

**Inaugural address by the President of 47th SEAMEC Conference, H.E
Pham Vu Luan, Ministry of Education and Training of Vietnam**

*His Excellency Pehin Abu Bakar Apong, Minister of Education of Brunei Darussalam,
President of the 46th SEAMEO Council*

Excellency Ministers,

Distinguished Guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am very honored to be selected as the Chairman of the 47th SEAMEC Conference and the Chair of SEAMEO Council. I would like to take this opportunity to extend my sincere thanks to H.E Pehin Abu Bakar Apong, Minister of Education of Brunei Darussalam, the President of the 46th SEAMEO Council for his tireless efforts during the last two years. I also would like to congratulate H.E Phongthep Thepkanjana on being elected as Vice President of the 47th SEAMEO Council.

Ministers, ladies and gentlemen,

As you may know, the 46th SEAMEO Council adopted the SEAMEO 10-year Strategic Plan (2011-2020). In my new role as the President of the SEAMEO Council, I myself and the Ministry of Education and Training of Vietnam would do our best to implement the Plan effectively, contribute to raise SEAMEO to the next level and make it a prestige organization in the Southeast Asia region and in the international arena.

I am looking forward to get your great support from the Ministers in the SEAMEO family, especially the effective support from the Secretariat so that I could successfully fulfill the tasks assigned.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Vietnam successfully organized the 40th SEAMEO Council Conference in 2005 and this year, the country is honored to host the 47th SEAMEO Council Conference (SEAMEC 47). In the SEAMEC 47, Vietnam works in collaboration with SEAMEO Secretariat to develop an agenda with four main sessions and a Policy Forum themed “Lifelong Learning” which is espoused by Vietnam. I am confident that the Forum will offer an opportunity for

countries within and outside the region to share and learn from one another's experience of lifelong learning and building a learning society. In the consultation of country members, SEAMEC 47 also gives two main topics for ministerial discussion in Round Table Meeting on tomorrow, March 21. These topics include "Building a Learning Society in Southeast Asian Countries" and "SEAMEO's Contribution towards the ASEAN Community by 2015".

Vietnam also makes its commitment on Lifelong Learning by proposing the establishment of the SEAMEO Centre on Lifelong Learning (SEAMEO CELLL) in Vietnam so as to meet the regional need of promoting Lifelong Learning and create the cooperation opportunities in the field of Lifelong Learning among SEAMEO country members and associate members. On this morning, in the SEAMEC 47, you have witnessed the signing of the legal documents of the Centre between Vietnam Government and SEAMEO. Thus, until now, two Regional Centres including SEAMEO RETRAC and SEAMEO CELLL are located in Vietnam. These two Centres, along with the network of other Centres in the region will contribute to develop regional and Vietnam's human resources.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

SEAMEO Council Conference has become a platform where educational leaders of SEAMEO country members, associate members and affiliate member gather and have meaningful and practical discussions. I wish to take this precious opportunity to share the Vietnam's educational strategic goals and our efforts in the regional and international integration with the ministers and participants.

Vietnam Government has approved "Education Development Strategy 2011-2020" with the goal that by 2020, Vietnam education will have been fundamentally and comprehensively innovated towards standardization, modernization, socialization, democratization and international integration; that educational quality will be comprehensively enhanced with moral education, life skills, innovative capacity, practical capacity, foreign language capacity and computer skills; meeting the need of human resources, especially high-level knowledge ones for the development of industrialization, modernization and a knowledge-intensive learning economy; ensuring social justice in education and lifelong learning opportunities for all; and gradually building learning society. In particular:

- For early childhood education: Vietnam would complete universal access to early childhood education for 5-years-old children by 2015; by 2020, at least 30% kindergarten-age children and 80% early-childhood children will participate in

preschool educational institutions; the children malnutrition rate would fall below 10%.

- For general education: education quality is enhanced comprehensively, especially in fields of academic education, moral education, life skills, legal education, foreign language, and computer skills. By the year of 2020, the net enrollment rate in elementary education would be 99%, the net enrollment rate in secondary education will be 95% and 80% adolescents will reach high school education or equivalent; 70% children with disabilities would be provided with access to education.
- For vocational education and higher education: the structure of its vocational and higher education systems would be completed; professional structure and training levels would be completed; training quality would be enhanced to meet the need of human resources for socio-economic development. By 2020, vocational schools would be capable of receiving 30% secondary school graduates, vocational trained and university graduate employees rate would reach 70%, the rate of students in all types of training systems will be 350 – 400 over ten thousand.
- For continuing education: continuing education would be strengthened to offer equitable opportunities on lifelong learning for all people, contributing to develop a learning society. The achievement of the eradication of illiteracy would be strengthened. By 2020, literacy rate of people aged over 15 will be 98%, and literacy rate of people aged between 15 and 35 will be 99% for both males and females.

Given the world and Vietnam economic crisis, those past years is a very difficult period. What makes me glad most is the care and the investment of Vietnamese Government and people in pursuing the above strategic goals. Many sectors and localities have to delay the implementation of important works; meanwhile, the investment in education is still a priority and guaranteed. With families, the income may reduce, but parents still continue pay attention to their children's education. This helps the national training scale is stabilized.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Being elected President of the SEAMEO Council and the Chairperson of the 47th SEAMEO Council Conference is a great honor, but also a great responsibility for me personally and for Vietnam Ministry of Education and Training. I commit that with more

than 20 years membership of the Organization, Vietnam has been strictly fulfilling its commitment and always an active member contributing to the regional development of education, science, and culture.

Thank you.