**รายการ "ศาสตร์พระราชา สู่การพัฒนาอย่างยั่งยืน" วันศุกร์ที่ 16 พฤศจิกายน 2561**

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Good evening to you all.

I have been attending international events throughout this week, starting from November 11 when I traveled to Paris, France, at the invitation of French President Emmanuel Jean-Michel Frédéric Macron to join other world leaders and more than 120 international representatives.

In Paris, I attended the centennial ceremony of the end of WWI. The gathering was a symbol of lasting peace and cooperation between nations, reminding the world that tragic events such as a war should never be repeated.

After the ceremony, I attended the Paris Peace Forum, a brain-storming platform for all nations to propose new ideas related to peace and sustainable development. The forum was joined by representatives from government agencies, civic sector, private sector, and a body of experts called Think Tank.

On this occasion, I took the opportunity to present 3 books to the Paris Peace Library. Not only do these books contain the principle of sustainability and the Sufficiency Economy Philosophy of His Majesty King Rama IX, but they will steer the world toward lasting peace. These books will give the world insight into His Majesty King Rama IX’s philosophy and wisdom which will be regarded as part of the world history.

Between November 13 to 15, I visited Singapore to attend the 33rd ASEAN Summit and other ASEAN related meetings and activities. This is the last ASEAN Summit under the chairmanship of Singapore. Apart from ASEAN leaders, leaders from other parts of the world were also in the attendance such as Australia, China, South Korea, USA, and New Zealand, as well as representatives from international organizations. The ASEAN Summit welcomed the approval of 7 documents and was presented, by Thailand, a report on the duties of the ASEAN Centre for Sustainable Development Studies and Dialogue. The center will be officially opened in 2019 during our chairmanship.

During this ASEAN Summit, I highlighted on the importance of making ASEAN Community strong with people at the center. I stressed on promoting sustainability in all facets and strengthening partnerships with the rest of the world including eliminating trade barriers, increasing intra-regional trade, accelerating negotiations on Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP), promoting regional and strategic connectivity including basic transportation and communication infrastructures and registrations, and promoting people-to- people contact for as we are heading towards seamless ASEAN.

(ASEAN nations) will increase people and businesses’ access to digital financial services and financial technologies (FINTECH), so as to spur growth among micro-, small, and medium-sized enterprises. Threats, both traditional and non-traditional, are challenges that we, ASEAN people will have to face together. Therefore, we, ASEAN people, must pay attention to the importance of border management, climate change, natural disaster management, and cyber security.

Such cooperation must be within the frameworks of regional and strategic connectivity including the “Free and Open Indo – Pacific” idea, the Master Plan on ASEAN Connectivity 2025, China’s Belt and Road Initiative, Japan’s Quality Infrastructure policy, and the ACMECS Master Plan. These frameworks of cooperation must be carried out with participation from all member nations focusing on the 3Ms concept which are mutual trust, mutual respect, and mutual benefit. The 3Ms initiative will bring about concrete results and sustainability in all respects.

The next step for us is we are taking the chairmanship of ASEAN from Singapore. It will be the 51st year of the establishment of ASEAN, co-founded by Thailand. On behalf of Thailand, I thanked Singapore for its outstanding work in mobilizing the ASEAN region toward stability, progress, and innovation, and promised to carry on all agendas of ASEAN for smooth continuity such as the “ASEAN Smart Cities” initiative. Thai cities that joined the initiative include Bangkok, Chon Buri, and Phuket. I have already made known that Thailand, as ASEAN chair of 2019, will uphold the Advancing Partnership for Sustainability” theme. Each word carries meaningful messages.

Partnership is about connecting with one another through the promotion of the partnership of ASEAN and the world, focusing on the ASEAN +1 initiative and other ASEAN-centered projects which will take into consideration regional balance and citizens’ best interest. Also, we will signify the role of ASEAN in global arenas in order to help fix existing problems that affect the region and the world. Advancing means we have to look to the future. ASEAN nations must continue to work together for a continued and dynamic future.

We have to utilize innovative technologies in order to increase our competitive edge. At the same time, we must prepare people to be able cope with new technologies and challenges, as we are moving towards digital ASEAN. Lastly, sustainability means we must build sustainability in all dimensions, whether it be security, peace, economic development, and environmental protection or the green economy, all of which are deemed sustainable development.

Thailand and our ASEAN friends should share the same view on the topics of sustainability and not leaving anyone behind. An example of our planned activities is the promotion of the “green meeting” under the concept of “3Rs” – reduce, reuse, and recycle throughout the year in all ASEAN meetings.Thailand will use environmentally-friendly materials such as glass bottles, souvenirs made of natural materials, cloth bags, and we will try to reduce the use paper as much as we can.

I would like to invite the general public to protect our environment to support the country initiatives and commitments as we are assuming ASEAN chair. You can make this small idea grows into something that is practical and widely accepted. Throughout 2019, Thailand will host as many as 170 meetings under cooperative frameworks of ASEAN. I would like to invite you to follow these conferences and activities on www.asean2019.go.th and other social media sites, so that you can be updated on work progress as well as meeting venues. Many meetings will be attended by leaders, senior representatives, and related personnel.

Please be informed that traffic could be congested in some certain areas as we might have to accommodate our visitors. The Government will do its best to minimize the impact. I asked for your kind understanding and support in order to be a good host to welcome our foreign visitors. People in other ASEAN countries have shown us their kind understanding and support in welcoming and accommodating their guests.

Not only in Bangkok, ASEAN meetings will be held in different provinces throughout the country. This way, we can promote domestic tourism and bolster spending in local communities. Thus, all members of the Thai public will eventually take part in being a good host to our visitors, welcoming ASEAN leaders and officials who will be representing their countries by offering security, generosity, cordiality, support, and friendship. Let us make long lasting memories for these visitors who will tell their friends and family about our country. Words will spread among tourists and investors. One day, they will want to see Thailand with their own eyes.

Between November 15 and 18, I will be attending the 26th APEC Economic Leaders' Meeting in Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea. Results and details of the meeting will be announced later on. My fellow citizens, today, I want to take this opportunity to answer 5 of your questions. These questions were voted by people as to most popular topics people would like to hear from me.

First question is how to fix the problem of informal debts. The answer is to increase access to formal loans and offer support to low-income earners, which the Government has been doing, whether it be tax measures, justice-related measures, and legislation.

For example, we have worked on the issue of sell with the right to redeem. We protect borrowers being taken advantage of by creditors, and offer mediation services based on related laws and social context to return justice for all especially the poor. In addition, the Government has pushed forward with the Community Bank Act, turning local financial entity into legal corporates, a move that would increase public access to loans. This mechanism will strengthen local people and narrow down the inequality gap. This legislation is important to the reform of community financial services.

Our short-term goal is to turn 7,000 community banks (from 30,000 community banks nationwide) into legal corporates. These banks have 200 billion baht in savings altogether. This legislation is expected to pass the National Legislative Assembly soon while the current administration is still in office. With that said, in order to fix poverty in a sustainable manner, we must first know how to be self-sufficient, which is our immunity against debts. Moreover, the Government has founded the National Savings Fund to cultivate a habit of saving among citizens.

We also encourage people to keep records of their spending so that data extracted from these records can be used to develop spending guidelines. I truly believe that measures, legislation, and methods the Government has introduced will allow the poor and the low-income earners to have a better life and an ability to support themselves.

2. Today education is for tomorrow. Therefore, the curriculum must be written with vision for the 21st century or digital age and in line with the forward-looking 20-year National strategy, preparing us for the future.

For example, speaking of the subject of agriculture since our country is an agricultural based economy, however, it will take 6+6+4 (elementary school, middle school and high school, and university) or 16 years to complete one education, if we don't continuously update what is taught in schools throughout a student’s 16 year of learning, what they have learned will be outdated. Therefore, research and development must include new knowledge/discoveries along with supporting new innovations that can be used for commercial purposes, adding more economic value.

3. Education reform must start from the beginning to the end of the line. This requires a concerted effort in planning as well as continuous amendments. The Government as Team Thailand must work on this together. As the molder, the Ministry of Education, which oversees various education levels must come together to discuss with other ministries such as the Ministry of Agriculture and Industry who are the units dealing with workers.

For example, if we would like the students to understand about the 10 target industries, all concern ministries must work together, not leaving the responsibility only to the Ministry of Education to draft the curriculum. This means that all agencies must work in a concerted effort. I can provide vision. However, I alone cannot provide a complete picture or implement everything just by myself, not even the Ministry of Education or the Government can achieve the aforementioned. We need cooperation from everyone.

4. The education system must not only produce capable people but also it must produce good people. This is one of the principles of the Sufficiency Economy Philosophy which says that knowledge must go hand in hand with morals. It is only then would a person's education be complete.

The success of the education system also depends on the two-way relationship between the instructor and the students. Both sides need to be passionate and enthusiastic in the teaching and learning process in order to impart knowledge that is necessary for daily life and the future.

The problem of agricultural crops is still a concern because the foreign markets are facing problems with trade wars and the economic downturn. They are not yet recover. There are many new rules. Oil prices are still fluctuating and weather conditions are still erratic. This affects the export prices of agricultural products of all countries. During my meeting with ASEAN leaders, I’ve learned that they all face problems, whether it be rubber or palm. It is good that our rice situation this year is better. Many countries have come across storms. Therefore, the export price and demand may not be so certain.

The Government is hard on this issue. We have to admit that in the past, we already were trying to promote the use of rubber in the country but it has been slow as many projects have yet to be completed. We produce about 4.5 million tons per year while domestic consumption is only about 500,000 tons. Another 4 million tons have to be sold outside the country. The prices have been suppressed because rubber is also grown in other countries as well. These countries also require energy and food stability. Many countries are facing problems in utilizing palm oil. The Government must address the issue at all fronts multilateral, bilateral, and domestic. The state, farmers, and merchants must all understand this point and work towards solution together. The Government is working on this issue but it won’t be possible to implement a solution once in one area and have it all work forever. The situation continuously changes.

Lastly, there are many complaints on my new online communication channels regarding subsidies for newborn babies. I’ve assigned this matter to the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security. The Ministry is going to quickly investigate and identify flaws in the system.

It will inquire into why those who qualify have yet to receive their entitlements. Any evidence of corruption will be dealt with decisively. Those who are in trouble or see any illegal activity can send information to me personally. Your information will be kept secret.

I will forward the issue to the relevant agencies. I’ve learned that some cases have already been resolved while those who submitted the complaints have been briefed on the progress of the case. This includes millions of cases that were reported to the Damrongtham centers.

Thank you, and I hope that we all shall act as good hosts and I hope that the citizens of ASEAN shall work together for progress and sustainability. Sawasdee Krub. See you again.

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