

Intervention

by H.E. Prof. Dr. Suchart Thada-Thamrongvech, Minister of Education
at the Third International Congress on Technical and Vocational Education and Training
Plenary I : The Role of Technical and Vocational Education and Training
for Rapid Economic Growth
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Excellencies,
Distinguished Participants,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It gives me a great pleasure to join you today at this plenary session and to share with you the Role of Technical and Vocational Education and Training for Rapid Economic Growth. Recently, our Prime Minister, Her Excellency Yingluck Shinawatra, paid her official visit to China, various agreements have been approved, some of which are construction projects on High Speed trains and water management system in Thailand. Within these coming years, vocational and technical graduates will be asserted in various jobs and businesses ranging from land survey, mechanics, electronics, and logistics to variety of services.

The Education in our country therefore values Technical and Vocational Training in view of Economic Growth and has a paradigm shift from learning for degrees to learning for the needs of labour markets.

Under a scheme known as **Completing Secondary Education within 8 Months**, those workers are encouraged to **transfer their prior knowledge** and learn additionally to get a secondary education certificate. The knowledge gained from the additional learning helps their fundamental knowledge in working better.

My government also highlights education for employability to reduce the income gap and to ensure fairer income distribution. This goal is reflected in the attempt of the Ministry of Education to provide equitable access to quality education and educational resources.

ICT in education is also on our agenda. Beginning from next month, **One Tablet Computer per Child policy will be materialized.** Recognizing the important role of technologies in increasing more learning opportunities for students in the changing world, at an initial stage, tablet computers will be provided for every year 1 primary and secondary education student throughout the country, expecting to be greatly beneficial for many students, especially those in remote areas whose opportunities to reach knowledge elsewhere are often limited by the lack of technologies.

Free access to WIFI internet will be provided to support Information and Communication Technology in Education. This will also include those in vocational education who will benefit from ICT in Education.

I truly believe that empowerment of people will lead to a fair and democratic society. As Minister of Education of Thailand, I intend to link education to the world of work, **support initial fund for new entrepreneurs**, support 21st century employability skills, such as computer literacy and proficiency in languages so that graduates will be equipped with more competitiveness, employability and hence, can fight poverty, improve their quality of life and make true their dreams with full potentials.

The Ministry of Education is also pushing forward several activities to prepare Thailand as a knowledge-based economy and society. Several bilateral and international agreements have been made to alleviate the impact of liberalization of trade in services in Thai education.

As I mentioned earlier that Thailand and China have a strong tie in Economics and Education. Teaching Mandarin Chinese language is also on our agenda. Last week, we welcomed more than one thousand Chinese

teacher volunteers for a period of one year to assist Thai students both in basic and vocational education to prepare for upcoming investment in the country and within the region. More Chinese volunteers will be visiting Thailand this summer to help their Thai colleagues to communicate in Mandarin. Supporting activities like home stay programme, cultural activities, contests and youth exchange will be organized in cooperation with international agencies as well.

The Ministry of Education sets a long term strategy **to develop the economy towards more high technology and creative industries** by pushing forward several activities to prepare Thailand as a knowledge-based economy and society. Undergraduates from vocational colleges will be equipped with practical and excellent technical skills. **Fund for settlement of graduates to be business owners or entrepreneurs** will also be granted to students to begin their own businesses. The scheme on **Schools in Factories and Factories in Schools** will enable them to learn and work simultaneously, thus gaining working experiences during their apprenticeship.

In Asia and the Pacific region, learning for employability is a significant issue. Recognizing competencies is also another track in parallel with normal education which learners will be provided with certificates and diplomas. We are very grateful to various countries within our sub-region, namely: Lao PDR, Cambodia, Viet Nam and Southern China, in working together for upgrading the technical and vocational education and training, such as fellowships in agricultural, industrial and service sectors, exchanges of teachers and teaching assistance in schools and colleges.

To end my presentation, may I express my appreciation to an excellent arrangement and hospitality of this Third International Congress organized by UNESCO and the host country.

Thank you for your kind attention.

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