

**Welcoming Address**  
by  
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**Secretary General of Office of the Public Sector Development Commission**  
**At ASEAN Workshop**  
**Thursday, 17<sup>th</sup> January 2013**

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**Introduction and credits**

Honorable Minister of the Prime Minister's Office,  
Acting Country Director of The World Bank,  
Deputy Secretary-General of the Office of the Council of State,  
Your excellencies, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen.

It is a pleasure to welcome you to Bangkok for the first ASEAN Workshop on The New Era of Public Sector Reform in the ASEAN Community. I am honored and delighted to participate in this important event.

**Importance of ASEAN Community 2015**

Ladies and gentlemen, on behalf of the OPDC, I wish to thank The World Bank and the Office of the Council of State for helping us prepare for this workshop and for co-hosting this event with us.

In fact, the public sector plays a critical role in providing an environment conducive to economic development, and provides social and economic services and security for all its citizens. As countries develop, citizens demand more and better services, and in an increasingly globalized world the challenges facing the public sector becomes more dynamic and difficult.

Inefficient public institutions and weak governance arrangements are increasingly perceived as a problem in many countries, including those in our ASEAN. Economic crisis in the US and Europe show that public sector response is a critical part of managing and mitigating adverse effects. The needs to strengthen public sector institutions are all too obvious.

Therefore, government agencies will be required to work in a more open environment with increasingly diverse and complex demands by citizens.

We gather here today to learn from each other, and seek ways to work together for a better future for all of our citizens.

### **The Conference**

We have a busy 2 day session ahead of us. Separate sessions will be held to stimulate frank and open discussions on the following issues:

- 1) Examine best practices that could be adapted to member countries, and discuss possible standards in some particular areas such as public service delivery.
- 2) Build networking and promote dialogue among ASEAN members. This would help us in sharing ideas and experiences so that we could learn about different aspects of public sector reform. The goal is to work together to strengthen good governance and find ways to achieve it.
- 3) Develop practical recommendations for sustained dialogue and cooperation among ASEAN members. This will include setting up a market place for ideas, and find practical ways to work together after the conclusion of this conference.

We will have a keynote presentation by Prof. Matthew Stephenson from Harvard Law School on “AEC 2015: A New Era of Public Sector Reform in the ASEAN Community.” He will talk about the importance of integrity in the Public Sector Reform process, and why it is a critical part of improving service delivery for citizens, enhancing public trust, strengthening efficiency, and fighting corruption.

The workshop will be followed by 2 plenary sessions seeking your knowledge, experiences and inputs on “ASEAN Region in International Perspectives” and “Presentations of the ASEAN delegates on Public Sector Innovation”. Hopefully, the sessions will give us ideas to guide our thinking, and point the way forward.

Tomorrow we will have the market place for ideas. This will be an interesting session since it will give all of us an opportunity to hear from each other. Topics include:

- 1) Experiences in public sector reform that you would like to share with the community;
- 2) What aspects of public sector performance you would like to learn about from within the community, as well as from international best practices; and
- 3) How you would like this community to move ahead.

The results of this market place will give us a valuable insight into each other’s thinking and priorities, and help to identify issues of common interests and professional needs.

## **Conclusion**

Ladies and gentlemen, the work before us over the next two days is challenging. But I am sure that with your experience, knowledge and vision, our discussions will be interesting and fruitful.

I hope that we all get to know one another, and form a network of practitioners who will continue to cooperate long after this conference ends. The ideas and insights shared over the next two days should also help all of us to better prepare for ASEAN integration so all member countries realize the aspirations of ASEAN.

2015 is drawing near. We all have plenty of work ahead of us, but with so little time. Let's us start working together now. I wish you all a very successful workshop.

Thank you.

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