

**Speech
of
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Royal Thai Government
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Excellencies, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen :

It is my distinct honor to represent the Royal Thai Government at this distinguished gathering. I am grateful for the opportunity given to me to expound on Thailand's policy concerning the Environmental Education, and to share with you the progress achieved to date by the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment as well as the challenges that remain.

On behalf of the Royal Thai Government, I would like to extend our sincere gratitude to the Japanese Government for the generous support given to Thailand over the years. Thailand's collaboration with Japan dates back to 1980 at the launch of a joint program under the name, "Environmental Cooperation between Japan and Thailand", which sought and develop cooperation in environmental research and education.

The success of this initial collaboration led to the establishment of the "Environmental Research and Training Center" which is the first grant aid to Thailand and later to Indonesia, China, Mexico and Chile. Much has been achieved since that period, and today it is my honour to convey our heartfelt gratitude to the Japanese Government

Today's congress is also an opportune time for me to speak on Thailand's pursuits, in particular those of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment.

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Thailand's Ninth Economic and Social Development Plan (2002-2006) focuses on four strategic areas that reflect the great challenges of our time. These areas all as follows : (i) promotion of economic stability and sustainability, (ii) establishment of strong national development through social protection and environmentally sustainable development, (iii) establishment of good governance at all levels of the Thai society and (iv) reduction of poverty and empowerment of the Thai people through the development of a knowledge – based society. We have to face these challenges together and we have to master them all.

What are our chances of success?

Thailand has long perceived education as a driving force for the economic and social development of the nation. In order to cope with the dramatic change. Thailand has put emphasized on education reform to gear the education system toward the 21st century Reengineering education in Thailand means "Rethinking the fundamentals of education and redesign new learning process which will bring great change and yield dramatic results in education with measurable indicators in terms of learners' achievement or quality, efficiency of teaching staff and education administration.

The concept of reengineering education to meet the desirable education consists as follow:

- Vision and hope for the future
- Changing views about learners
- Reform of teaching learning process
- Empowerment of teachers
- Return of education to family
- Revitalization of local wisdom
- School based management
- Reform of education authority

The Vision of education is Thai people will have more access to diverse educational services responsive to their needs. Every individual has the right to quality education and all stakeholders will unite again in functioning as education agents providing education. The ultimate goals of environmental education of Thailand is to promote and foster eco-

consciousness in relation to an environmental sustainable society and the sustainable management of resource use in the country.

Environmental education has been integrated into both formal and non-formal educational program since 1977. Ministry of Education launch the master plan for environmental education, certain universities offer a master's degree and doctoral degree programs in environmental education. Environmental education has been formally integrated into the school curriculum since 1997. The need for readjustment in teacher education has been identified as well as the role of teachers of all subjects across the curriculum to address environmental education in their teaching.

Currently, Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment and Ministry of Education have jointly established 59 Provincial Environmental Education Centers throughout Thailand. The Centers play an important role in building local environment education networks and core teams to develop learning practices, produce educational materials and develop curriculum suitable for local environmental issues.

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Some challenges to our Ministry are still waiting for answers and the need for vigilance remains. The Ministry recognizes the importance of the Decade of Education for Sustainable Development, 2005-2014. For us at the Ministry, environmental education is the prospect for making further contributions to Thailand's development that reinforces our determination to succeed and to make a difference.

Thank you for your kind attention.