

**Opening Remarks by  
Mrs. Panita Kambhu  
Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Education, Thailand  
at the  
16<sup>th</sup> UNESCO-APEID International Conference  
on the theme  
“The Heart of Education: Learning to Live Together”  
Infinity Room, Ground Fl.,  
Pullman King Power Hotel, Bangkok, Thailand  
21 November 2012, at 09.30 hrs.**

Mr.Gwang-Jo Kim, Director of UNESCO Bangkok,

Ms.Michelle Lombard, President of Emerging Markets,  
Pearson Thailand,

Mr.Thomas DuCharme, Head of Treasury and Securities  
Services, Asia-Pacific, J.P. Morgan

Distinguished Speakers and Participants,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is both an honor and a pleasure to be here this morning to welcome delegates to the 16<sup>th</sup> UNESCO-APEID International Conference on the theme “*The Heart of Education: Learning to Live Together*”. With the return of this year’s international conference to Bangkok,

/The Thai Ministry...

the Thai Ministry of Education is pleased to be collaborate once again with the Asia Pacific Programme of Educational Innovation for Development (APEID) under the UNESCO Asia Pacific Bureau for Education. We would also like to express our gratitude to the Asia Pacific Network for International Education and Values (APNIEVE), Pearson Thailand, and J.P. Morgan for the support they have given.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Whether at the national, regional or global level, sustainable development that is fair and balanced can only be achieved through relationships built on mutual respect, understanding, and tolerance. Only in that context can we hope to find effective way to address inequalities and injustices, solve problems and overcome the risks and challenges we face in today's world. Thus, of the four pillars of learning identified in the Delors Report, *The Treasure Within* (1996), this conference is right to highlight

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learning to live together as probably the most important and compelling. Over the next three days, we have been invited to share our ideas and experiences on relevant topics, consider paradigms of learning and showcase innovative approaches. I would like to contribute to the discussions by talking very briefly about Thailand.

In the Policy Statement, delivered to the Council of Ministers on 23 August 2011, the Thai government called for coordinated efforts to foster harmony and stability throughout the country as the pre-conditions for strong, balanced and sustainable economic, social and political development. Education has been identified as having a crucial role in bridging our country's urban-rural divide and empowering people so they have a better quality of life. As Ban Ki-moon, the UN Secretary-General pointed out at the launch of the Education First initiative in –

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September 2012, “..when we *put Education First*, we can *reduce poverty and hunger, end wasted potential – and look forward to stronger and better societies for all.*”

Accordingly, education policy has been formulated around the government’s “one big family” concept in which consciousness raising, the building of knowledge, values and social skills and promotion of lifelong learning are among the key strategies for creating a more cooperative, peaceful and livable society. The Ministry of Education gives strong emphasis to ensuring the equitable distribution of resources, so people of all ages and backgrounds, including the disadvantaged, have access to educational services and resources throughout life and equal opportunities to realize their full potential and prosper.

Particular attention is given to increasing opportunities in education and training to meet the needs of people in Thailand’s southernmost provinces.

/ Cultural considerations...

Cultural considerations are being taken into account in the development of new curricula and learning materials; teacher and staff development initiatives have been introduced and scholarships awarded with support from neighbouring countries to encourage people to continue their studies and raise levels of educational attainment.

In the bigger picture, considerable investments are being made in ICT which we see as tools to promote equity and build the nation's human capital. Within the formal system, the distribution of tablet computers from the beginning of the year, the provision of free WiFi to all schools and expansion of the broadband network are among our flagship initiatives. The Asia Pacific Ministerial Forum on ICT in Education, held in Bangkok in September 2012, recognized Thailand's achievements but also commented on the leadership of the region as a whole in working with telecoms and developing pre-paid services. In view of the fact that the Asia Pacific is home to some of

/ the most populated...

the most populated countries, it is vital that these public - private partnerships continue to focus on ways to scale up the use of technology as a means to address this particular challenge so that the region can achieve education for all and also the millennium development goals.

Another of Thailand's challenges has been to reach out to adults and out-of-school youth in all provinces and communities nationwide. With support from UNESCO, Thailand has established a strong network of Community Learning Centres (CLC) under the Office of Non Formal and Informal Education. These centres have an important role to play in promoting literacy and raising literacy levels as the foundations for lifelong learning. This was recognized by the UNESCO Director General when she joined our International Literacy Day celebrations on 8 September this year. In the same way that definitions of literacy have expanded, so too have educational services at

/ these centres...

these centres over time. Communities today access the centres for information on health and sanitation, environmental conservation and stewardship, disaster risk management, income generation, business development and responsible citizenship – themes which underpin the Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) agenda.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

These are just a few of the more recent policy and project developments in Thailand. I am confident that during the presentations and discussions that take place at the 16<sup>th</sup> APEID conference my colleagues will be able to provide information on some of our other ongoing initiatives. Thailand also looks forward to learning more from the various stakeholders represented at this conference and to networking with counterparts from the Asia Pacific region.

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At this point it remains for me to congratulate the Asia Pacific Programme of Educational Innovation for Development (APEID), Asia Pacific Network for International Education and Values (APNIEVE), Pearson Thailand and J.P. Morgan as well as my colleagues at the Ministry of Education for the successful organization of this event. Once again, may I welcome the distinguished resource persons and conference delegates to this important meeting and wish you a pleasant and productive stay in Thailand.

May I now declare the Conference open.

Thank you.

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