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**UNITED NATIONS**

**ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMISSION FOR ASIA AND THE PACIFIC**

In collaboration with

**PUBLIC POLICY DEVELOPMENT OFFICE (PPDO) UNDER THE OFFICE OF THE  
PRIME MINISTER, THE GOVERNMENT HOUSE OF THE KINGDOM OF  
THAILAND**

International Conference: Happiness and Public Policy

18 -19 July 2007

Bangkok

**WELCOMING REMARKS BY MR. KIM HAK-SU,  
UNDER-SECRETARY-GENERAL  
OF THE UNITED NATIONS AND  
EXECUTIVE SECRETARY OF UNESCAP**

- § H.E. Mr. Piboon Wattanasirithum, Deputy Prime Minister of Kingdom of Thailand
- § H.E. Mr. Lympo Jigmi Thinley, Minister of Cultural and Home Affairs, Kingdom of Bhutan
- § Mr. Rongpon Charoenpan, Secretary-General to the Cabinet, Kingdom of Thailand
- § Dr. Sauwalak Kittiprapas, Acting Director , Public Policy Development Office, Kingdom of Thailand

Excellencies, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

I would like to welcome you all to the International Conference on Happiness and Public Policy. This important and pivotal International Conference is a timely initiative and undertaking of the Public Policy Development Office (PPDO) an innovative policy agency under the Office of the Prime Minister, the Government House of the Kingdom of Thailand.

Today, the Asia and Pacific region is still home to two thirds of the world's poor and struggles with increasing environmental pressure arising from its rapid economic growth. While economic growth has reduced poverty in the region it is also drastically increased pressure on the region's limited ecological capacity. We can no longer continue our current grow first clean up later approach. This is why we need a new paradigm for development and economic growth.

Excellencies, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

Our current paradigm focusing on quantity of GDP growth is not enough. We need a new paradigm focusing on quality of growth. In this context, UNESCAP has been working closely with PPDO in preparing this conference and strongly supports the Thai government's initiative. Quantity of growth must be replaced with quality of growth, for this reason, we fully support this important International Conference on Happiness and Public Policy. This Conference is a timely initiative and undertaking exploring and sharing new and innovative ideas to promote an alternative development paradigm in the Asian and Pacific region.

I would like to congratulate the Thai government for taking this new initiative of pioneering a search for a new development paradigm by organizing the first official conference on happiness in the region. I am sure this conference will provide an important forum to identify a happiness paradigm to improve our quality of life. It is of great significance that for the first time in the region, an official conference hosted by Government is promoting an alternative paradigm as a way to improve quality of life and well-being that moves beyond the current GDP paradigm as a measure of development.

UNESCAP has been promoting environmentally suitable economic growth or "Green Growth" to improve the quality of growth and to achieve MDG1: Poverty and MDG 7: Environmental Sustainability, at the same time without comprising the limited ecological carrying capacity of the region. I believe the Green Growth approach could operationalize this happiness paradigm, harmonizing economic growth, ecological efficiency and quality of life. Green Growth was endorsed by the 5th Ministerial Conference on Environment and Development and recommended as a unique instrument and viewed as the most strategic answer to increasing the need to improve the environmental sustainability of economic growth reconciling MDG 1 with MDG 7.

To improve the eco-efficiency of economic growth, there is a need to improve the eco-efficiency of the production and consumption patterns of society. UNESCAP is promoting the need to improve ecological efficiency as a driver of economic growth with improved ecological

quality. Focus areas of GG approach are economic and policy instruments to promote the betterment and advancement of the lives of billions of people in the region through five tracks:

- Green tax and budget reform;
- Development of sustainable infrastructure;
- Promotion of sustainable consumption and production;
- Greening of Markets and business, and
- Development of Ecological Efficiency Indicators

Excellencies, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

I press upon the distinguished experts joined here today to share their innovative ideas and proposals which could facilitate shifting toward a new development paradigm for the governments of the Member States of UNESCAP. In conclusion, I trust that this innovative Conference will serve as a viable and indispensable means of operationalizing a new paradigm for development that moves us beyond the current paradigm of quantity of growth toward realizing quality of growth that sustains our precious environment, and thus our continued wellbeing.

Thank you for your attention.

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