

**Statement  
by  
His Excellency Nataphol Teepsuwan  
Minister for Education, Thailand  
and Chair of the Thai National Commission for UNESCO  
at the 40<sup>th</sup> Session of the UNESCO General Conference  
on Thursday, 14 November 2019  
at UNESCO Headquarters, Paris, France**

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President of UNESCO General Conference,  
Chair of UNESCO Executive Board,  
Director-General of UNESCO,  
Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It gives me great pleasure to represent Thailand and join previous speakers in congratulating Excellency Mr. Ahmet Altay Cengizer (อาเหม็ด อัลตัย เซ็งจิเชอร์) on being elected as President of this General Conference.

Thailand has hosted the UNESCO Bangkok Office since its establishment in 1961. Ever since we have continuously valued our cooperation and collaboration with UNESCO in all areas of UNESCO mandate, in particular the areas that link to support all Sustainable Development Goals. We understand that resources to bring about these ideas into action require strong commitment from Member States and multilateralism. Therefore, we propose to adopt the Draft Programme and Budget for the next biennium with ZRG+ scenario to ensure smooth transition of relevant programmes for the achievement of 2030 agenda.

As UNESCO is the lead agency of SDG4, Thailand is ready to support UNESCO's activities related to SDG4 focusing on inclusive, equitable and quality education, and promote lifelong learning. Our Constitution stipulates that all children in Thailand can access to 15 years of quality education, from pre-primary level to upper secondary level, free of charge.

In terms of improving educational quality, the Ministry has put great efforts in preparing Thai citizens for the 21<sup>st</sup> century and the digital era. As such, we have given high priority to early childhood care and development to ensure the readiness of our children to higher levels of education. We encourage our students to develop critical thinking skills at the very young age and have promoted interactive learning by utilizing digital learning resources. We have taken a holistic approach to improve the teacher education and training system. As a result, teachers have more

opportunities to select and acquire additional new skills that are more relevant to their professional development. In addition, the linkage of education to the world of work is our priority. The engagement of business sector in supporting vocational colleges in curriculum design, teaching and learning process and assessment will enable our students to learn theories in schools and gain on-the-job training experiences in companies, and hence enhance their employable skills in line with the labour market.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

In Southeast Asian Region, the Out-of-School Children and Youth is still a major issue in several ASEAN Member States. As this year Thailand is the Chair of the ASEAN, we cooperated with ASEAN, SEAMEO, UNESCO and UNICEF in convening a Regional Conference on Out-of-School Youth and Children to enable our formal school systems to serve more children and youth, keep those who are presently in schools from dropping out and provide learning opportunities outside schools.

Earlier this month, the ASEAN Summit has adopted the Bangkok Declaration on Advancing Partnership in Education for 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in ASEAN. This is an initiative of Thailand aiming to work with all sectors including all partners inside and outside the region as well as global community on the grounds of mutual benefit for the advancement and sustainable future for all. In addition, this year Thailand has also set up a regional centre so called "SEAMEO Regional Centre for Sufficiency Economy Philosophy for Sustainability aiming to strengthening education for sustainable development in our region.

In the field of science and social human sciences, Thailand also works closely with the Global Young Academy to promote and develop new generations of scientists. We will continue to promote research and innovation in parallel with ethical issues to support inclusive and equitable societies. In July 2019, we hosted the Conference on the Ethics of Science and Technology and Sustainable Development in conjunction with the 26th Session of the UNESCO International Bioethics Committee (IBC) and the 11<sup>th</sup> Session of the UNESCO World Commission on the Ethics of Scientific Knowledge and Technology (COMEST) in Bangkok. During the Conference, participants welcomed the Bangkok Statement on the Ethics of Science and Technology and Sustainable Development to recognize the importance of ethics in reducing harmful impacts that may result from science, technology and innovation.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Thailand supports the role of UNESCO in promoting culture as cross-cutting issue for sustainable development. We have attached great importance to nominating tangible and intangible cultural heritages on UNESCO list as a way to protect and preserve them and to ensure that our youth recognize the importance of preserving local and national wisdoms, arts, culture, tradition and customs and, at the same time, understand and respect cultural diversity.

On a final note, Thailand would like to reaffirm its commitments to UNESCO. We will continue to collaborate with UNESCO in all of its areas of expertise to achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Thank you.

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