

**PANEL DISCUSSION  
AND Q&A  
SESSION I,  
FORUM DAY 1  
MONDAY, JANUARY 9, 2012**

**By**

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As traffic jam has become a serious problem, students expressed their concerns about the solution to reduce road congestion and the efficiency of building mass transport system. At the panel discussion, Dr. Ngo Doan Vinh stated that the given issue had been puzzling for many policy makers but still raised several promising solutions from his point of view: on a short term basis, governments should build freeway overpasses and prevent cars into centers in rush hours; on a long term basis, policy makers could consider reallocating the most populous areas out of the city centre. Dr. Ngo Doan Vinh also added that he would prefer developing small and medium urban centers than big ones as this had been the cause of endless road congestion. Considering the importance of the synchronization of the transportation system, Dr. Ngo Doan Vinh also proposed to Vietnam Government to allocate a hub in each country's region, where all goods across the region are processed and delivered to the ports and vice versa. Meanwhile, the Governor from Thailand – M.R. Sukhumbhand Paribatra shared that as Thailand Government does not wish to create an unfair burden on the middle class, new solutions for transportation in Thailand have to be reasonable in terms of cost. He stressed on the idea of building the monorail – a kind of rail transit system which can be built in a short period of time at a relatively low cost. The Governor also introduced another appropriate solution – BRT (Bus Rapid Transit) which is really cheap to construct but need to control all bus routes.



Following that, students expressed their interest in the system that M.R. Sukhumbhand Paribatra had described and sought his advice on which is the most suitable system for a city. In considering pros and cons, the Governor suggested that for smaller cities, monorail, light rail might work but bigger systems, such as BRT, MRT (Mass Rapid Transit), are more appropriate for bigger cities like Bangkok. On the other hands, monorail, light rail, BRT is inexpensive in terms of time to build but as mentioned, will need to control all bus routes. Referring to the deployment of such system in Thailand, the Governor stressed that Thai people are flexible and adaptable so they will soon get used to new transportation solutions.



As Malaysia has succeeded in implementing SMART (Stormwater Management and Road Tunnel) system, an underground highway which acts as a storm drainage and road structure, a Malaysia student proposed to apply the same system to Vietnam and Thailand and shared Malaysia's willingness in co-operating with neighboring countries to realize the SMART system. Both speakers acknowledged the idea of Malaysian student but expressed that geographical issue should be put in consideration. For example, the terrain in Bangkok is extremely flat so the tunnels need to be long or else the water will simply disappear from one part of Bangkok and emerge in another part of the city.

Both speakers were also agreeable with Japanese students' idea on giving incentives to citizens to shift from existing system to new sustainable transport option. The best incentive, according to M.R. Sukhumbhand Paribatra, is a natural one – economic incentive. For example, when the average cost of travel per day per person is about Baht 18 in Bangkok, using BTS is cheaper by 25% without taking into consideration the amount of time saving.