

Laos and Cambodia Business Trip Report

I was a part of the seminar, "Information Service for ASEAN's Exporters" in Laos and Cambodia from March 16-24, 2014. My presentation was about Japan's import regulation, custom procedures, and some important tips on transportation of goods.

Laos



In Laos, about 65 people participated in the seminar, where many women also have joined. I have received some questions regarding specific tariff rates and transportation methods.



I have visited some local companies. Many of them are companies that produce traditional handmade crafts. Every company has a great awareness of the value of making their handicrafts in order to keep their tradition and protect minority groups of the country.

Laos is a landlocked country with no access to the sea; thus, the logistics companies have been expanding very slowly into the country. The main international transportation method is EMS or foreign courier service.

At this time, I have only visited Vientiane where the city is compact and well-organized. Despite rapidly increased numbers of automobile in the city, the street parking vehicles are commonly seen due to insufficient numbers of parking lots.

The price of gas is about 110 yen per liter, which is relatively expensive compared to their living standard and salaries.

Cambodia

After visiting Laos, I moved to Phnom Penh, the capital of Cambodia. It has been 7 years since the last time I have visited. The rapid development of the city brought me endless surprises during my stay in Cambodia. Tall buildings stand side by side and a Japanese mega-shopping mall, local hotels, infrastructure, and commercial facilities are now being constructed in the city.



A total of 115 people have joined the seminar in Cambodia. Many local exporters are ambitious and have many questions regarding preferential tariff treatment.



People in Phnom Penh City encounters traffic congestion since the number of population and automobile has increased recently. Automobiles and bikes get stuck in traffic every morning and afternoon which is commonly seen in Southeast Asia.

Instead of rapid development in the city area, the areas outside the city (about ten kilometers away from the city) have no tall buildings and spread all around grassland and wetland landscape with dirt road condition. They have large arable lands which show that Cambodia remains as an agricultural country.

Due to my schedule constraints, I was unable to stay for long in both countries, but I have experienced a great moment with a relaxed sense of time flow in Laos and vibrant spirits of Cambodia.