

**Opening Remarks and Report of
His Excellency Pehin Abu Bakar Apong
The 46th President of the SEAMEO Council**

**At the Opening Ceremony of the 47th SEAMEO Council Conference
Grand Ballroom, Daewoo Hotel, Hanoi, Vietnam
Wednesday 20th March 2013, 1315 hrs**

His Excellency Prof Dr Pham Vu Luan
Minister of Education and Training, Vietnam

Distinguished Members of the Council

Dr Witaya Jeradechakul
Director of SEAMEO Secretariat

SEAMEO Regional Centres Directors

Ladies and Gentlemen

First of all, I wish to extend my profound thanks to the SEAMEO Secretariat, Centre Directors and all staff for their support during my term in office.

I also wish to express my sincere appreciation to the SEAMEO Member Countries for the warm welcome and generous hospitality accorded to me and my delegation during my visits.

I also wish to extend my apologies to the Minister of Timor Leste for not being able to include **Timor Leste** in my series of visit due to unforeseen circumstances.

Our decision to extend the Presidency to a two-year term was indeed a right and timely decision with the increasing number of Regional Centres that we have. The two year tenure has allowed me to **visit almost all** these

centres and to have a closer look at our Regional Centres, and have fruitful exchanges with the Centre Directors and Staff. Please allow me to take this opportunity to congratulate all Centre Directors and Network Coordinator for their hard work and support towards realizing our Golden SEAMEO vision.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen

Our Regional Centres operate according to their Legal Documents and Development Plans. In the current economic situation, our Regional Centres are faced with the challenges of limited resources and in seeking funding to implement their programmes and expand their operations. Regional Centres need to consider **reviewing their programmes** in relation to the needs of the stakeholders and also to review relevant **Legal Documents** in seeking funding and generating income as a means to attain financial viability.

After 47 years in operation, SEAMEO has established itself as a reputable international organization in human resource development. SEAMEO should not just offer its services to the region; it should **develop a network beyond the region** to ensure the sustainability of this Organization as well as enhancing its visibility.

SEAMEO has set for itself the **Golden SEAMEO vision** by 2020 where not only the Associate and Affiliate membership has increased to include major regions of the world but also SEAMEO will continue to be a dynamic education community which thrives amidst all challenges be it economic, social, technological or legal.

SEAMEO continues to be relevant as evident by the growing number of membership and Regional Centres. As we establish new centres, we need to consider that it will not burden SEAMEO as a whole. Perhaps, **auditing the Centres and Units' functions** can be carried out to ensure their

programmes and activities are focused to the objectives of their establishment.

During my visits to the Regional Centres, I pledged to advocate the spirit and principle of “**SEAMEO First**” to fellow Education Ministers. Let me reiterate this message again to encourage fellow Education Ministers to fully utilize the expertise and resources available in our Regional Centres. I am proud to say that our Regional Centres do provide quality services that have earned regional and global recognition.

On that note, I am pleased to invite you to view the highlights of my term in office throughout January 2011 until March 2013.

Thank you.