

Dr Gatot Hari Priorwirjanto
SEAMEO Secretariat Director
Opening Remarks
6th Batch of SEA-Teacher Evaluation Meeting
16 October 2018
Pangasinan State University, Philippines

Honorable Dr Dexter R Buted, President of Pangasinan State University (PSU)

Distinguished guests ladies and gentlemen,

Good morning, selamat pagi, sawasdee krub, magandang umaga,

1. It is a great pleasure for me indeed to extend to all of you a cordial welcome on behalf of SEAMEO Secretariat and to pay tribute to Pangasinan State University efforts and cooperation to be the host of the 6th batch of SEA-Teacher Evaluation and Planning Meeting.

Ladies and gentlemen,

2. In related with Priority no.5 Revitalising Teacher Education of SEAMEO New Education Agenda, SEAMEO initiated SEA-Teacher Programme since 2016 with a total 94 universities participated and 1385 students had been mobilize in 4 countries. This programme that enables Higher Education Institutions to conduct exchange of pre-service teachers among universities in Southeast Asia for practicum (teaching experiences) is very unique and rarely done in this world. Normally the exchange is only conducted for students to

earn credit by studying in the classroom only, but through this programme we did extremely different that enable pre-service student teachers to develop their teaching skills and pedagogy by giving them an experience teaching students that have differences both in terms of culture and language in different countries. By doing so, these experiences will expose our future teachers to diverse teaching and learning situations and opportunities, and the value of flexibility. Through this SEA-Teacher programme also we encourage the pre-service student teachers to practice their English skills as well as allow them to gain a broader regional and world view. These approaches can lead to a more sustainable future by educating our student teacher to become global citizens with the skills, knowledge and the attitude required to cope with the issues and challenges instigated by globalization. This is in line with the goal of Education Sustainable Development where education is an important tool that fosters sustainable development for our future society together.

Ladies and gentlemen,

3. Our long journey in the SEA-Teacher programme has produced a lot of experiences. The strengths and weaknesses of this programme be in harmony. However, the existence of SEA-Teacher members has been strived to strengthen each other to make this programme can be more perfect in the future.

Ladies and gentlemen,

4. This morning I would like to emphasize in intercultural communication that I thought critical to carry out in this SEA-Teacher programme. As you know Southeast Asia with its population more than 650 million people represent to a vast area with quite diverse

cultures. From this perspective, there is meaningful value in understanding those people in various cultures in the region. These people daily life including their business relies to a large extent on relationships that require effective communication to be built. Whatever your profession or industry, employers have come to value the ability to communicate effectively with others as much as, if not more than the technical expertise you need to succeed in your given field. In today's globalised world, these relationships often need to be built across **cultural boundaries**, which can complicate the process more than a lot of people realise. It's not just about being able to speak the same language as your counterpart, but about developing an awareness of how your speech, body language and behaviour are likely to influence the person you are interacting with. Further still, it's about being able to adapt your communication style on the basis of cultural norms and attitudes, as well as the specific context in which you are operating. Though **flexibility** is key in being able to react to different settings, situations and individual traits, there is no doubt that an understanding of how cultures tend to communicate is extremely useful when choosing your starting approach.

Ladies and gentlemen,

5. Effective intercultural communication relies on understanding the culture of the person and what influences his/her behaviors, beliefs, and perspective. **“When people from differing cultural backgrounds encounter one another, these differences can form hidden barriers to communication”**. In the context of pre-service student teacher participation in SEA-Teacher Programme, I could see the point of Intercultural communication capacity building is one way to implement internationalisation at home for students who do not participate in international mobility. Also on the other

hand, preparing the outgoing students to benefit better from their international mobility period. The exchange programme allows our pre-service student teacher to travel and meet people from different cultural, religious and socio-economic backgrounds, and develop a greater understanding of diversity in the process. They will also learn to cultivate positive relationships with others, appreciate a broader range of perspectives, and acquire the knowledge and skills for participating in our multicultural societies. And by applying what they have learnt, they can not only shape a better future for their own, but for the community, the country, and the world for all.

6. I believe within this one day meeting will bring all of us to strive to understand more the essential of SEA-Teacher Programme. Also, when we take this opportunity to learn about other cultures and their people's histories, we can engage in meaningful, respectful communication and develop mutually beneficial relationships.

Ladies and gentlemen,

7. On this opportunity, I also wish to extend to you my heartiest congratulations on the success of conducting this meeting. Furthermore, once again thank you for Pangasinan State University for their hospitality and well arrangement of this meeting. Our joint partnership activities have been strong and productive as years of cooperation increased through the support and commitment of the leadership of all organizations here. I also recognize this meeting will play a key role in promoting future international student mobility, intercultural communication and a culture of peace and thus contribute to academic excellence in this era of knowledge-intensive collaborating society.

With this in mind, I very much look forward to your discussions and exchange of views at today's meeting. Once again, I heartily welcome you all to Lingayen, Pangasinan, Philippines. I strongly hope and know that you will find the meeting extremely stimulating and enjoyable.

Thank you. Terima kasih, Khap Khun Krub and Maraming Salamat,