**From the Sufficiency Economy Philosophy to Sustainable Development Goals December 28, 2018**

**------------------------------------------------------------**

Good evening to you all.

On the occasion of the forthcoming New Year, I would like to convey His Majesty the King’s well wishes message provided in the Royal New Year card to you all. Begins: “Sawasdee, May the New Year bring (you) strong physical and mental health through sports and all forms of exercise” End.

The Royal message indicated that His Majesty the King attaches great importance to family institution and physical and mental health of the Thai people. His Majesty the King hopes that people understand the importance of good health and exercise which is an activity family members can enjoy together either at home or any places.

In addition, Her Royal Highness Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn has given a Royal New Year card bearing a hand-drawn pig to celebrate the year of the pig, along with Her Royal Highness’s well wishes message to Thai people. Her Royal Highness message urges Thai people to apply wisdom in everything that they do.

I’d like to convey these two Royal well wishes messages to you for your best of luck. The Royal messages can be applied to everyday routines to attain peace and happiness for oneself and family.

They can also be adopted in a wider context for the prosperity and stability of our nation. I believe that exercise, good health, wisdom, and family are very important for all of us in this changing world where everything is changing including nature and technology.

My dear brothers and sisters, Thailand will assume ASEAN chairmanship for a period of one year, from January 1st, 2019 to December 31st, 2019.

During the official visit of the secretary general of ASEAN on December 21st, the Government hosted “Thailand Together for the ASEAN Chairmanship 2019” event at the Government House, showing Thailand’s readiness and preparedness to chair ASEAN next year.

The organization of such event was made possible by related agencies including ASEAN ambassadors, students, the private sector, actors and actresses, athletes, and relevant responsible personnel.

Together, they showed strength and unity of “Team Thailand” in a bid to mobilize ASEAN cooperation and to be a good host, in compliance with the theme “Advancing Partnership for Sustainability.”

ASEAN was founded in Bangkok in 1967 or more than 5 decades ago. Since then, ASEAN has grown into a peaceful, prosperous, and stable region. ASEAN is the 6th largest economy of the world and is likely to become the 4th largest economy by 2030, or in the next 10 years.

Since the establishment, ASEAN has played a vital role and has cemented its acceptance in the world community. Trade and investment is conducted under ASEAN agreements. With that said, ASEAN is faced with many challenges in terms of trade, technology, transnational crime, inequality, and changes in the social structure, prompting the ten member nations to work even more closely with one another on the basis of the “3Ms” namely mutual trust, mutual respect, and mutual benefit. The 3Ms Model will help ensure more concrete results and our ability to cope with challenges in a more sustainable fashion for ASEAN in all dimensions.

Becoming the chair of ASEAN is a rare opportunity for Thailand. It is once in a decade opportunity. During the next one year, Thailand and its people should take the opportunity to unite and mobilize ASEAN through development and innovation, building a unified community and creating intra- and interconnectivity for sustainable growth, as well as lifting Thailand’s role in regional development. Singapore serves as the ASEAN chair for 2018, which will end soon. Singapore did a marvelous job in mobilizing ASEAN and strengthening nations through innovations. Thailand will be carrying out the same mission by completing the ASEAN Smart Cities Network for continuity and sustainability of the ASEAN Community. Moreover, Thailand will seek to stabilize the region by resolving existing obstacles and seeking active cooperation from member states for concrete and effective results, while at the same time forging partnership within and outside the They will also help ASEAN to achieve its ultimate goals which are to become a people-centered community, to leave no one behind, and to grow in a sustainable manner.

As ASEAN chairman, Thailand will host to more than 180 conferences/meetings in Bangkok and other provinces, boosting the economy and tourism around the country.

In addition, the benefits from various cooperation (under ASEAN frameworks) will go to our public sector, private sector, educational institutions etc. Visiting Thailand will allow (our guests) to learn more about our way of life, businesses, and attractions, strengthening the tie between people and businesses.

In this connection, I therefore would like to seek your kind cooperation in being a good host and welcoming foreign leaders and delegates with open arms so that conferences/meetings can be held accordingly to achieve their ultimate goals. Our guests therefore will feel like coming back to visit us again.

This is a good way to promote our country and tourism. Furthermore, I invite all sectors to help move ASEAN, in all respects, forward without leaving anyone behind. ASEAN will be a peaceful, strong, and sustainable community.

Being a chairman of ASEAN is not the task that the Government can mobilize alone by itself but it is the task that require cooperation from all Thai people. As a citizen of Thailand, we can impress our guests from their first footstep in the country by showing them good service and hospitality.

For example, the ASEAN lane will help facilitate our guests through the formality. For other services, (service providers) must carry out their jobs with honesty and care. Also, they have to make sure that their workplaces are clean and well taken care of.

I’ve seen restaurants and stores joining the effort to stop using plastic bags and foam containers as many of them have turned to recyclable materials in order to reduce waste and save the environment, in line with the country “green meeting” concept. We can show our foreign visitors and allies that Thailand is a unified and well-managed society.

Dear brothers and sisters, as Thailand will become the ASEAN chair next year, the Government, through various concerned Ministries and agencies, has prepared many projects and activities for the ASEAN people such as the announcement of 2019 as "ASEAN Cultural Year".

the Ministry of Culture has prepared plans, activities and projects throughout the year, both in ASEAN and around the world, to promote the role of Thailand and to honor ASEAN. Thailand will be a coordinator to cooperate with ASEAN member states and dialogue partners.

The project aims to promote ASEAN culture on the world stage. Activities include ASEAN books in English and a book on ASEAN and world, which will compile information on cultural and natural heritage sites in ASEAN, the ASEAN Film Festival, the ASEAN Puppet Festival and the launch of the animated film "Ramakien" (or "Ramayana"), which is a "shared heritage" of ASEAN culture, the festival on cultural wisdom, and the ASEAN Culture Expo celebrating 237 years of the Rattanakosin Kingdom.

An ASEAN cultural tour featuring performances and exhibitions will be held in Europe and Asia, including the ASEAN Street Food exhibition.

We aim to use this "Cultural Dimension" in promoting the role of Thailand as the ASEAN chair under the "Cultural Diplomacy" policy to unite ASEAN into one beautiful identity comprising of multiple cultures and honoring ASEAN at the world stage.

In addition, it will be a way of creating synergy between ASEAN member countries in order to continue to play an active role in the global community While "Cultural power" is abstract and intangible, we are able to recognize its tremendous power, not only its sense of nationality, but also in it being an indicator of the strength of a nation’s human resources.

So I feel honored to preside over the ceremony to celebrate this year’s creative cultural achievements. I reiterate this to stress the importance of each award, such as Person of the Year, awarded to those who have brought fame and honor for Thailand and served as a role model for society.

The list consist of the Venerable Vudhijaya Vajiramedhi (V. Vajiramedhi), the first Thai national to be appointed by the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) as a Patron for Peace and Compassion, Professor Prasert na Nagara for his studies of ancient Thai inscriptions, and national artist Dr Chalermchai Kositpipat who designed the world famous Wat Rong Khun.

Dr Chalermchai also gathered local Chiang Rai artists to draw “The Heroes” painting honoring the Wild Boar Academy rescue operation as well as the museum at Tham Luang Cave honoring Major Saman Gunan.

(Former Chiang Rai Governor) Narongsak Osottanakorn headed the joint rescue operation of Tham Luang Cave. With his dedication, sacrifice, and exceptional management skills, he was able to bring about the successful rescue of 13 Wild Boar Academy teammates, garnering international recognition for the country.

Former Navy Seal Major Saman Gunan who volunteered to help the 13 boys and lost his life during the rescue operation was honored for his courageous and scarify. A true hero of the Tham Luang.

Athiwara Khongmalai (Toon Bodyslam) served as a role model for the country’s youth and society in his “Kaokhonlakao” walk to raise over 1 billion baht in funds for the construction of hospitals and their medical supplies, increasing more access to medical services for people.

I would like to congratulate these individuals and hope that all of us will honor them as role models of goodness and national pride.

I want to announce to the world that Thai people have the knowledge, ability, love, unity, and selflessness required for doing good for society without expecting anything in return.

This is considered a way of fulfilling His Majesty King’s wish. His Majesty the King has initiated the Altruistic Heart volunteer program for the purpose of promoting sprit of public service and contribution to one’s community, society, and the country.

As the New Year festival is around the corner, many of us will celebrate the festival with their families in accordance to our beautiful Thai traditions. I wish those returning to their homeland or traveling on vacation a safe journey. Please maintain awareness and refrain from drinking alcohol for the safety of all.

For the people in Bangkok, in addition to count down events, there is also the Love and Warmth at Winter’s Festival at the Royal Plaza and Sanam Sua Pa, offering various activities for all family members.

I’d also recommend eco-tourism, cultural-tourism, and agro-tourism activities such as in Koh Kred in Nonthaburi, an island in the Chao Phraya River.

The island is a settlement of the Mon community that has preserved its culture and traditions. Visitors can experience community life along the Chao Phraya River and various important temples. They can also purchase a variety of food and souvenirs, especially pottery and ceramic in various shapes It is also a prototype for universal access communities according to the Koh Kret Model Project where people with disabilities and everyone in society can live and travel freely, conveniently, and safely.

In addition to the famous durian of Nonthaburi, there is also the OTOP community tourism project rich with charm, local wisdom, traditional way of life, culture and creativity transformed into revenue generating products.

The project connects 30 OTOP villages in 6 districts via water, nature trails, and cultural trails.

Another nearby province rich with eco and cultural tourism, featuring cycling routes is Kung Bang Kachao in Phra Pradaeng District of Samut Prakan Province.

It is considered the largest ozone source near Bangkok, with biodiversity and natural resources while also equipped with cultural wisdom.

It once received praise from Time Magazine to be the best “Urban Oasis” in Asia. Other interesting attractions include King Chulalongkorn Fort, Bang Pu Resort, the ancient city and the crocodile farm.

Thank you, and I wish everyone good health and safe travels and I hope that all families are full of joy and happiness. Sawasdee krub.