

**An Address**  
**by**  
**His Excellency General Dapong Ratanasuwan**  
**Minister of Education, Thailand**  
**at the Sixth APEC Education Ministerial Meeting**  
**on Session 3 “Employability: Transition from Education to Work**  
**for Economic and Social Growth”**  
**(Discussion on the Priority Area: Promotion of collaboration between**  
**Government, universities, TVET institutions, private sector and**  
**education and training stakeholders to ensure that education is oriented**  
**to industry/business demands and regional labour market needs.)**  
**on Thursday, 6 October, 2016**  
**at Lima, Peru**

.....

Mr. Chairman, //

Excellencies, //

Ladies and Gentlemen, //

It is my pleasure to join you all/ at this APEC Ministerial Forum/ and to share Thailand’s experience/ on Employability/ focusing on/ Transition from Education to Work/ for Economic and Social Growth.// This topic is not only relevant to the APEC 2016’s theme but also reaffirms APEC’s commitment in achieving the Bogor Goals. The theme on “Quality Growth and Human Development”/ reflects the key role of our economies/ represented here/ to jointly enhance/ the skills of our peoples/ to support sustainable economic growth and prosperity.//

On this occasion,/ I would also like to express my appreciation/ to the Ministry of Education of Peru/ for hosting this Meeting and for warm hospitality extended to me and my

delegation.// My thanks also go to Russia Federation/ for co-hosting/ this very important meeting.//

Yesterday,/ many APEC member economies mentioned on cross-border education,/ use of innovation and technology in education,/ quality assurance,/ and mobility.// I totally agree on all of the issues raised/ since they all link to employability.// However,/ the main challenge that we are facing is that/ our universities could not provide necessary twenty-first century skills/ to our learners.// This will lead to unemployability/ or underemployability/ which is one of the major concerns in APEC member economies.//

Ladies and Gentlemen,//

What I am going to present to this meeting/ might not be new to some APEC member economies.// However,/ these are the approaches that Thailand has introduced/ to promote the national education reform.// I would like to start my presentation by providing basic information on our education situation.//

This slide shows the current number of students/ in Thailand.// It also indicates the numbers of educational institutes/ and teachers/ in all levels of education of Thailand.//

Now I would like to refer to Thailand's vision,/ which is to achieve "Stability,/ Prosperity/ and Sustainability".// To make this vision a reality,/ our twenty-year National Strategy/ and the existing draft constitution/ highlight education as a key.// The current Government/ is committed to developing the potential/ of our human resources/ to reduce social disparities,/ strengthen

the economy/ and achieve prosperity.// This is why our education reform focuses on QEOS,/ which means quality,/ equity,/ opportunity for sustainability./ I strongly believe that/ equal access to quality education/ will definitely provide more opportunities in improving people's quality of life,/ leading to social equity/ and a more sustainable community.// Thailand has continuously invested over twenty (20) percent of our national budget/ to education during the last decade.// The ultimate goal of education is to ensure that/ our learners will be equipped with necessary skills/ which can be linked to the world of work.// We focus on apprenticeship more than ever/ to enable our people to equip with practical skills.//

แอปพลิเคชันที่สําคัญ

In order to increase employability,/ Thailand is introducing Thailand four point zero (4.0) policy/ which is a major transformation of how to prepare our human resource/ to meet the demand of the labour market.// We are focusing on five existing industries.// At the same time,/ five emerging industries/ will be promoted.//

The 12<sup>th</sup> National Economic/ and Social Development Plan/ is also being implemented/ to ensure Thailand's sustainable development/ and growth/ in line with the "17 Sustainable Development Goals"/ and the Education 2030/ Framework for Action.//

Ladies and Gentlemen, //

Here are what Thailand has committed/ to promoting education reform in particular to enhance the transition from education to work which some of them have to start at the very early stage. //

**Thailand's first / and foremost commitment /** is to ensure access to education for all. // We will continue to implement the fifteen-year/ free education policy/ to expand education opportunity to all. // Moreover,/ we encourage learners to enhance their critical thinking skill/ to enable them to solve problems,/ and learn independently/ and continuously throughout their lives. // Under the policy "Teach Less, Learn More",/ we have started reducing classroom hours/ and increase non-classroom activities with a strong hope that/ our learners will be equipped with the "4H's",/ head,/ hand,/ heart/ and health. // This aims to provide skills in thinking critically and creatively,/ hands-on practice,/ while our learners remain healthy/ with sound mind. // This is to ensure that they can maximize their capabilities at the early stage. //

Moreover,/ we are attempting to include learners/ with special needs all over the country/ aiming to leave no one behind. // We will continue to play a key role/ in developing an action plan/ for the ASEAN Declaration on Strengthening Education for Out-of-School Children/ and Youth/ which has recently been adopted by the Summit. // Around four hundred and ten thousand (410,000) children with special needs,/

including the gifted and disadvantaged children,/ are taken care of by the Ministry of Education.// There are three hundred seventy thousand (370,000)/ with special needs studying in the inclusive classrooms/ while forty thousand (40,000)/ are in forty-eight (48) special schools/ and seventy-seven (77) Special Education Centers nationwide.// The Ministry of Education has provided budget/ to support the schools/ for the extraordinary expenses,/ as well as to develop teachers/ in specific areas/ who can teach these special students in the inclusive classrooms.//

In addition,/ distance learning,/ via satellite programmes,/ is currently being provided to over fifteen thousand (15,000) schools/ that can cover 100 percent of schools in remote areas.// To increase more capacities of internet in schools,/ the government has allocated budget of five hundred millions (500,000,000) US dollars/ to develop high-speed internet/ in over thirty thousand (30,000) schools/next year.// We also highlight on training our teachers/ so that they can keep pace with new technologies.//

**Thailand's second commitment** is to enhance educational quality.// In this regard,/ the curriculum and teaching-learning process/ is being reformed.// Currently,/ the teaching of science,/ technology,/ engineering/ and mathematics,/ or STEM,/ is integrated/ and will be extended to all schools within 5 years,/ covering both general and vocational education.//

**Thailand's third commitment** is to train/ and develop learners' employability skills/ in line with the labour market needs/ by engaging private sector in human resource development.// A Public-Private Steering Committee was set up.// Its main task is to prepare our future workforce/ in thirty selected areas.// Among these,/ are the textile industry,/ hotel and tourism,/ agriculture and agro-industry,/ and automobile and parts.// This Committee/ join hands in providing on-the-job training opportunities in companies with payment. The proportion time spent is 50:50 between attending theoretical knowledge in school and working in companies. So far, all four hundred twenty-one (421) vocational and technical colleges,/ over twenty one thousand (21,000) enterprises/ and around one hundred fourteen thousand (114,000) students/ have participated in the dual-education system.// The number of students enrolling in this programme has remarkably increased. This joint Committee has agreed to collaborate in curriculum design, develop teachers, and learning materials design.

At the university level, almost one hundred twenty (120) universities/ and fifteen thousand (15,000) students joined this similar programme.//Currently,/ around three thousand eight hundred (3,800) companies have joined this collaboration.//

Moreover, guiding by the Pracharat Policy, or the Civil-State-Policy, the Government has set up a Task Force on Competitive Work Force. In order to prepare our future workforce to compete in the global market, the Government collaborates with thirteen leading companies. This Task Force

has four priorities, comprising the rebranding or image building of vocational students, the establishment of excellence model schools, the installation of database for workforce demand and supply, and the establishment of vocational standard and certification centre.

**The Fourth commitment** is to set up the National Qualification Framework.// Thailand values the competency of the workers/ rather than degree possession.// This is why/ Thailand has provided our strong support/ to the ASEAN Qualification Reference Framework or AQRF.// We are working on revising domestic related law/ to reinforce enterprises to pay their workers by competency-based.//

**The fifth commitment of Thailand** is/ to improve the flexibility of educational system/ to allow students in the general stream to study in the vocational stream/ and vice versa.// In this dual - track programme,/ students in high school/ are able to study both general and vocational streams.// Upon graduation,/ they will receive a certificate,/ comprising a Higher Secondary Certificate and a Diploma in Vocational Education.//

Moreover,/ under the dual - track programme,/ higher secondary students/ opt to study in both general and vocational streams.// Upon graduation,/ they will receive two certificates,/ comprising a Higher Secondary Certificate/ and a Diploma.// The teaching hours will be prepared for their future careers/ in line

with their interests and aptitudes./ Currently,/ more than fifty five thousand (55,000) students/ have joined this programme.//

**Thailand's sixth commitment/** is to offer the dual-qualifications programme or dual - degree/ in vocational education.// In this programme,/ learners study only in the vocational stream/ and are given opportunities to study in Thailand or abroad/ under the exchange programmes for teachers/ and students.// This requires a modification of curriculum of both participating vocational and technical colleges/ to enable the alignment of the syllabus.// Upon graduation,/ they will receive relevant qualifications/ from vocational education institutions,/ both in Thailand and abroad.// We have started this collaboration with a few APEC member economies.//

**The seventh commitment** relates to reprofiling our universities/ to ensure that/ our learners will be equipped with necessary skills/ which can be linked to the world of work.// We classify universities into 3 different types,/ namely/ research-oriented,/ specialized university,/ and teaching and community-service university.// Currently, the investment in research/ and innovation/ provided to university has been increased from 0.6%/ to 1.0%/ of the GDP.// This aims to help us on the appropriate budget allocation/ to different types/ of classified university.//

**Thailand's eighth commitment,/ last but not least,/ we are committed to** developing specific curriculum in ten

established Special Economic, Development Zones./ This aims to prepare learners **both in formal and non-formal schooling/** in terms of their language skills,/ basic knowledge/ about economics. // An Advisory Committee Board/ and the Working Committee of Education in Special Economic Development Zones/ have been set up to take charge of this initiative.// A Coordination Centre/ at the ministry level/ has also been set up/ to coordinate with the Provincial Committee Board of Education.//

Ladies and Gentlemen,

In conclusion,/ I can ensure all of you here that/ Thailand has a strong commitment to move forward our education reform/ in line with our own context.// We do whatever possible/ including legislative revision,/ and provide all political wills/ to make sure that/ we could produce learners with full potential/ to cope with the rapid change in this century.// Thailand is ready to play a constructive role/ in improving security,/ prosperity/ and sustainability in the Asia-Pacific Region,/ without leaving any party behind.// We are willing to collaborate with all economies/ in developing the potential of our citizens/ and enhancing the regional and global competitiveness.//

Thank you.//

\*\*\*\*\*

