

**Address by
H.E. Chinnaworn Boonyakiat, Minister of Education of Thailand
on
“Strengthening China-ASEAN Education Cooperation and Exchanges”
at the
1st China-ASEAN Education Ministers’ Meeting Roundtable Conference during
the 3rd China ASEAN Education Cooperation Week
3 August 2010
Guiyang, Guizhou Province, China**

Excellencies,

It is my great pleasure to attend the first China-ASEAN Education Ministers’ Roundtable Conference. The hosting of this Ministers’ Meeting is a further sign of the growing recognition worldwide regarding the importance of education and training to ensure balanced and sustainable development. May I commend the organizers on having taken this initiative.

Over the past two decades, China-ASEAN cooperation has brought benefit to us all. Activities such as the “Chinese Bridge - Summer Camp” allow our young people to build bonds of friendship and establish networks which will continue far into the future.

I would also like to mention a Thai project which received support from the ASEAN leaders at the 12th ASEAN-China Summit in Cha-am, Hua Hin, Thailand. Next year, under the ASEAN -China Cooperation Fund, high school students from the ten ASEAN countries plus

China will have an opportunity to travel together along the Mekong River. Ideas and experiences from the journey will be shared among our students.

Excellencies,

During the Plus Three Senior Officials Meeting on Education, which took place in Phuket, Thailand, this year, China expressed her willingness to assist ASEAN by offering courses in ASEAN Studies and East Asian Studies, as well as promoting the learning of languages. China has also shown good spirit in granting 1,200 scholarships within ASEAN in 2009-2010. Thailand would like to express its appreciation to China on all accounts.

Another important forum for ASEAN and China to work together is the East Asia Summit. Attention has focused on how to enhance regional competitiveness, pooling all the available educational resources to promote economic and social development. Mobility and flexibility are key factors.

The harmonization of standards of assessment among higher education institutions in the region and the adoption of a common credit transfer system for the

mutual recognition of degrees and qualifications will enhance mobility of faculty members and students in the region. Projects are now undertaken by ASEAN, SEAMEO and the ASEAN University Network. These efforts will help us to increase educational opportunities, promote the free flow of ideas, build a skilled and talented workforce, and provide alternative career paths for the peoples of the region.

Excellencies,

While a great deal of attention is focused at the higher education level, we must not forget our shared commitments with regard basic education. An on-going driver in educational cooperation must be achievement of the Education For All goals, with special attention given to reaching the unreached. Another is the promotion of Education for Sustainable Development that will contribute to overall quality improvements in education at all levels. For this reason, Thailand would like ASEAN–China cooperation to explore and develop lifelong learning opportunities to ensure sustainable development in the region and among its peoples.

Excellencies,

As a member of ASEAN, Thailand looks forward to building and strengthening the relationship with China. The China-ASEAN Education Cooperation Week is an excellent opportunity for us to get together to build a bridge that will lead to peace and prosperity.

Thank you.