

Opening Session
by
H.E. Mr. Niwattumrong Boonsongpaisarn
Minister Attached to the Prime Minister's Office
At ASEAN Workshop
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สวัสดีครับ / Good Morning

Excellencies,
Distinguished Guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

- May I, first of all, extend my sincere appreciation to the Office of the Council of State, Office of Public Sector Development Commission, and the World Bank, for their kind invitation extended to me to honour the Opening Ceremony of the Workshop today. I am certain that the organizers have dedicated their utmost effort to ensure that everyone will be benefitted from attending this Workshop.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

- We are fully aware that ASEAN has become a major global player and that the input from all ASEAN member countries is vital to the vibrant regional cooperation.

- ASEAN has worked diligently so as to avoid future economic crises. In order to achieve this goal, strong institutions and solid macroeconomic policies formulated and enacted by effective governments are essential. The respective governments must be capable of assessing risks and taking action in order to make economic development equitable, provide opportunities through cooperation strategies that reduce income gaps within and across countries, and in turn, promote citizen welfare.

Another important aspect is also to strengthen the ASEAN regional security.

- Furthermore, ASEAN must develop a business environment where private sectors can operate in efficient markets, under effective national and regional regulations. This is to ensure that ASEAN products must be able to compete internationally with improved productivity and more advanced innovation.

- ASEAN then needs to move towards ASEAN economic community through better policy coordination, mutual recognition of standards, regulatory harmonization, transferring responsibilities from national agencies to regional bodies, and further strengthening of ASEAN institutions.

- In doing so, ASEAN could build an efficient regional bureaucracy which would be based upon good governance principles.

- To achieve sustainable development within ASEAN region, governments need to maintain good governance that will enable them to deliver their outcomes more effectively and achieve high level of performance, in a manner consistent with applicable legal and policy obligations.
- Efficient, effective and ethical governance is a major focus for governments, particularly with the changing nature of the public sector and its greater focus on citizen-centric policies, reduction of bureaucracy and improvement of the effectiveness of internal controls and regulations.
- It has taken many years for ASEAN Members to build institutional frameworks and strengthen the capacity of government. Yet, ASEAN has not achieved that goal.
- One priority is to improve governance, both at national level and also, if possible, at the regional level.
- I personally believe that the success of institutional reform depends on the strength and professional skill of the civil service.
- ASEAN governments need to make concerted efforts to train and develop an efficient and independent civil service that will be the main pillar for governments to improve their economic welfare without sacrificing long-term development goals.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

- Please allow me to share with you the ongoing efforts the Thai government has taken towards ASEAN Community in 2015.

- Currently, the Thai government has launched a national strategy aiming to promote growth of a long – term national development. The said strategy will gear the country towards ASEAN Community in 2015.
- The strategy is divided into three pillars, in line with the ASEAN Blueprint. With regard to ASEAN Economic Community (AEC), we will focus on the rules and regulations reform, customs interconnection among ASEAN countries, a National Single Window system relating to ASEAN Single Window, inland connections and a logistics system created especially for ASEAN corridors, trade and services, SMEs, human resources development plans in conjunction with the mobility of professionals in the ASEAN Community and an ASEAN business database.
- To enable a more fluidity of trade and investment in the ASEAN region, the policy of enhancing more connectivity is also enshrined by the Royal Thai Government. To achieve that goal, the Government focuses on improving the efficiency of the 10 border checkpoints around Thailand, which are the gateways connecting to ASEAN. Together with this, our hard efforts are being made to speed up the opening of the permanent border checkpoints with the high potential in the future. Furthermore, we enhance the link between National Single Window and internal process of public agencies in responding to ASEAN National Single Window.

- For inland connection, we are putting our utmost effort to develop our domestic highways to be able to connect to ASEAN highways through the important border checkpoints, and the new border checkpoints.
- With regard to ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community, the government has highlighted the importance of improving English and Chinese language skills of Thais, raising ASEAN awareness and creating a sense of belonging to the ASEAN community. In order to achieve this we are working to revise our education system, establishing ASEAN Units at each governmental agency, and support exchange programs among ASEAN member states.
- With reference to the ASEAN Political - Security Community, the Thai government is striving towards establishing rule of laws, use of corporate governance principles, a strong commitment to working towards attainment of ASEAN Anti-Drug and Anti-Terrorism targets and a disaster emergency logistics system for ASEAN.
- These strategies are just some of the steps we have taken towards preparing the country for ASEAN Integration in 2015.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

- In conclusion, I wish to highlight the fact that though 2015 is less than two years away, the Royal Thai Government has prioritized our policy in working towards ASEAN Community. Though there will be many challenges ahead, but I am certain that with the firm commitment of every sector, we will be able to attain that goal.

- Lastly, may I offer my appreciation, once again, to the organizer of the Workshop. I am assured that we have made a good start and have created a tangible advantage towards achieving our common aspirations for strengthening good governance in line with levels of development.

Thank you very much. ขอขอบคุณมากครับ
