engagement. On behalf of the foreign business community in Thailand, please accept our appreciation, Your Excellency, and Khun Duangjai and staff, for having organised today's consultative meeting.

Close consultations between the Government and the private sector are very welcome and are important for policy development, understanding and support.

The Joint Foreign Chambers of Commerce in Thailand, (JFCCT), is the umbrella organisation for over 30 foreign chambers of commerce foreign Business Associations in Thailand, with some 9,000 end member companies. 2016 marked our 40<sup>th</sup> year of supporting foreign business in Thailand.

JFCCT and the entire foreign business community reflect a large pool of talent, commitment to Thailand and a positive regard for enhancements to doing business, transfer of skills, capacity building and other ways of raising economic and social prosperity.

To be sure there are challenges, and real reforms are needed. The recent change in the World Bank's 'Doing Business' rankings to number 26<sup>th</sup> is very much a positive step in the right direction. The Smart Visa programme is also a positive step.

Looking at the big picture, we are committed to contributing to ways in which an economic vision for Thailand, such as Thailand 4.0, can be achieved by various policies not only at a high level but via the nitty-gritty of everyday experience.

We also look to new areas (for us) such as Agriculture, a sector not as well addressed perhaps as industry and services. Changes to the education system are needed to equip the workforce with necessary future skillsets and mindsets. The telecoms sector which underpins the Digital Economy also needs reforms.

Big issues include:

Skills in the economy,

how we may transform digitally at the company level, industry level and economy-wide level ,

processes for interaction with government (B to G and G to C) and within business (B to B and B to C) .

Liberalisation of services

All these require in many respects a change of mindset and fundamental structural reform. Tools to achieve this in our life-times do need fast track initiatives such as the Guillotine programme, something which JFCCT is pleased to have been part of since the start.

As we look to issues which impact our business lives daily (including those of local companies) our recommendations are based on experiences which are less about convenience but more importantly about national reputation which can be impacted one way or the other by these experiences. For example, Work Permit and Visas continue to be just about the single-most talked-about area of experience. In many respects this is a 45 year old issue but it is not one featured in the 'doing business' ranking criteria.

We also welcome the continuity from looking at issues raised in the past and hope that all issues can be tracked for future enhancement. Nothing is solved in a day, but it is, I would suggest, quite OK for all of us to be a little impatient about developments – that applies to us also and we will continue to do our part to contribute to positive outcomes.

Excellency, Secretary-General and esteemed representatives from government agencies, we thank you again for the opportunity to engage in these valuable consultative meetings.