

**Opening Address by
Dr. Chinnapat Bhumirat, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Education,
Thailand
at the 51st Governing Board Meeting of SEAMEO INNOTECH
September 24, 2008**

Dr. Erlinda C. Pefianco, Director of SEAMEO INNOTECH,
Undersecretary Ramon C. Bacani,
Dr. Tinsiri Siribodhi, Deputy Director of SEAMEO Secretariat,
Distinguished Governing Board Members,
Honorable Guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my honour and privilege to be here today for the opening ceremony of the 51st Governing Board Meeting of SEAMEO INNOTECH. May I begin by expressing my deep appreciation to SEAMEO INNOTECH on the successful organization of this annual meeting. While the Centre continues to design and implement innovative projects and programmes which are widely recognized in and outside the region, it is important that it maintains a space for the valuable inputs and continued support of the Governing Board Members. These contributions will help strengthening management capability and guaranteeing the relevance of the Centre's initiatives.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

As we are all aware that the provision of education in the 21st Century is facing many challenges. It seems that the world is moving at a faster rate which implies that education must keep up with the pace.

The rapid change in science and technology and high rate of natural resource consumption having significant effects on human life. The task of every government is not to stress only on economic growth

for the livelihood of the citizens, but to ensure long-term sustainable development. In order to reach the goal of sustainable development, we, as educators must design a roadmap which encompasses the equity in education and the assurance of its quality.

We recognize the need to equip the new generations of young people, including the existing workforce, with the 21st century competencies, and life skills so they can become a productive citizen and can actively participate as a member of their local communities.

However, we have to admit that there is still a large gap in terms of educational opportunity and even a larger gap in terms of quality. With the advancement of information and communication technologies, the world is opened up for a new mode of educational delivery. I believe every country in our region has put high priority for the development of ICT in education. It is the area that we can share our experience. Within the mandate and expertise of INNOTECH, I am assured that we all can benefit in enhancing the utilization of ICT to bridge the gaps in quality and equity in education.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

With regard to educational management, many governments including Thailand, have promoted the concept of decentralization. As central government gives more authority to Education Service Areas and schools over human resource management, academic matters, budget and finance, ICTs are being used as a means to ensure more effective and efficient management and administration practices. The adoption of appropriate systems and mechanisms will lead to greater transparency and accountability to all stakeholders. Underpinning such increased autonomy, of course, is good leadership in order to manage the necessary changes successfully.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Since its establishment in 1970, SEAMEO INNOTECH has been dedicated to providing responsive, innovative and flexible education and training solutions for a wide range of clients in the region and worldwide. The areas of strength include :

- educational planning and management
 - instructional leadership and supervision
 - teaching - learning methodologies and strategies
 - alternatives educational delivery systems
- and literacy and community development

May I briefly mention a concrete example, the ICeXCELS or **Instructional and Curricular Excellence in School Leadership and Management** training programme for which the Centre recently received a commendation from UNESCO in a ceremony in Bangkok that concluded UNESCO's 2007 ICT in Education Innovation Awards.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of the Governing Board Members, I would like to express my confidence in the fact that SEAMEO INNOTECH will continue to act as a regional leader in its field. As the 51st SEAMEO INNOTECH Governing Board Meeting begins, I am sure we will learn more about the Centre's initiatives and inspirations to expand and improve educational coverage, quality, and access; ensure that education services meet the needs of modern society; and contribute to a better quality of life through the on-going development of human resources in Southeast Asia.

Thank you