

**Opening Remarks by
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Deputy Secretary General,
National Economic and Social Development Board
At the Regional Workshop on National Sustainable Development
Strategies in Asia
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Distinguished Participants,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of the Royal Thai Government and the National Sustainable Development Strategy Project's National Focal Point for Thailand, it is my great honor to be with all of you in this Regional Workshop on National Sustainable Development Strategies in Asia today.

I would like to take this opportunity to express our sincere thanks to all participants who have come here to share their expertise and experiences on sustainable development strategies. We are grateful to the governments of 22 countries in 4 subregions that have participated in this workshop. My heartfelt thanks also go to UNEP and the Government of Norway for supporting and organizing this workshop and for having been assisting developing countries with building capacity and achieving the target for NSDS by 2005 as committed at the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation 2002.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Thailand attaches great importance to sustainable development. For the current Tenth National Economic and Social Development Plan (2007-2011), the "Sufficiency Economy Philosophy" has been applied and adopted as a policy guiding principle for the country's overall development. It underpins the Royal Thai Government's efforts in administering the country in the way of the "middle path" by advocating economic growth with stability over rapid but fragile growth.

The Sufficiency Economy Philosophy emphasizes sustainable development, sound macro-economic policies, and the equitable sharing of economic benefits. At the same time, it avoids excessive risk-taking, untenable inequalities in society, and the wasteful use of natural resources. It also provides more secure approach and strengthens the fabric of Thai society, and enables the country to address the challenges of globalization in a balanced and sustainable manner.

Moving towards Thailand's sustainable development vision to be the "Green and Happiness Society", set as the ultimate goal under the 10th Plan, it requires the most encompassing measure. NESDB is currently developing "Green GDP" which gives a much broader picture of the country's society than GDP, covering both the economic and non-economic dimensions such as environmental and social costs of economic activities.

Given that GDP only measures the market value of all final goods and services produced within a country in a given period, yet it is not an ideal yardstick for well-being of the people. The "Well-Being Plus" indicators

representing the happiness, security and satisfaction with life of the people are being developed by NESDB for sustainable development.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Sustainable development stands for meeting the needs of present generation without jeopardizing the needs of future generations – a better quality of life for everyone, now and for generations to come. It offers a vision of progress that integrates immediate and long-term needs, local and global needs and regards social, economic and environmental needs as inseparable and interdependent components of human progress.

But sustainable development will not be brought about by policies only, it must be taken up by society at large as a principle guiding the many choices each citizen make everyday, as well as the big political and economic decisions that have ramifications for many. Realizing this vision requires profound changes in thinking, in economic and social structures, and in consumption and production patterns.

To realize sustainable development is a common task for all countries. The implementation of the global sustainable development strategies hinges upon the materialization of the principle of “common but differentiated responsibilities” set forth at the Rio Conference. In the past decade, there have been progress and setbacks. Some commitments have not been honored in earnest. The GMS countries and other subregions together with the international community should strive to make greater headway in regional and international cooperation on environment and development under the continued guidance of this principle.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

To carry out the strategy of sustainable development involves the economy, social development as well as natural resources and environment and many other fields. We should cooperate with one another, give priority to resolving such issues as poverty, water resources management which is the major challenge for GMS and Asian countries, the global scale of climate change, urban air pollution, soil erosion, energy utilization, aging societies, etc. which are of concern to us and that impeding the achievement of MDGs.

During the past few years, a number of effective tools have been applied in order to achieve the MDGs. For examples, the "Polluters pay Principle or PPP" has been applied and would be further enforced in the area of water pollution. With regards to this principle, the polluters are required to pay for the cost of discharge they have made to the environment such as wastewater treatment fee, which is implicitly built-in, the clean water charges.

Furthermore, recent applications of "Clean Development Mechanism or CDM" have been introduced worldwide in order to combat with global climate change and air pollution. A number of carbon finance projects are being implemented in many GMS and Asian countries such as China, Indonesia and Malaysia in order to decrease the emissions of greenhouse gases such as carbon dioxide and methane and to ensure the sustainable development.

Regarding energy issues, we need to explore technological options for the development of more energy efficiency and focus on renewable energy

in order to ensure not only long term energy security but also sustainability.

We should have clear perspective to understand and join our hands to cope with these issues, as they are constraints to growth and development. Otherwise, it would be impossible to ultimately achieve the goal of subregional, regional and global sustainable development.

Once again, I wish to express my genuine thanks to UNEP and the Government of Norway for their support in organizing this workshop.

On this note, it is my pleasure to declare this workshop on National Sustainable Development Strategies in Asia open. I wish you every success in your discussion as well as an enjoyable stay in Thailand.

Thank you very much.
