

An Address
by
H.E. Mr. Nataphol Teepsuwan
at the 2nd Integrated STEM Leadership Summit in Asia (Virtual)
on 21 January 2021

Distinguished Speakers, Participants and Guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen

Good afternoon. It is an honor and my pleasure to address this prestigious conference on integrated STEM education. The Ministry of Education of Thailand in concert with the other Southeast Asian ministries, recognizes the value and importance of integrated STEM education in the nation's schools and higher education institutions. Indeed, most countries of the world have embraced STEM education research evidence and it is now an important part of their education systems. Our view of STEM education should not be just of what has happened in the past, but we need to look forward with a goal of equity of outcomes, meaning students at all academic and socio-economic levels must have access to quality STEM education if we are to move forward to meet the challenges we face now as well as those of the future.

As higher education institutions, industries, and governments call for graduates who have strong problem-solving skills that include critical thinking, communication,

creativity, and collaboration, it becomes obvious that students at all levels should be given the opportunity to practice and strengthen them, and that STEM education should not be reserved just for the elite academic achievers. Thus, STEM education has become an important innovation in school curricula. Those who enter all areas of the work force will be called upon to make critical decisions and apply creative innovations to advance our society and to develop solutions to problems we face locally as well as globally.

In this era of technology-driven economy, many industries and business sectors require the STEM-educated workforce. We believe that by introducing STEM Education to young children, we can spark their interest in STEM careers. So, here in Thailand, teaching STEM starts at primary level and STEM education is provided for secondary students in both general and vocational streams. With the help of the Institute for the Promotion of Teaching Science and Technology (IPST), the Ministry of Education of Thailand has developed STEM Education program for its national curriculum, launched the STEM Ambassador program and conducted professional development for School Directors to improve STEM Education in Thailand.

The Thai government is not alone in promoting STEM Education. In fact, we are so fortunate that the private sector, such as the Chevron Corporation and the Kenan Foundation Asia, to name a few, has greatly contributed to the development of STEM Education in Thailand. We sincerely appreciate your kind contribution in training our teachers and nurturing young minds to encourage their creative and inquisitive thinking.

We are fully committed to furthering the knowledge and skills needed in STEM education for successful teaching and learning throughout the kingdom, in both teachers and students. It is crucial that our young graduates, when choosing a career, whether in professional or vocational fields, be well prepared for addressing the pressing needs of our society. The skills developed in effective evidence-based STEM education will play a major part in making that happen, as will strong university programs that are committed to the development of critical thinking and problem-solving skills in their students that includes the power of STEM education.

The Government of Thailand has also hosted the SEAMEO Regional Centre on Science Technology Engineering and Mathematics-Education or STEM-ED to support the STEM knowledge exchange and partnership opportunities between Thailand and other countries. With the hard work and dedication of those involved

in this newly-established SEAMEO Regional Centre on STEM-ED, Thailand is ready to expand our horizon in the Southeast Asian Region.

This, the Second Integrated STEM Education Leadership Summit in Asia, has an impressive agenda indeed. I would like to say welcome and thank you to the thousands of STEM educators and leaders in STEM fields who have been viewing the outstanding presenters today and will do so throughout the rest of the day and tomorrow. I also wish to express my gratitude to the educators, international organization representatives, and industry leaders in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics who have agreed to share their knowledge, ideas, and expertise.

The sessions delivered during these two days contain a wealth of expertise, ideas and models for creating strong STEM education programs. I hope that they will be the fuel that advances STEM education policy and practice, not only here in Thailand and the other ASEAN countries, but in every part of the world.

Thank you very much.