

The 50th Governing Board Meeting of SEAMEO TROPMED
7 – 9 September 2011
Bangkok, Thailand

POLICY FORUM
Climate Change: Its Impact and Challenges to the Education
and Health Sectors with Special Reference to Children

OPENING REMARKS
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Professor Dr Jaime Galvez-Tan, Chair of the 49th Governing Board Meeting of SEAMEO TROPMED

The Members of the Governing Board representing the SEAMEO Member Countries

Prof Dr Pratap Singhasivanon, Secretary General of SEAMEO TROPMED Network

Dr Supamit Chunsuttiwat, representative of the Director General of the Ministry of Public Health, Thailand

Officials and representatives from the United Nations Environment Program; Asian Development Bank; the World Health Organization Center for Health and Development in Kobe, Japan; and UNICEF

Other officials and staff members of the Centre,

Guests, ladies and gentlemen,

Good morning. Sawadee krap.

I am honored to be part of today's Policy Forum and address the 50th Governing Board Meeting of the SEAMEO TROPMED Network.

On behalf of the SEAMEO Secretariat, let me extend my greetings and congratulations to the chair and members of the Governing Board; as well as to the Secretary General of SEAMEO TROPMED Network, Professor Dr Pratap, for the able organization of the meeting as well as today's policy forum.

This forum is an excellent opportunity for the Centre and the Organization as a whole to learn from the collective wisdom of the honored members of the Governing Board of SEAMEO TROPMED as well as the invited speakers and guests.

Reflecting on the current era, there are three major changes that are shaping our world today. These are the fast-paced technological advances, globalization, and the changes in our environment. The third one – the changes in our environment – is a huge concern to everyone and is now affecting how we live in the 21st century.

The international community has given particular attention to this issue. In fact, Goal number 7 of the Millennium Development Goals calls for environmental sustainability.

In responding to the needs of the current century and in unison with Goal 7 of the Millennium Development Goals, SEAMEO has embarked on a decade plan that will see SEAMEO embracing the challenges to remain relevant and become more efficient in the execution of its mandate in the next 10 years and beyond. Among the priorities that SEAMEO identified for the new decade include the overlapping themes of education in emergencies, education for sustainable development, biodiversity, disaster management, and environmental management.

It is at this juncture that I congratulate SEAMEO TROP MED Network for bringing to the fore the very important issue, which is climate change, in today's policy forum.

Climate change is a global problem. And I believe that each one of us has the power to make a difference.

According to scientists, changes in climate are natural. However, we are now experiencing temperature rises at unprecedented speed which may be attributed to human activities.

Alarming, our children and youth of today are likely to experience the greater effects of this problem. Thus, it is important that we familiarize them about the problem so they become aware of the causes of climate change and understand what they can do to change it.

Today's theme of the policy forum clearly echoes this point of view: "Climate Change, Its Impact and Challenges to the Education and Health Sectors with Special Reference to Children". I am very pleased that the discussion focuses on two important sectors -- education and health -- which need to work hand-in-hand in order to promote the welfare of our children and youth.

I am very pleased that SEAMEO TROP MED Network has brought together key organizations and experts to share with us today the issues that surround climate change. I very much look forward to learning more from the sharing and the discussions on this phenomenon. During the afternoon session, I hope that we can come up with concrete recommendations that we can bring to the SEAMEO High Officials and SEAMEO Council for consideration; and subsequent implementation in the SEAMEO Member Countries.

I welcome everyone to Bangkok and look forward to a productive discussion with you all.

Thank you very much. Khop Khun krub.