

SEAMEO College
Module 2: High Officials Country Case Study (HOCCS)
SEAMEO TROPED Network, Bangkok, Thailand
11-13 March 2015

Opening Ceremony
11 March 2015; 09.00-09.30 hrs

Remarks and Overview of SEAMEO College
Dr Witaya Jeradechakul
Director
SEAMEO Secretariat

A. Greetings

Dr Somsak Lolekha, President, Administrative Board of the Thai Medical Council

Assoc Prof Dr Suchitra Luangamornlert, Thailand Nursing and Midwifery Council

Prof Dr Pratap Singhasivanon, Secretary General/Coordinator, SEAMEO TROPED Network;

Dr Kuniko Urashima, Deputy Director, National Institute of Science and Technology Policy, Japan

Ms Oranuch Jetwattana, Senior Project Officer, Asian Development Bank, Thailand

Ms Julia María González Ferreras, President of Education for an Interdependent World, Senior Advisor of the Tuning Academy, Spain

Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen, good morning!

B. Introducing SEAMEO College

Today, it is my honor to represent the SEAMEO Secretariat as we unfold the first conduct of Module 2: “High Officials Country Case Study” under the SEAMEO College project.

Moreover, I am privileged to speak to you today about what this project is all about.

SEAMEO College is a product of two years of consultation and content development. It was approved unanimously by the Education Ministers of the 11 SEAMEO Member Countries who comprise the SEAMEO Council in January 2013 and was launched in March 2013 in Hanoi, Vietnam. SEAMEO College forms part of the SEAMEO Strategic Plan 2011-2020 and is considered a flagship project of SEAMEO.

The SEAMEO College falls under Strategic Theme 2: Programme Excellence and Dynamism of the SEAMEO Strategic Plan. The theme envisages SEAMEO College as an elite forum that serves as a venue for present and future education leaders from SEAMEO Member Countries to convene and hold regular and methodical dialogues that will generate innovative and forward-looking ideas to address regional concerns and drive momentum towards growth and better quality of life of the peoples of Southeast Asia.

Even in its name is the word “college”, the project does not pertain to a physical campus. In fact, SEAMEO College consists of a series of forums and research and development activities.

The term “college” in this project is referred to as “a body or society of persons engaged in common pursuits, or having common duties and interests”. Thus, just like you and me whose main pursuit is the development of the individual through harmonization and integration, we all form part of SEAMEO College.

Under the project, various modules and programmes were developed based on identified and prioritized needs of four target groups, namely education ministers, high-level education officials, education administrators and practitioners, and youth leaders.

Since its full swing operation in January 2014, SEAMEO College has seen the implementation of Module 3: Education Leader Innovation Forum in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam on 9-11 July 2014, Module 1: Strategic Dialogue of Education Ministers in Vientiane, Lao PDR on 13 September 2014, and Module 4: Learning and Innovation Forum of Youth Leaders. And here today we unfold Module 2: “High Officials Country Case Study” under the theme “Promoting Harmonization and Mobility in Higher Education Focusing on Health Professions in Southeast Asia”. I am also honored to be part of this activity.

C. The SEAMEO College Module 2 – High Officials Country Case Study (HOCCS)

As the regional integration nears, governments, the private sectors and all stakeholders have been gearing up for the realization of the ASEAN Community at the end of this year. SEAMEO as the leading organization in education, science and culture cooperation in the region has initiated several projects in support of the merger. Since 2007, the SEAMEO Regional Centre on Higher Education (RIHED) has mobilized efforts to create a “common space” in higher education among Southeast Asian countries under the proposal on “A Structured Framework for Regional Integration in Higher Education in Southeast Asia: The Road Towards a Common Space” which subsequently became materialized as the ASEAN International Student Mobility for Students (AIMS) Programme. The AIMS project aims to lay a foundation on which to develop sustainable and ongoing student mobility programmes in Southeast Asia in order to contribute to the transition towards the ASEAN Community.

Building on the AIMS initiative spearheaded by SEAMEO RIHED and the resolutions that resulted from Module 1 or the Strategic Dialogue of Education Ministers, SEAMEO College Module 2 aims to explore further the potential for harmonization of higher education. As this Forum focuses on harmonization and mobility in health professions, this Forum serves as one of the first attempts to translate the ASEAN MRAs into action and tangibly contributes to the realization of the ASEAN Community.

D. Expression of Thanks

As the Lead Centre for Module 2, SEAMEO TROPED Network also serves as one of the implementing agencies of SEAMEO College. This is made possible in coordination with the SEAMEO Secretariat and the SEAMEO College Project Management Office which are both based in Bangkok, Thailand.

For almost five decades since its establishment, SEAMEO TROPED Network has been at the forefront of regional cooperation in education, training and research in tropical medicine and public health in Southeast Asia. With its regional coordinating role among the network, SEAMEO TROPED Network is indeed the fitting SEAMEO Centre to lead SEAMEO College Module 2.

At this juncture, please allow me to recognize SEAMEO TROPED Network for the able leadership in the implementation of this Module, as well as SEAMEO RIHED for its support and the groundwork laid down by its AIMS programme.

On behalf of SEAMEO Secretariat, I also thank the Asian Development Bank and the Government of Japan through its Japan Official Development Assistance which makes it possible for us to subsidize the costs of this project. I would like to also acknowledge the support of ADB Thailand to the SEAMEO College and I look forward to a meaningful and rewarding partnership during this second year and the next phase of the project.

Importantly, I thank the support and guidance of the SEAMEO Member Countries for the full realization of SEAMEO College. Specifically, I wish to sincerely thank and acknowledge all the participants from the Member Countries who devoted their time and attention to this week's activity under SEAMEO College Module 2. I am confident that your rich experience and expertise will help us achieve the objectives of Module 2 and SEAMEO College as a whole which will in turn contribute to the actualization of the ASEAN Economic Community. As this forum forms part of the SEAMEO Strategic Plan, the success of this forum and your participation also contribute to the realization of SEAMEO's aspiration of the Golden SEAMEO by 2020.

With this, I look forward with enthusiasm to participating in the sessions prepared by SEAMEO TROPED Network for the next two and a half days. I wish us all fruitful discussions and a sense of camaraderie as we share and learn together.

Thank you very much and Sawasdee krab.