

*Statement of His Excellency Mr. Jurin Laksanawisit
Minister of Education and Chair of the Thai National Commission for UNESCO
at the 35th UNESCO General Conference
October 7, 2009, UNESCO Headquarters, Paris, France*

Dr. Davidson Hepburn, (ดร. เดวิดสัน เฮปเบิร์น)
President of the General Conference,
Mr. Koichiro Matsuura, (โคอิชิโร มัตซึอูระ)
Director-General of UNESCO,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

First of all, I would like to congratulate Dr. Hepburn on being elected as President of the 35th Session of the UNESCO General Conference. I would also like to take this opportunity to commend Mr. Matsuura for his commitment and dedication to the Organization during his ten-year term in service.

Mr. President,

Thailand fully supports UNESCO's proposal to the General Conference for the allocation of 653 (six hundred and fifty three) million dollars for the next biennium programme and budget. In this regard, we agree that Education for All is the highest priority since education is the basis for much wider social and economic benefits. As host of the first World Conference on Education for All, Thailand

would be delighted to host, once again, the Tenth High Level Group on EFA in 2011.

Regarding education development in Thailand, this year, we have initiated the Second Decade of Education Reform focusing on **three aspects** and **four NEWS** for education. The **three aspects** are quality, opportunity, and participation of all sectors. The **four NEWS** are being addressed through projects designed to create a new generation of Thais, new teachers, new educational institutes and learning resources as well as a new administration and management system. Greater emphasis is given to good governance and encouraging the involvement of all sectors.

Several new projects have already been initiated. Among them is the Fifteen-year Free Quality Education Programme provided for all citizens in both public and private educational institutes, ranging from kindergarten to grade 12, covering basic education, technical and vocational education and non-formal education. The disabled are included in this project and will be provided free education up to bachelor degree level. This project was started at the beginning of this year. I believe that what we are doing is in line with the Education for All goals.

In my role as President of the Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Council or SEAMEO Council, I am pleased to report that as a region we are united in working towards achievement of the EFA goals. We plan to enhance overall quality and standards of higher education in the region and develop mechanisms to support credit transfer and the mutual recognition of professional qualifications in the future. SEAMEO Regional Center for Higher Education and Research Development or RIHED, based in Bangkok, has been assigned to take charge of this initiative. I look forward to seeing progress on this qualifications framework for the region by the end of this year.

Mr. President,

The global issue of climate change is a common concern to all countries on which there should be greater inter-agency cooperation within the UN system. At present, Thailand is hosting Climate Change Talks in Bangkok. Participants to this meeting have an opportunity to discuss and share their views on mitigating the impacts of climate change. As the sole agency responsible for natural sciences, UNESCO should have a stronger role in using the conclusions and recommendations from this and other

relevant conferences to develop future activities to address climate change.

Mr. President,

UNESCO's priority on Africa is strongly supported. Thailand is among the countries ready to share our achievements in technical and vocational education and higher education with the African countries. I personally discussed this issue with Ambassador Yai, President of the Executive Board, in July this year, during his visit to Thailand. During this General Conference, we have scheduled further discussions to look in more detail at how Thailand and Africa can develop practical projects and activities together.

On a final note, Thailand reaffirms its commitment to the work of UNESCO and will continue to provide our full support to UNESCO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific in Bangkok.

Thank you.
