Welcome Remarks

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Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Secretariat
At the Opening Ceremony: 24 August 2015

- Dr Kritsanapong Kirttikara, Former Deputy Minister of Education, Thailand
- Mr Paul Bute, Deputy Head of Mission, British Embassy, Bangkok
- Dr Chaipreuk Sereerak, Secretary-General, the Office of Vocational Education Commission
- High Officials of Southeast Asian Technical and Vocational Education and Training
- Mr Andrew Glass, Country Director, British Council, Thailand
- Distinguished speakers, moderators and resource persons
- Directors of TVET Institutions
- Representatives and experts of SEAMEO Regional Centres
- Ladies and Gentlemen

Good morning

I bring with me the warmest greetings on behalf of the organizers of this important meeting. It is quite a privilege for me to be given this chance, as one of the organisers, to address the TVET High Officials, policy makers, and distinguished resource persons and guests of this first High Officials Meeting on Technical and Vocational Education and Training for the Southeast Asian region.

Ladies and Gentlemen
As part of the goal of greater regional integration between countries in Southeast Asia that was largely initiated in 2015, regional nations have been intensifying links in different areas, specially human resources and mobility of people within the region and neighbouring areas.

This new development places Technical and Vocational Education and Training or in short “TVET” in a pivotal position to take a prominent role in developing human resources that are capable of working within industry and exchanging technical expertise regionally – which will greatly impact the economic and social development of all nations and the region.

The term “TVET” has been frequently highlighted and identified in many Ministerial and High Officials Meetings as one of the priority areas on education development for the Southeast Asian region.

In particular, the SEAMEO Strategic Dialogue of Education Ministers in September 2014, in Lao PDR –attended by the education ministers and high-level education leaders from 11 Southeast Asian countries, resulted in the identification of seven priority areas, including promoting of TVET as one of Education Ministers’ priority areas. The meeting also agreed that TVET in the region can be enhanced through the development of a regional policy framework for labour, skills and learner mobility.

Besides, the Ministerial Round Table Meeting at the recent SEAMEO Council Conference in Pattaya, Thailand in May 2015 highlighted the promotion of teachers and school leaders’ competencies standard, and agreed on the mobilizing and sharing of knowledge, skills and practices among SEAMEO Member Countries in many areas, including TVET.

Added to this, recent Asia-Pacific Conference on Education and Training held by the Ministry of Education, Malaysia and UNESCO on 3 to 5 August 2015 announced the Kuala Lumpur Declaration which emphasizes the importance
of TVET development that all governments and all other TVET stakeholders should consider actions, such as fostering regional integration and labour mobility.

Ladies and Gentlemen

This High Officials Meeting with its theme “Working Together towards Harmonisation and Internationalisation” is truly unique and timely for the Southeast Asian region as an important venue for the High Officials on TVET and policy makers to determine the joint policy directions, feasible strategies and priority areas for developing TVET through harmonisation and internationalisation for the Southeast Asian region.

We expect that the joint agreement for developing TVET among the Southeast Asian countries will be announced at the end of this meeting.

However, there are challenges and issues on the internationalisation and harmonisation of TVET that concern us all. By working together and learning from each other, we can further improve what we do and ensure our joint implementation to reach our regional goals.

SEAMEO, including SEAMEO Secretariat and our Regional Centres such as SEAMEO VOCTECH, SEAMEO SEAMOLEC and others, have strongly committed to the development and promotion of TVET for the Southeast Asian region and will work closely with the 11 Southeast Asian countries, TVET stakeholders and development agencies for successfully implementing the programme according to the regional directions derived from this meeting.

The results from this Chiangmai meeting will bring to further discuss at the SEA TVET-DAAD Workshop which will be hosted by the Ministry of Education and Culture of Indonesia on 10-12 Sept in Solo, Indonesia.
In this Solo workshop, the TVET policy makers and Directors of leading TVET institutions from 11 countries and representatives from industry are invited to discuss the operational plans, and strategies for harmonisation and internationalization based from the joint statement of this Chiangmai meeting.

There are more regional TVET activities, initiated by SEAMEO lining up for the region which you will hear more from the presentation of VOCTECH and SEAMOLEC tomorrow.

Finally, I would like to express my appreciation to the Office of Vocational Education Commission, Ministry of Education Thailand for the leadership in convening this important meeting to benefit the TVET education and community. I also would like to thank the British Council for their kind support to bring experts from UK who will share experience and practices with the Southeast Asian region. Special thanks must also go to speakers, experts, and moderators for their contributions to this meeting.

Most importantly, I would like to express my appreciation to the support of TVET education leaders, policy makers and educators from Southeast Asian countries who have joined this regional effort for promoting and developing TVET for our region.

I wish this High Officials Meeting on SEA TVET every success.

Thank you very much