**รายการ "ศาสตร์พระราชา สู่การพัฒนาอย่างยั่งยืน" วันศุกร์ที่ 4 มกราคม 2562**

**From the Sufficiency Economy Philosophy to Sustainable Development Goals January 4, 2019**

Happy New Year and good evening to you all.

Tonight’s program is the first of 2019 which marks the fifth year since the Government and the National Council for Peace and Order brought peace and happiness back to Thai people, and stability, prosperity, and sustainability to the nation.

Most of the country’s problems are structural issues which require time to solve and a new management method called the Pracharat mechanism, which gave rise to the 20-year national strategic plan and the 13 reform agendas. I believe we all are familiar with this topic. Some topics that may not concern you but they surely can broaden your views and increase social harmony.

As for the topics that concern you, I would like you to pay close attention and work on the issues together. This can help protect your interest and rights as well as avoid conflicts. Under a democratic system, we all have liberty but such liberty must be under the law. I have talked about several issues that concerned you and those that didn’t every time I get a chance. The current Government belongs to the people and will take care of all groups without leaving anyone behind.

One of the major concerns is the informal debt among Thai farmers and the low-income earners who make up for the majority and contribute to economic development. Without a sustainable solution, the problem is likened to cancer that is hurting and killing our nation.

The Government, led by the center for prevention and suppression of fraud, is enforcing the law against the outlaws and those that take advantage of the underprivileged. So far, the center has successfully returned assets and properties worth 16 billion baht to 15,000 people including 11,700 land deeds covering 37,000 rai.

We are going to work on this issue until the problem goes away. Borrowers of informal debts can seek assistance at the Hotline 1155 at any time.

Today, I’d like to bring two issues that have been resolved in a sustainable manner to your attention. The first issue is education. There is no denying that social inequality has a negative impact on our national development, the economy, the society, and politics. One of the major causes of social inequality is education which is the most important foundation of our human resource development.

Education is a door to opportunities, giving people access to knowledge, understanding, experience, and skills, all of which are the basis of income generation and the ability to adopt and adapt to new environments. This includes learning and analyzing available information for everyday use. Most importantly, knowledge must always accompany with morality, as together, they will provide people with immunity in accordance with the philosophy of sufficiency economy.

Educational development is a priority of all governments. Educational problems have been addressed in several aspects. Although we have spent as much as 500 billion baht to improve education, several issues remain and worsen, affecting the confidence in the economy and society. The loss in confidence is a threat to Thailand’s plan to step out of the middle-income bracket.

The Government is working with concerned educational experts and agencies to establish the Equitable Education Fund, in compliance with the 2017 Constitution of Thailand. The charter provides for those who lack educational funds and eliminates disparities, promotes and improves Thai teachers by authorizing the Government to allocate budget for the fund. The fund is free to work with the intention to focus on the promotion of equal opportunity and access to education in several dimensions such as the preparation of young children for school and helping student from low-income families to be able to have basic education. The underprivileged will get the education they need to thrive in their occupations.

The other aim is to encourage schools to provide courses that meet the needs and abilities of each individual student. Educators shall be able to cater to the needs and differences of their students and help them reach their full potential. All in all, educational reform strives to improve human abilities, closer the educational gap, and support the labor market.

The Equitable Education Fund is responsible for looking after the less fortunate and the unprivileged, reaching out to more than 4.3 million people, from newborns to 18-year-olds. The effort must focus on the efficiency of the fund while making sure the money is well spent. The fund has therefore established the information system for educational equality (iSEE) which links to the database of the Equitable Education Fund, allowing policy makers to see and understand education problems in all areas of Thailand. The system will serve as a tool for state agencies to eradicate educational inequality, making sure nobody is left behind. The Equitable Education Fund and OBEC have worked on the system since 2018. Once finished, iSEE will provide information about children and youth and the less fortunate, both registered and unregistered, numbering 4 million people.

Children’s 13-digit number will be linked to the databases of 6 ministries. Information to be made available includes families’ financial status, pictures of their homes, children’s health information, risk behaviors, needs, and children’s school performance and academic records etc.

Information sent via iSEE comprises data from the Big Data system, deriving from 4 notable parts.

First, information on qualifications of those eligible. The system now can cover more than 2 million students within the care of OBEC nationwide. The criteria for eligibility include family income, family status, and geoinformatics etc.

Second, result of the allocation of subsidy (with condition). The allocation of budgets to eradicate inequality will be based on the needs of each individual, making sure that the distribution adheres to the practice of demand-side financing. The iSEE system can track the transactions made between the benefactor and 500,000 students. The system can provide information on money transaction, picture, and location of the transaction with the recipient electronic signature.

Third, we have a tracking system to make sure the money is spent for the right purpose. Reports will be filed by responsible teachers every semester. All reports will be submitted via the CCT application, reducing the time needed to following up and allowing all information to be recorded to make sure all criteria are met such as the 80% attendance per academic year.

In addition, the physical conditions of the students will be taken into consideration. The CCT application will notify officials of students’ weight and height. Teachers will be able to notify the benefactor of students’ absences. Every process will be conducted in a paperless fashion.

Forth, we have a system to forward information to Big Data of responsible agencies using the 13 digit ID card number. This enables the Equitable Education Fund and the six ministries to provide equal chances to education. They can recall all information about educational problems and the number of students in need, as well as the information about 30,000 schools, the distribution of funds at the national level, provincial level, school level, and on an individual basis. In the near future, all projects related to inequality will be synchronized such as the state welfare card scheme and the financial support program for newborns.

The iSEE system is screened and verified at three stages including

1) the empirical data examination related to income and financial status through the CCT application,

2) the verification of data by parents, teachers, and community leaders,

and 3) the certification and approval by school committees which consist of community leaders, religious leaders, civil servants, and state officials. After the launch of the system on December 21st, more than 400,000 students have met the criteria.

We have to admit that educational reform has yet to yield effective results as we had hoped. Part of the blame is on the ineffectiveness of funds distribution, not scratching the right itch, thus prolonging educational disparities. The iSEE system incorporates modern technologies that help state agencies operate more effectively, transparently, and cater to the needs of each individual student.

There are criteria and rules that students have to follow in order to receive assistance. I have to extend my thanks to all involved for their efforts to reform Thai education. I ask that the Equitable Education Fund, the Ministry of Education, and related agencies continue to work hand in hand with schools and educators to make sure all data are correct and up to date, and make sure students’ information is kept confidential.

In addition to the work of the Fund for Educational Equality, this Government is also accelerating the foundation of educational reform and development to accommodate changes according to the Thailand 4.0 policy and to reduce the problem of inequality of the country. One important channel is support for education through the “Ruam Pattana” or Partnership School Project.

It is a concept of creating innovation in the management of educational institutions under the cooperation between the Ministry of Education and companies - foundations - organizations - and many institutions that provide resources, support, and participate in the management of educational institutions by working together according to the Pracharat mechanism. In the past year, there are 50 participating schools from 34 provinces.

This year we will extend this program to cover all 77 provinces across the country, encompassing a total of 185 participating educational institutions.

The goal of raising the education standards under the “Ruam Pattana” School Project is to promote participation between various sectors in management, joint development, and educational support to develop quality and create innovation in school management to be able to raise learning outcome and prepare students for the future.

The school, therefore, will have an opportunity to develop thoroughly and serve as a lifelong learning center for everyone in the community as well. The center will provide the development of skills and quality of life, which will contribute to reducing inequality in the country.

To achieve the goals of the Ruam Pattana School Project, the Government has revised regulations relating to management, budget allocation, personnel management, and curriculum.

This includes outlining criteria for selecting educational institutions (as a prototype Ruam Pattana School), private sectors, and sponsors as well as putting in place management systems for change and future success.

Important factors that can lead to the success of the Ruam Pattana School Project includes (1) Participation in school administration from local administrative organizations and communities in the area.

(2) Personnel management where private sponsors will participate in the school board or advisory panel, enabling them to evaluate work and select personnel.

(3) Budget management, consisting of an accounting system to match the audit standards by clearly creating separate accounts from the government budget.

(4) Academic administration with the development of curriculum and learning materials, as well as measurement and evaluation systems in accordance with the needs of students, parents, communities and the context of educational institutions.

And (5) Monitoring and research at the organizational and school level and in the form of a working group and external evaluators.

This project is another effort that is done in accordance to the need to cooperate in developing the country’s personnel in order to have the skills that are suitable to market demands and people preferences in order to support our transition into the 4.0 era, which also coincides with the needs of the private sector in mobilizing the production of products and services. I would like to thank all that are involved in the successful and continuous implementation of these policies in order to help reform the country’s education system.

There remain many other schools that are interested in joining the Ruam Pattana School Project. If companies, especially those located near schools, are interested in participating, they can join to support the education of students in communities to develop the quality of the country’s youth.

Dear fellow Thai citizens, the second issue is about creating sustainability for Thailand’s fishing industry. Even though Thailand is blessed with an abundance of natural resources, epitomized by the famous saying “In the water, there is fish. In the fields, there is rice.” If we fail to have a sound ecological management plan or use our resources without restoring them, our next generation may be confronted with shortages.

The Thai fishing industry has historically employed destructive and violent tools that have significantly reduced the marine wildlife population, forcing boats to go farther and farther to find fish. This has resulted in poor living conditions for crewmembers and the use of forced labor and human trafficking.

These issues, coupled with obsolete laws, such as the 1947 Fisheries Act and the 1938 Thai Vessels Act, has resulted in illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing and human trafficking. Thailand may not be able to export fishing products to other countries because of certain requirements such as ensuring that products aren’t the result of environmentally destructive practices or human trafficking.

This Government has addressed this problem for more than 3 years, by adhering to the principles of sustainable fishery that benefits the next generation and respects international rules, maintaining a balanced approach between fishing vessels, fishermen, and fishing practices.

It has established 6 frameworks, consisting of the legal framework, vessel management; monitoring, controlling, and surveillance (MCS), traceability, law enforcement, and fishing labor.

These frameworks must be carried out simultaneously with participation from all sectors, especially fishermen, resulting in we are able to allocate fishing days according to the schedule specified aquatic animal type and fishing equipment, with the first fishing licenses issued in the history of the country.

By doing the aforesaid, our aquatic resources are back to a healthy level, as can be seen from the fishery logbook in 2018, with the amount of fish captured exceeding numbers in 2017 by about 200,000 tons. Furthermore, fishermen and fishing networks have reported increases in quantity and size of their catch.

From the results of such operations, the Government has assigned the Department of Fisheries to increase fishing days to be from January 1st to March 31st for commercial fishing boats both the Gulf of Thailand and the Andaman Sea as a result of solving illegal fishing problems that made Thai seas sustainable.

Our 3 years work has proven the success of sustainable solutions for the Thai fishery sector. I would like to thank all related parties, including all officials and fishermen.

Brothers and sisters, the global factor is considered as an external factor that we cannot control. However, we need to pay attention and stay up to date in order to adapt to any changes, such as the current trade war that may impact the global economy this year.

I ask that everyone stays up to date. All things are linked together, starting from finances of the global community to our domestic economy. We must build our strength from within. We have to help each other progress and be able to adapt to the new changes.

Changes in weather conditions are intensifying and are difficult to control, but can be mitigated if we make adequate preparation and create awareness. For example, Tropical Storm Pabuk, as reported by the Meteorological Department, is currently entering the Gulf of Thailand and making landfall in the southern provinces of Thailand, causing heavy rain, flash flooding, and high sea waves. Southern provinces both in the Gulf of Thailand and the Andaman Sea were broadly impacted. The Government has alerted residents and has made preparations in advance.

The National Disaster Prevention and Mitigation Division has emphasized that each province closely monitor weather patterns, rainfall, water level, and trends and make preparations to accommodate, prevent, resolve, and restore affected areas in accordance to the risk factors in each area.

This includes making necessary preparations such as disaster relief operation, food, medical supplies, medicine, fast moving units, rescue car and boats, backup power systems, and communication that must be 100% ready as well as evacuation and restoration plans that are extensive and systematic.

I ask that residents comply with the orders of officials in order for our disaster management plan to proceed in an orderly fashion and that all parties are taken care of. I pray for everyone safety.

Finally, I recently had the opportunity to audience the Supreme Patriarch at Wat Ratchabophit on the occasion of New Year. His Holiness had provided me with the book “Look into Your Mind,” a book that I see as very useful for everyone. I would like to recommend this book for everyone to read and apply the content to your everyday life.

Thank you and I hope that all families safely overcome all obstacles in life. Happy New Year again and I hope that everyone is happy this year and beyond. Sawasdee krub.