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TVET Closing Statement
Don Chan Palace Hotel

Political Statements

- TVET is high on the agenda of ASEAN governments and important for their people
- TVET also represents a core issue for German supporters
- We have achieved enormous progress but many challenges still lie ahead of us
- Partners are aware of chances and challenges coming with AEC integration and will tackle them together

Ladies and gentlemen,

I. Underlining the importance of TVET

- Over the last two days, we have gathered here in Vientiane to discuss and agree on the future development of Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) in Asia.
- To understand the importance of TVET, I would like to put it into the context it deserves: As economies in Southeast Asia become more diversified, job requirements demand more complex and sophisticated skills. Strong educational foundations and effective skill strategies must play a significant role in helping national economies to adjust to changes in working practices, advances in technology and challenges associated with globalisation.
- As we already know, there is a rising demand for more and better educated experts in all economic sectors in order to safeguard sustainable economic growth in the region. This trend will accelerate: A few days from today, the ASEAN Economic Community will become reality, which signifies a boost for economic development and also presents new challenges for the entire region.

- We already know that Laos, Vietnam, Cambodia and all the other AEC countries require more skilled workers. However, these are not available in the current labour market. In short, this means that the skills gap represents a burden for the future development of the region.

II. Highlighting German support

- This is the main reason why TVET is core to German development policy: the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development – known as the BMZ for short – supports bilateral and regional TVET projects in Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Myanmar, the Philippines, Thailand, Vietnam and elsewhere within ASEAN. In our recently published Asian position paper, the BMZ highlighted that TVET is and will be one of the focal sectors of German development cooperation in the region.
- In order to foster a regional exchange, the BMZ has commissioned the GIZ to organise a series of regional TVET conferences. The first one in Hanoi in 2012 established the conference as a platform for dialogue between German development cooperation representatives and Asian countries, especially with member countries of ASEAN. The second conference, held in Jakarta in April 2014, again reinforced the serious interest of the BMZ and the partner countries. During the

third conference here in Vientiane we discussed and agreed on a number of issues, and I want to highlight those that seem to be most relevant to me.

III. TVET features and current challenges

1.) Relevance: Involvement of business and governance of TVET:

- TVET governance should, among other things, be endowed with the fiscal autonomy and political authority required to effectively assume decision-making and implementation responsibilities, in particular, with regard to National Qualification Frameworks, quality assurance and financing arrangements.
- But TVET governance is not complete without a focus on the role of the state as a provider of basic conditions of action and of incentives for stakeholder participation. The role of the state and its relation to stakeholders on vertical and horizontal levels should be enhanced so as to improve prospects for effective TVET management and financing.

2.) Quality: Enhance efficiency and quality of work process and employment-oriented vocational education and training

- ASEAN member states face similar challenges when it comes to promoting demand-driven TVET, especially due

to the pressure of the upcoming AEC. Enhanced Public-Private Cooperation can be seen as a key element to improve the quality and employability of vocational education. Participation of enterprises in occupational standards development, policy formulation, quality assurance and assessment as well as funding should be strengthened and enforced continuously.

- ASEAN countries can indeed benefit from the experiences of European and German private sector involvement in the Dual-Cooperative Training (DCT) system. ASEAN member states should carefully examine which DCT elements can be adapted and integrated into their TVET systems, taking into account their social, cultural and economic structures. Three key elements are critical in order to enhance on-going reform processes in the TVET sector:
 - Ensuring work-process and employment-oriented vocational education at all qualification levels in close collaboration with the business sector,
 - Creating and promoting mechanisms and cooperation platforms that involve representatives of enterprises, workers, learners and the entire civil society (cf. National Training Councils, Trade Working Groups etc.),
 - Ensuring appropriate financing of TVET on a

sustainable basis that is supported by all stakeholders.

3.) Harmonisation

- In the wake of the AEC being established, more effort has to be made in order to further enhance regionalisation and harmonisation processes in vocational education in Asia – for example by:
 - Working towards the mutual recognition of certificates of vocational education by developing and applying regional standards.
 - Promoting the establishment of entities which are responsible for mutual recognition as well as the conclusion of bi- or multilateral recognition agreements.

4.) Inclusion: Ensure inclusion of disadvantaged groups into TVET

- If societies want to get people out of the poverty trap, inclusion of disadvantaged groups is a key factor: inclusion is already incorporated in some BMZ funded programmes and initiatives in Asia, including the Southeast Asian Region. There are policies in place and regular conferences are held where stakeholders with different (political) backgrounds can come together and discuss how to handle the topic of inclusion in specific areas. Looking at inclusion in TVET in Southeast Asia, we see some first approaches and projects emerging in countries like Laos, Sri Lanka and Indonesia.

- Germany is committed “to achieving an ambitious, people-centered, planet-sensitive and universally applicable post-2015 Agenda for Sustainable Development that integrates the three dimensions of sustainable development – environmental, economic and social – in a balanced manner. Therefore our focus is on:
 - Promoting and implementing national, regional and international policies and strategies on Inclusive Education.

- Preparing an open TVET environment for “inclusive vocational education and training”.
- Ensuring access to TVET for socio-economically disadvantaged people and people with disabilities of any kind.

5.) **Exchange of TVET personnel in ASEAN**

- A key factor for quality improvement of inclusive and employment-oriented TVET is to promote a coherent framework of academic and non-academic vocational teacher education in line with national and regional requirements:
 - There is a need for the design of specific quality standards for TVET personnel development, which should be stipulated in frameworks that are accepted ASEAN wide. The criteria should be specific to TVET and include comprehensive competence standards and profiles for TVET personnel.
 - Providing systematic and practice-related capacity building programmes for teachers, trainers, school managers and executive personnel is essential. TVET personnel development programmes need to ensure that students are exposed to practical work experiences.

- A strong infrastructure is vital for the advancement of TVET personnel development. The two main components of such an infrastructure are (1) dedicated TVET teacher training institutions on central, regional and local levels, and (2) a close cooperation with universities for the development of academic TVET personnel.

- In order to recruit and retain highly qualified TVET personnel, the bodies responsible will need to establish working conditions and incentive systems that are attractive and transparent. In particular, great emphasis should be put on the recruitment of TVET personnel with practical work experience.

IV. Closing remarks

- Before I will hand over to Prof Kongsy Sengmani, who will present the joint “Regional TVET Conference Statement”, I would like to thank everyone who made this conference possible. It was a tremendous effort in a very short time, and I think that we can all agree: it was a success.

- I would like to end by saying that, again, I enjoyed the hospitality and the kindness of the Lao people, the way you were professional hosts to all of us who came to your lovely country, even if only for a short time, and made this an unforgettable experience for us all.