

## **A Seminar on Activating the Automotive Market to Invite Foreign Car Assemblers: Lessons from Myanmar**

Presentations by Kenichi Ohno (GRIPS) and Toru Homma (JICA)  
Co-organized by MOTI, JICA, GRIPS

Since 2018, GRIPS and JICA have studied and discussed automotive policy with Ethiopia's responsible ministries and agencies. We interviewed automotive manufacturers and dealers in Japan and Ethiopia, invited MIDI officials to Japan in June 2018, conducted two automotive seminars in February and August 2019, and dispatched policy missions to Kenya (Aug. 2018) and Myanmar (Nov. 2019). In this seminar, we report the findings of our Myanmar mission.

With per capita income of \$1,310 (World Bank, 2018), Myanmar is at an early stage of industrialization in general and automotive development (SKD) in particular. However, with recent policy actions featuring used car restriction and drafting of an automotive policy (approved in May 2019), the car market suddenly began to boom. Previously, used Toyota cars dominated Yangon streets. Now, new car sales are rising strongly. Seeing this, Suzuki is upgrading its existing assembly plant and Toyota is building a new assembly plant. Koreans and other foreign makers are following suit.

We will explain why this positive change has occurred, and what were the vital policy factors. Policy capacity of the Myanmar government is not very high and the policy process is slow, but Myanmar leaders and officials were—and still are—willing to take foreign (mostly Japanese) advice seriously and try to balance industry needs and national goals. We believe Myanmar's automotive experience can offer useful lessons for Ethiopia in drafting its new automotive strategy.

Time: 9:00-11:00 AM, February 18<sup>th</sup> (Tue), 2020

Venue: Meeting Hall of the Ministry of Trade and Industry  
(8th floor, which is behind Flamingo Restoration or around Exhibition Center)

Participants: Officials from MOTI, EIC, MIDI and other related ministries and organizations, private automotive firms, Japanese and German participants, media

9:00-9:05 Opening remark by H.E. Mr. Teka Gebreyesus, State Minister of Trade & Industry

9:05-9:35 Presentation by Mr. Toru Homma, "The evolution and current status of Myanmar's automotive industry"

9:35-10:05 Presentation by Prof. Kenichi Ohno, "Key findings in Myanmar's automotive policy and lessons for Ethiopia"

10:05-10:50 Discussion chaired by H.E. Mr. Teka Gebreyesus

10:50-11:00 Wrap-up



Kenichi Ohno is a professor at the National Graduate Institute for Policy Studies (GRIPS), Tokyo. He was previously at the IMF, Tsukuba University and Saitama University. He does comparative research on industrial strategies in latecomer countries. He conducts policy dialogue with Ethiopia and Vietnam.



Toru Homma is a senior advisor on industry/investment at Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA). He has extensive industrial experience in both Asia and Africa, including the policy dialogue with Ethiopia since 2009 and Myanmar where he stationed recently as an investment promotion advisor.