**รายการ "ศาสตร์พระราชา สู่การพัฒนาอย่างยั่งยืน" วันศุกร์ที่ 15 มีนาคม 2562**

**From the Sufficiency Economy Philosophy to Sustainable Development Goals March 15, 2019**

**Sustainable**

**Development From Royal**

**Philosophy program.**

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**MC:** Welcome you all to this week’s “Sustainable Development From Royal Philosophy” Program. There is no denying that online media have influence over our everyday lives. We wake up in the morning, we check LINE messages, Facebook, and Instagram. Online shopping is also gaining ground among the public.

**MC:** I’ve brought with me today entrepreneurs who are selling their products online. We will be talking to the entrepreneurs before moving on to the topic of government policies on the e-commerce sector. Let’s meet our guests.

**MC:** Our first entrepreneur is the owner of the Brooklyn and Brighton brand. How is the business after going online?

**Guest:** Brooklyn and Brighton. Our products are well-received online.

**Guest:** Soda Printing. This gift is one of a kind in the world. We can edit pictures from Facebook, Instagram, and mobile phones. There is no need to visit the shop. You can just send your photos through the LINE application.

**Guest:** Suptar Petshop. My shop features a wide array of products. We know what people want, and we cater to their every need.

**MC:** This brand is called Panita. The designs of these bags reflect the culture and lifestyle of our ancestors. How’s your business?

**Guest:** These products have been selling well since online debut.

**MC:** Your shop is very adorable. You have earrings.

**Guest:** Yes, these are woven miniature earrings.

Did you make these items yourself?

**Guest:** These items were made by senior citizens in Sisaket Province.

**MC:** Do the elderly know how to use the internet?

**Guest:** Well, this is where we stepped in. We help them sell these products online.

**MC:** Over here, we have Chinese rice cake.

**Guest:** Our best seller is Chinese rice cake with fresh coconuts.

**MC:** Seniors can bake it at home and sell it to earn some extra money to support their family.

**MC:** Wait a minute. Can you really sell fresh foods online?

**Guest:** Yes. I sell my products nationwide on online platforms. It is called “Lobster Gangsters.”

**MC:** So, people can order your food from anywhere in Thailand?

**Guest:** That’s correct.

**MC:** This is another product that previously you had to visit the shop to buy, but can now be ordered online. What is the name?

**Guest:** It is called “Chom Chuey.” Our products are sold through Amazon and ebay for international buyers. Rice and fish are sold domestically through Lazada and Shopee.

**Guest:** The brand is called “Meamtarn Artwork.” To create this brand is like having an art room of my own. The concept is very simple. We make our products by hand. Each product is different from one another.

**Guest:** Our brand is called Moshi Family. My inspiration was to wear matching clothes with my children. I first tried selling it on Facebook. We started with only two tailors and now we have almost 50 tailors.

**MC:** This is only a small group of successful entrepreneurs who are successfully doing their business online. Of course, doing business online requires entrepreneurs to constantly improve and develop both themselves and their businesses as the world keeps on spinning. The most important factor is how the Government is planning to support the e-commerce sector. Let’s go talk to Mr. Prime Minister.

**MC:** Sawasdee krub, Mr. Prime Minister, General Prayut Chan-o-cha. Sitting here with us today are e-commerce entrepreneurs. They are joining us today. As we all know, moving our country forward, especially on economic and social sectors, is not going to be possible without cooperation between the public sector and the private sector. So, today, we are going to ask you, Mr. Prime Minister, about the government’s policies to improve and support the business sector, especially online businesses. My first question to you is, Mr. Prime Minister, what is Thailand 4.0?

**PM:** Many people are wondering what Thailand 4.0 is. Actually, the concept came into light since during the reign of His Majesty King Rama IX. His Majesty King Rama IX created Thai alphabets for computers, a mechanical surface aerator, and other inventions. His Majesty the King has instructed us to preserve, prolong, and perpetuate what His Majesty King Rama IX had initiated.

**PM:** First of all, you have to understand what precedes the 4.0 concept. The 1.0 is about agriculture. 2.0 is also about agriculture but with the addition of some household industry activities, no modern machines). 3.0 introduces big machines, big companies, and multinational corporations. This is where machines are starting to replace labor. 1.0, 2.0, 3.0, and 4.0 can move forward together. This is who we are.

**PM:** What can be added to this is digital technologies and the internet. Research and innovation can help take us to the 4.0 era. We cannot wait any longer because the world is changing, along with consumer behavior and production process. Customers want convenience on their terms. This is how e-commerce begins. Some people say that the economy is bad. This might be because they might still rely only on traditional trading methods which lead to greater costs and expenses. Also, entrepreneurs have to form a group or a network if you want government’s support. Your business must not be illegal. All registrations must be fully completed.

**PM:** The Government has been preparing these platforms. Today, we would like our work forces to learn to work with machines. This will lead to the use of robotics especially for the production of hazardous items. Production will be standardized. However, in production lines, there must be someone supervising the operation. This is why we have to improve our workforces, machines, processes, and legislation, from upstream to downstream activities. This includes marketing too.

**MC:** What about online marketing promotion? What is the Government’s policy?

**PM:** What the Government does is open up opportunities, equal opportunities where everyone is given equal chances to grow. All businesses must also be under the same laws. At the same time, we have to improve physical and digital infrastructures.

**PM:** The Government has provided free WiFi across the country to promote online sales. In this regard, we, therefore, have to put in place measures to regulate the sector, making sure online transactions are safe. We launched the Pracharat Internet project, installing WiFi in 75,000 communities across the country. Everyone shall have access to this public service. Therefore, we need to upgrade our infrastructures.

**PM:** For example, we are putting in place fiber optic cables. As a result, the internet will be faster and the coverage will be wider, stretching 25,000 kilometers and connecting Asia, Africa, and Europe. We also have a 2.4-trillion-baht transportation project – land, water, and air – to increase Thailand’s capacity to transport personnel and products. As a result, more people will be interested in coming to work in Thailand and our markets will be expanded.

**PM:** As for the sellers, if you could take advantage of this online platform, it will give your business a better chance at reaching new markets and customers. Logistic is also an important issue. Delivery time must be respected. In many cases, customers did not receive their products on time as there’s a shortage on the supply side. Many sellers might be able to provide from 10 to 100 items, but not a 1,000-item purchase.

**PM:** You have to make an improvement, at the same time, please don’t forget to think about the Royal Sufficiency Economy Principle as well as building “immunity”. The Royal Sufficiency Economy Principle can help us think twice before we make any investment. It will also enable us to link to many material sources. This way, we don’t have to invest in everything. We can buy raw materials from different sources. This is a way to diversify risks. Also, it allows more parties to generate more income. In the future, you can turn yourselves into executives.

**PM:** Today, what I have just mentioned has already been done in many communities, especially in the establishment of Pracharat markets which started with us here. We need to build new generations of traders.

**MC:** What about the development of online trade? How much growth can we expect from the e-commerce sector? And what can expect from this sector?

**PM:** Let me give you some updated information. According to the latest report, Thailand has the highest growth in ASEAN, thanks to the country’s basic infrastructure. The number of internet users has grown by four times for the past ten years, from 9.3 million people in 2008 to 45 million people in 2018.

**PM:** The value of the Thai e-commerce industry grew 14% from 2.8 trillion baht in 2017 to 3.2 trillion baht in 2018. The value of the country’s e-commerce is the highest in ASEAN at 25 billion US dollars.

**MC:** I think all entrepreneurs here must be very pleased with your answer. However, this is only the big picture we’re talking about. Each entrepreneur must have their own questions and concerns in relation to online platform. Let’s give the floor to these business owners. Who wants to go first?

**Guest:** I would like go first. All of my products are hand-made. We make our products more appealing and unique by adding handicraft materials to them. These materials are found in local communities, adding more value to the products. My question to you is, Mr. Prime Minister, what can the Government do the help the producers that have quality goods but don’t have access to the e-commerce?

**PM:** First of all, we have to understand all the components of e-commerce. Firstly, you have to build confidence among the buyers. You will not be successful if your customers don’t trust you. Farmers are the most worrisome. Some don’t have land and are in debt. The Government urges people to form a network and add uniqueness to what they have to offer such as handmade products. You have to form a group of your own so that the Government can provide its support to your group. The Government’s OTOP campaign has boosted income for businesses. Also, please don’t forget about taxes. In some cases, nothing happened because people are afraid to be taxed.

**PM:** In relation to digital community centers, we have around 7,000 – 8,000 digital community centers where you can learn about many things such as agriculture and related activities. In addition, you can learn things from the government websites. For instance, you can learn more about how to operate SMEs on the Ministry of Finance’s website. You can also google what you want to know. If you can’t access to Alibaba or Amazon, try doing your business on Thaitrade.com of the Ministry of Commerce.

**PM:** There are around 70 million people in Thailand, not more. There are around 640 million people in the ASEAN region. You need to look at the demographic – how many men and women, and the difference in age. You have to come up with products that meet their needs. To register a startup company or an SME under one person’s name, you can have 3 employees. There is no need to have a big factory (yet). Then, we have community enterprises and cooperatives which can help open the way to online platforms. Three thousand people have received their training. For Thaitrade.com, let’s say, more than 20,000 Thai businesses today have qualified to be on thaitrade.com.

**PM:** Today thaitrade.com have over 20,000 qualifying shops and 5.6 million users from across the world. This is Thaitrade.com a website hosted by the Ministry of Commerce. It is worth visiting the website to find out more. It gathers together Thai products for export and enables buyers and sellers to connect in a new form of B2B. This will eventually turn into the expansion of services into the B2C or retail Market.

**MC:** I think you have answered up until the last point.

**PM:** I try not to waste time.

**MC:** Fantastic. Let’s move on to the second question.

**Trader:** (Montira) This second question comes from my personal experience. Most people who sell online usually do so through Facebook, Instagram, or LINE. These platforms continuously adjust their algorithms resulting in less exposure of our products. Would it be possible if the Government creates a platform or a marketplace to support sellers without them having to have a lot of knowledge about (online) marketing. This way, they don't have to spend money advertising their products but get nothing back in return.

**PM:** We have working on 2 platforms in parallel. The first is Thaitrade.com and the second one is Alibaba. Today we are trying to strengthen the sector. I have acknowledged this issue and will continue to push it forward. It is worth visiting Thaitrade.com to find out more. I understand that they already have their own platform. Thaitrade.com from the Ministry of Commerce also provides information about investment and SMEs.

**MC:** How about another question from an entrepreneur?

**Trader:** (Thawatchai) If I may ask the last question, the online Market is not just a domestic market anymore. It is an international market. I think competing in the international market is not as challenging as having international player(s) coming to play in our domestic market. In this connection, I was wondering if you can share with us Mr. Prime Minister on how the Government can support Thai businesses in order to ensure that they can compete with international players who have entered into our online markets?

**PM:** First of all, we have legislation pertaining to online cybersecurity. We are able monitor and verify the transactions. Most importantly, there must be measures by the Ministry of Commerce. However, we cannot impose trade barriers to all because it would go against the WTO and international agreements. Some people asked me why don’t we keep the market for only Thai people. If we really do this, foreigners won’t buy from us then. In this changing world, we must understand that this is the nature of a free and global market.

**PM:** What we can do instead is finding a way to help lower your production cost. This way, it will help you at the other end too. We must help people at the beginning step in order to generate value and innovation. This is the overview picture. I am going to instruct concerned agencies tomorrow. Also, I will ask the cabinet to have a discussion on this topic in details.

**MC:** This would be it for entrepreneurs. Anyone here, as consumers, would you like to ask any questions?

**Consumer:** (Thepawit) If I may ask how family garment sellers can differentiate themselves to consumers?

**Trader:** When I first opened my shop, I was not so sure because the market was flooded with products from China and South Korea. However, they don’t understand what Thai people wear during festivals i.e. Loi krathong and Songkran. This is where they can’t compete. Another way that I differentiate my product is by having fixed sizing instead of standardized sizing. I have products for all ages. I don’t think products from oversea can compete on this front.

**PM:** Available in all sizes?

**MC:** This is like what you have mentioned previously of how our identity is our unique selling point.

**PM:** Following the demands of consumers is the right approach. Please keep on doing your good work. Any more questions?

**Consumer:** (Kraiwat) I want to ask the entrepreneurs in the leather industry. There’s lots of competition on leather goods in the international market. I want to ask since our Thai leather products have their own signature as they resemble Thai desserts, how can we meet the demands of the international market and how can we expand our businesses.

**Trader:** (Kanita) At this time, the majority of our customers are still Thai. There are some Lao and Japanese customers that have contacted us as they would like to be our distributors. As they are planning to sell our products in other countries, they must find ways to attract interested buyers.

**PM:** I would like to add that you should explore the market first before increase your production. You must survey the market and try out designs. You also have to find out the delivery time/procedures as well as sell volume. If the order is too small, it may not be worth it. You must also calculate shipping costs. I believe, you produce leather goods in the shape of Thai desserts (Kanom Sai Sai). But can you make leather goods in the form of Hor Mok? This is because I think the bag should be bigger so that you can put other things in the bag such as a mobile phone.

**PM:** Today, there are many forward-looking ideas. For example, I heard that Elon Musk was talking about creating a tunnel that would be able to transport people at a speed of 4,000 kilometers per hour. People ask how this innovation would handle gravity or suction Force. He said that he hadn't thought of these aspects yet. I said in meetings and seminars that Thai people might come up with the solution. Anyway, this is thinking big and outside of the box.

**Consumer:** (Siporn Pornprasert) I would like to ask the entrepreneurs who make Kanom Keng what their inspiration is for their creations, if it’s something that their families have done or something else.

**Trader:** (Nimit Ratanarongkapon) Mainly, I must say that my family makes Kanom Keng each year as offerings. When we’re done, we then distribute them to our peers and co-workers. Everyone loves our Kanomg Keng, until they’re known as “Papa’s Kanomg Keng. ”

**Trader:** This was the inspiration. I want to make desserts that my father had created and share them with everyone who came to our home. We did not set the price high as we want everyone to be able to buy it.

**Trader:** As time passed and people praised our deserts as being delicious, Papa said that the profit isn't in the money but in the pride.

**PM:** Very jealous of a grateful son. You are a civil servant and being in this business at the same time. Hope you will continue doing both jobs. These two occupations can go together.

**PM:** You must first start at a small scale. This way, you can stand on your own feet. There are many things that we do in terms of innovation and online technology. These issues must be addressed urgently. Thailand has many high potential sectors apart from the agricultural sector. It is up to how we manage these things and utilize the online and digital space. These are (additional) values. You should be able to have customers from all walks of life. However, the quality must be good too. Thank you.

**MC:** I would like to thank all producers as well as consumers for their questions, ideas, and their insights. This shows that the Government has already issued policies to support online retail. Our discussion today has highlighted the issue.

**MC:** In this connection, those who are interested in doing online businesses can start from applying many methods that the Prime Minister had said. Therefore, it is important to do your research and understand the law of demand and supply as well as our country's unique identity. These factors are vital to product development and success.

**MC:** I would like to thank you Prime Minister, Gen Prayut Chan-o-cha, for being here with us, and we’ll see you again for next week’s installment of the King’s Philosophy for Sustainable Development. Until next time, sawasdee krub.

**Trader:** (Tawatchai Sahassapat) The motto that we adhere to everyday is an inspiring heart is more important than inspiration as it helps us overcome all obstacles.

**Trader:** (Kanita Kaniyomwekin) We create brands on the basis of Thainess and adopt a the Royal Sufficiency Economy Philosophy into our work.

**Trader:** (Nopawan Sumangklasiri) Everyday we are able to draw from the small things that make us happy and use them in our enterprises, mixing them with our Thai identity and culture. These methods help us produce happiness, love, and sufficiency in our business.

**Trader:** (Srithana Chuenangkul) Discipline is an important basic principle that has brought us this far and is what will continue to lead us toward sustainability.

**Trader:** (Montira Charoenwan) Sustainability and reasonableness, and strong “immunity” are things that will make us move forward at a strong and steady pace.

**Trader:** (Trinuch Cheewakittikul) We must have determination and perseverance in order to succeed in the long-term.

**Trader:** (Kritima Nuamkoksung) We take joy from giving and sharing to farmers and developing our community. It is a happiness that comes from within. With knowledge, we are able to develop our communities.

**Trader:** (Suwichak Wongnapasarakorn) When we are able to conduct business in a field that we love and enjoy, success will not be too far to reach.

**Trader:** (Nimit Rattanarongkaporn) Diligence, determination, and perseverance results in success in all areas.

**Trader:** (Kemika Chanto) Returning to our hometown and selling our community goods leads to security and sustainability.

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