

**Welcome Remarks by His Excellency Dr. Phankham VIPHAVANH**  
**Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Education and Sports**  
**At the Opening Ceremony of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Regional Conference on TVET**  
**14 December 2015**

Excellencies

Distinguished Participants,

Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

First of all let me express a very warm welcome to Excellencies, Distinguished Participants to Vientiane, the Capital City of Lao PDR. It is my great privilege to welcome you to the Third Regional Conference on TVET. The holding of this important conference is at the time that Lao PDR has just solemnly celebrated its 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary, providing the opportunity to look back on 40 years of peacefully and successful development which started from a nature-based to a market-oriented economy with a constant growth of not less than 7%.

Excellencies,

Distinguished Participants,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

As you may know, 2016 is the year that Lao PDR will officially assume the chairmanship of the ASEAN. It is the year that our ASEAN community makes the next important step on its way to more integration by officially entering the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC). We believe that the many meetings and conferences planned for 2016 in Lao PDR will provide significant inputs into the integration process. This conference is one important part of this process. As for human resource development, ASEAN put this issue at a very high priority in its integration efforts. This goes in line with the dynamic economic development in our region creating increasing demand in highly specialized workers at all levels. This is true and relevant for Lao PDR as our country is entering the next 5-Year Socio-Economic Development Plan (2016-2020) which is the last period to the strategic goal of graduating from the list of least countries, the tasks and challenges have become even bigger. However, we are not alone in dealing with these problems as we always got valuable support from many countries and organisations from all over the world. For the support in the specific field of technical and vocational education and training, please allow me to highlight Germany.

Distinguished Delegates,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The 3<sup>rd</sup> Regional Conference on TVET will provide a good opportunity to share experiences and opinion about the current status of TVET in the region and beyond. It also provides the opportunity to look forward to identifying new challenges and ways and methods to deal with them in a very successful manner. More importantly, it is the platform to discuss how

ASEAN countries work together to strengthen harmonization in TVET and skill training post-2015.

On behalf of the Government of Lao PDR, I would like to express my sincere thanks to the Government of Germany for financial and technical support to the organization of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Regional Conference on TVET. I would also like to express my thanks to all distinguished delegates, participants and guests for your participation in the conference.

Last but not least, I wish all the participants fruitful days and pleasant stay in Vientiane. I wish the 3<sup>rd</sup> Regional Conference on TVET a fruitful success.

Herewith I declare the 3<sup>rd</sup> Regional Conference on TVET officially open!

Thank you!