

**JOINT PRESS STATEMENT
OF THE TWELFTH COORDINATING MEETING OF THE
THAILAND-SINGAPORE CIVIL SERVICE
EXCHANGE PROGRAMME
28 MARCH 2016, BANGKOK**

1. The Twelfth Coordinating Meeting of the Thailand-Singapore Civil Service Exchange Programme (CSEP) was held on 28 March 2016 in Bangkok. His Excellency Mr. Don Pramudwinai, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Thailand and His Excellency Dr. Vivian Balakrishnan, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Singapore officiated at the opening ceremony.
2. The Meeting was co-chaired by His Excellency Mr. Apichart Chinwanno, Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Thailand and His Excellency Mr. Chee Wee Kiong, Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Singapore. Senior officials from the civil services of both countries participated in the Meeting.
3. Since its inception in 1998, the CSEP has become an institutional hallmark in the bilateral relationship between Thailand and Singapore in promoting friendship and cooperation between the civil service agencies of the two countries, guided by the overall vision of the Singapore–Thailand Enhanced Partnership (STEP) framework.¹
4. The Meeting reviewed and noted with satisfaction the good progress made across the thirteen areas of cooperation since the Eleventh CSEP Coordinating Meeting in Singapore from 23-24 January 2013.² Highlights include (i) the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on Advancing Continuing Judicial Education between the Office of the Judiciary and the Singapore Judicial College on 18 March 2016 in Bangkok; (ii) the signing of the MoU on Cultural Cooperation in Academic and Technical Fields between the Fine Arts Department, Ministry of Culture of Thailand and the National Gallery Singapore on 31 March 2015 in Bangkok; (iii) the implementation of the “Programme to Share More about Water and Reuse in Singapore” and collaboration on

¹ In 1997, STEP was conceived as a broad vision for a long-term strategic partnership between both countries. STEP consists of four pillars: (a) civil service exchanges; (b) enhanced economic relations; (c) defence relations; and (d) people-to-people cooperation.

² The thirteen cooperation clusters are: Education; Environmental Cooperation; Legal and Judicial; Social Welfare, Youth and Sports cooperation; Civil Service Cooperation; Media, Culture and the Arts; Transport; Manpower; Information and Communication Technology; Science and Technology; Technical Cooperation; MFA-to-MFA Cooperation; and Health.

environmental law and water management; and (iv) cooperation in health promotion and disease prevention.

5. Both sides reaffirmed the warm ties of friendship between the two civil service agencies, and renewed their commitment to collaborating closely together to enhance cooperation under CSEP and to ensure that the process remains relevant and is supportive of the advancement of the ASEAN Community.

6. The central theme for the Meeting was “Promoting Cooperation among Civil Service Agencies to Support ASEAN Connectivity”. The theme is in line with the establishment of the ASEAN Community in December 2015 and in recognition of the important roles of civil service agencies of Thailand and Singapore in promoting connectivity in ASEAN. Both sides identified issues of common concern and proposed new areas of collaboration. These include: (i) exchanges and cooperation on water management and environmental law enforcement; (ii) cooperation on cyber security and e-transaction; and (iii) knowledge exchange in the areas of health promotion, environmental health and healthcare for the elderly.

Cluster Cooperation

7. On **civil service cooperation**, the Office of the Civil Service Commission (OCSC) and the Civil Service Training Institute (CSTI) of Thailand, and the Public Service Division (PSD) and the Civil Service College Singapore jointly organized the Third Singapore-Thailand Leadership Development Programme in July-August 2013 and the Fourth Singapore-Thailand Leadership Development Programme in September 2015.

8. For the coming year, both sides agreed to continue collaboration on the Singapore-Thailand Leadership Development Programme by jointly organizing the programme every other year and to continue the active exchanges and sharing of experiences between senior officials or young talents through the study visit programmes.

9. On **education cooperation**, the Ministries of Education (MOEs) of Thailand and Singapore expressed satisfaction with the progress in various areas of collaboration since the last CSEP meeting. Thailand’s Office of the Vocational Education Commission (OVEC) and Singapore’s Institute of Technical Education (ITE), in cooperation with Temasek Foundation, initiated a capacity building project to train vocational trainers of Thailand in curriculum development and assessment skills in 2014. The MOE of Thailand hosted the 2015 Singapore-Thailand Enhanced Partnership (STEP) Camp from 28 June–4 July 2015 for over 200 staff and students from both countries. The School

Twinning Programme was expanded from 10 to 15 pairs of schools to increase opportunities for students in both countries to learn about each other's culture.

10. For the coming year, the MOEs of both countries agreed to convene the Fourth Retreat Meeting on Higher Education in Thailand to continue discussions on bilateral educational collaborations.³ Both sides also noted that Singapore's ITE will continue working with OVEC on the OVEC-ITE train-the-trainers project.

11. On **environmental cooperation**, the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment of Thailand (MNRE) and Ministry of the Environment and Water Resources (MEWR) of Singapore noted with satisfaction on the close collaboration and sharing of experiences and knowledge in environmental inspection and law enforcement, water reclamation, desalination, conservation and public engagement, and application of the Singapore Index on Cities' Biodiversity (Singapore Index).⁴

12. Thailand and Singapore continues to work closely under the ASEAN Agreement on Transboundary Haze Pollution (AATHP) to strengthen and review initiatives to promote regional cooperation to address transboundary haze pollution. Most recently, Singapore and Thailand joined other ASEAN Member States, at the 11th Meeting of the Conference of Parties to the AATHP held in October 2015, in expressing their commitments to a bold but necessary vision of a haze-free ASEAN by 2020. To this end, Singapore is fully supportive of Thailand's initiative in the setting up of an ASEAN Task Force to develop an ASEAN Haze-Free Roadmap which is an action-oriented and time-bound framework for ASEAN Member States to achieve the vision of Haze-Free ASEAN by 2020. This is a significant development that will pave the way for the region to be free from an environmental issue that has been plaguing it for decades.

13. For future collaboration, both sides agreed to continue exchanging experiences and best practices on water treatment technology such as membrane, desalination, and pilot scale water treatment system, water pollution control and environmental law and enforcement through workshops and study visits.

³ The Second Retreat Meeting between administrators from Thailand's Office of the Higher Education Commission (OHEC) and Singapore MOE's Higher Education Division (HED) was held in Bangkok in July 2013 and the Third Retreat Meeting was held in Singapore in October 2015, where both sides discussed developments related to higher education and lifelong learning, such as the feasibility of promoting university student mobility through internship arrangements.

⁴ The officials from the MNRE, Pollution Control Department of Thailand had participated in training programmes for "Environmental Inspection and Law Enforcement", and attended a capacity building workshop on water reclamation, desalination, conservation and public engagement during 26–29 January 2016 and at the Singapore International Water Week 2014 respectively. The MNRE collaborated with the National Parks Board Singapore to conduct two workshops in 2013 for about 24 Thai municipalities on the application of the Singapore Index.

14. On **health cooperation**, the Ministry of Public Health (MOPH) of Thailand and Ministry of Health (MOH) of Singapore welcomed the exchanges of study visits and active collaboration in infectious disease surveillance and management, non-communicable diseases (NCDs), elderly and long term care, tobacco control as well as health promotion. Both sides welcomed the close cooperation in combating emerging infectious diseases (EIDs) such as Ebola and MERS-CoV, under the ASEAN Plus Three Health Ministers' Meeting. This close cooperation is reflected by Senior Minister of State (Health) of Singapore's attendance at the ASEAN Plus Three Health Ministers' Special Meeting on Ebola Preparedness and Response hosted by MOPH in Thailand on 14-15 December 2014. The meeting built consensus and commitment among the ASEAN Plus Three Health Ministers towards international and regional collaborations to strengthen national capacities against the pandemic of Ebola Virus and other emerging infectious diseases.

15. In view of our common health challenges, both Thailand and Singapore have maintained frequent exchanges so as to learn from each other about health policy formulation and implementation processes, as well as to share knowledge and experiences across the broad spectrum of health-related topics. Over the years, there were numerous exchanges and study visits to MOH and the public healthcare institutions.⁵ There were also active participation and engagement of senior officials through MOH's ASEAN Health Policy Fellowships and the Leaders in Governance Programme at Singapore Civil Service College. In terms of high-level visits, the Minister of Public Health of Thailand attended the Ministerial Meeting on Universal Health Coverage: the Post 2015 Challenges on 10-11 February 2015 in Singapore at the invitation of the Government of Singapore. During the visit, the Minister of Public Health of Thailand paid a study visit to the Health Promotion Board of Singapore.

16. For the coming year, MOPH and MOH have agreed to enhance collaboration to further strengthen national and regional capacities in the areas of infectious disease surveillance and management through bilateral and multilateral frameworks. Both sides will also continue knowledge exchange in the areas of health promotion, NCDs prevention, environmental health, health care system and finance, especially that for the elderly, universal health care coverage, and health technology assessment.

⁵ For example, officials from the Department of Medical Services and the Permanent Secretary Office, MOPH visited Singapore. The visits facilitated discussion on promoting occupational health and also the exchange of ideas on access to appropriate care, primary and community care sectors, a well-connected healthcare system and geriatric assessment.

17. On **information and communication technology (ICT)**, the Ministry of Information and Communication Technology (MICT) of Thailand and the Infocomm Development Authority (IDA) of Singapore expressed satisfaction with the exchanges and cooperation in the areas of e-Government, secure electronic transactions, eCitizen engagement, cloud computing and network and information security. Both sides also cooperated substantially in the area of study visits and training courses.⁶

18. For the coming year, MICT and IDA agreed to continue their bilateral cooperation in the areas of electronic transactions, digital government, cyber security, and training and capacity development programmes. Singapore and Thailand discussed emerging trans-boundary challenges, and agreed there was a need for a regional approach to strengthen cybersecurity and deal with threats. Both sides underscored the need for closer collaboration with the global community to secure cyberspace. To complement ASEAN's cybersecurity efforts, CSEP noted that Singapore will be organizing an ASEAN Ministerial Conference on Cybersecurity on 11 October 2016 as part of a larger Singapore International Cyber Week (SICW) from 10-12 October 2016. The Ministerial Conference will serve as a platform for discussions on regional cybersecurity issues. It will also identify areas for greater cooperation on cybersecurity and cybercrime capacity building and joint training among AMS. Formal invitations will be sent out shortly to ASEAN members.

19. With a view to further deepen and strengthen bilateral ties, Singapore and Thailand agreed to conclude a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on the cooperation in the field of ICT in 2016 and to have this MoU signed at the earliest opportunity.

20. On **legal and judicial cooperation**, both sides welcomed the signing of the MoU on Advancing Continuing Judicial Education between the Office of the Judiciary and the Singapore Judicial College on 18 March 2016 in Bangkok. Both sides noted with satisfaction the collaboration between the Ministry of Justice, the Office of the Judiciary, the Ministry of Law and the Supreme Court of Singapore on the service of documents in civil and commercial matters. Since the 11th CSEP in 2013, the Thai authorities assisted with eight requests from Singapore for service of process while Singapore authorities assisted with five requests from Thailand. Both sides also noted with satisfaction the substantive

⁶ This included five visits made by Thai delegations to IDA from 2013-2015. In 2013 and 2014, senior Thai telecom policy makers attended an executive training programme on "Enabling Frameworks for ICT Development – The Singapore Experience" organised by IDA in Singapore. In addition, Singapore offered two training courses: (i) "Chief Information Officers Programme on the Strategic Management of Information Technology" on 27 October-7 November 2014 in Singapore; and (ii) "Developing e-Government Strategies" on 24 February-7 March 2014 and 2-13 March 2015 in Singapore.

collaboration on study visits and training courses relating to legal and judicial areas.⁷

21. With a view to developing further relations and networks between officials, both sides welcomed the inclusion of the Administrative Court of Thailand and the Supreme Court and State Courts of Singapore as additional agencies in the legal and judicial cluster. Both sides agreed to continue collaboration on the service of documents in civil and commercial matters; and to host additional study visits relating to legal and judicial areas of mutual interests so as to learn the best practices of each other. Both sides also welcomed the strengthening of cooperation including the sharing of knowledge on and best practices relating to court excellence, court technology and enforcement of foreign judgements. The Legal Execution of Thailand extended an invitation to the legal and judicial agencies of Singapore to attend the International Conference on Cross-border Insolvency in Thailand in 2016. The Office of the Judiciary also extended an invitation to the South East Asia Judicial Workshop on cybercrime to be held on 25-29 April 2016 in Bangkok.

22. On **manpower cooperation**, the Ministry of Labour of Thailand (MOL) and the Ministry of Manpower (MOM) of Singapore were satisfied with the cooperation on the exchanges on work-life balance and flexi-work arrangements initiated at the 11th CSEP, including Thailand's participation in the Work-Life Conference 2013 held in Singapore on 4 November 2013. Thailand and Singapore also welcome continued collaboration in occupational safety and health, through mutual sharing of experiences and best practices, including occasions such as the upcoming XXI World Congress on Safety and Health at Work 2017 hosted by Singapore.

23. On **media, arts and culture cooperation**, the Department of Information of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Thailand hosted the 9th Information Officers' Exchange Programme (IOEP) on 15-19 July 2013 and the 10th

⁷ Officials from the Office of the Narcotics Control Board attended the 13th and 14th Integrated Narcotics Enforcement Programme on 6-10 May 2013 and 3-7 November 2014, respectively in Singapore. A delegation from the Department of Probation of Thailand conducted a study visit to the Probation Services Branch, Rehabilitation and Protection Group, Ministry of Social and Family Development and to the Yellow Ribbon Project of the Ministry of Home Affairs of Singapore on 17-20 March 2014. A delegation from the Department of Juvenile Observation and Protection of Thailand paid a study visit to the Probation Service Branch and the Tampines Family Centre of Singapore on 21-24 April 2014. Two delegations from the Department of Special Investigation (DSI) of Thailand paid study visits to Singapore on 17-19 December 2014 and on 28 January 2016. One officer from the Central Institute of Forensic Science Thailand attended the scene of crime officer course, conducted by the Home Team School of Criminal Investigation from 20 July to 11 September 2015. The Office of the Judiciary sent 25 officials to attend a training on "Judicial Governance and Achieving ASEAN Economic Community", jointly organised by the State Courts and the Singapore Civil Service College from 8-17 September 2014 in Singapore and another 6 officials to pay a study visit at the State Courts of Singapore on 17 August-13 September 2014 and on 6-24 July 2015. The Office of the Judiciary and the Administrative Court of Thailand also participated in the International Conference on Court Excellence on the theme "Judiciary of the Future" from 28-29 January 2016, organised by the State Courts of Singapore.

Journalists' Exchange Programme (JEP) on 26-30 August 2013. The Ministry of Communications and Information (MCI) of Singapore hosted the 10th IOEP on 26-29 January 2015.

24. Both sides agreed to further enhance their cooperation in the exchange of programmes for journalists and information officers. In this regard, the Department of Information of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Thailand will host the 11th IOEP in 2016. The Ministry of Communications and Information (MCI) of Singapore will host the 11th JEP in 2017.

25. The Ministry of Culture of Thailand and the Ministry of Culture, Community and Youth (MCCY) of Singapore noted with satisfaction on the collaboration on inter-institutional exchanges and study visits in the areas of arts and culture.⁸ Both sides welcomed the signing of the MoU on Cultural Cooperation in Academic and Technical Fields between the Fine Arts Department and the National Gallery Singapore on 31 March 2015 in Bangkok. Both sides noted the loaning of cultural artefacts and artworks from Thailand to be displayed in Singapore.⁹

26. For future collaboration, both sides agreed to continue the inter-institutional exchanges and study visits in the areas of arts and culture as well as other activities such as cultural performances. In 2016, Ramayana dance troupe from Singapore were invited to participate in ASEAN Cultural EXPO 2016 in Bangkok.

27. On **MFA-to-MFA cooperation**, the two MFAs reaffirmed the importance of maintaining momentum of exchanges between our diplomats across all levels. These exchanges provided the opportunity for both sides to exchange views on global and regional developments and helped build close rapport and understanding between the officials.¹⁰

⁸ A delegation from the Chiang Mai College of Dramatic Arts paid a cultural exchange visit to the Sri Warisan Mom Said Performing Arts School and to the SOTA School of the Arts during 1-3 February 2016 in Singapore. A delegation from the Fine Arts Department, Ministry of Culture of Thailand and the National Gallery of Thailand participated in a seminar on heritage conservation at the Heritage Conservation Centre in March 2014 in Singapore and attended the opening ceremony of the National Gallery Singapore on 23 November 2015.

⁹ The Fine Arts Department, Ministry of Culture of Thailand lent cultural artefacts to be displayed at the exhibition on "Enlightened Ways: The Many Streams of Buddhist Art in Thailand" at the Asian Civilisations Museum (ACM) between November 2012 – April 2013 in Singapore. Following, the Fine Arts Department lent three pieces of artworks to be exhibited at the National Gallery Singapore on 13 October 2015 – 13 April 2016. The National Gallery Singapore requested a loan of 4 pieces of modern artwork by Mr. Prasong Patamanuj, a Thai artist, to be displayed at the exhibition on "Reframing Modernism" at the National Gallery Singapore in collaboration with the Centre Pompidou of France in March 2016.

¹⁰ The Singapore MFA Permanent Secretary Chee Wee Kiong visited Thailand from 27-28 February 2014 at the invitation of the Thai MFA Permanent Secretary Sihasak Phuanketkeow. Singapore MFA Ambassador-at-large Bilahari Kausikan, visited Thailand on 4-6 January 2015 at the invitation of Thai MFA Permanent Secretary Sihasak Phuanketkeow to deliver a lecture on "Power Transitions in East Asia" at the MFA of Thailand.

28. The two MFAs also agreed to continue with the exchange of visits between newly-recruited diplomats in order to develop networks and friendship between junior MFA officials. The Devawongse Varopakarn Institute of Foreign Affairs (DVIFA), MFA Thailand arranged a study visit for newly recruited Thai MFA officials to Singapore from 23-26 September 2013.

29. For the coming year, DVIFA will schedule a study visit by newly recruited Thai MFA officials to Singapore in 2016. In return, DVIFA looks forward to welcoming newly recruited Singapore MFA officials on a visit to Thailand in 2017.

30. On **science and technology cooperation**, the National Institute of Metrology, Ministry of Science and Technology of Thailand and the National Electronics and Computer Technology Centre (NECTEC) of Thailand and the National Metrology Centre and the Agency of Science, Technology and Research (A*STAR) and Institute for Infocomm Research (I2R) of Singapore expressed satisfaction on the technical cooperation in metrology and speech recognition technologies. NECTEC of Thailand and I2R of Singapore co-organized the 17th Oriental International Committee for the Co-ordination and Standardization of Speech Databases and Assessment Techniques (COCOSDA) Conference on 10-12 September 2014 in Phuket, Thailand, which was a satellite workshop of the INTERSPEECH 2014 conference organized by I2R.

31. On **social welfare, youth and sports cooperation**, the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security (MSDHS) of Thailand and the Ministry of Social and Family Development (MSF) and the Ministry of Culture, Community and Youth (MCCY) of Singapore noted with satisfaction on the conduct of study visits in areas such as family development, protection of victims of domestic violence and assistance to the disadvantaged.

32. For future collaboration, both sides will continue to share experiences and knowledge on capacity building and skills enhancement via study visits on social welfare and development issues involving persons with disabilities, children and youths, women and families, the destitute and victims of domestic violence.

33. The Institute of Physical Education (IPE) from the Ministry of Tourism and Sports of Thailand will also be sending a delegation of 32 staff and students to the Singapore Sports School (SSP) later this year for a study trip and cultural exchange and both sides will continue our existing initiatives such as sending SSP staff for the IPE conference and SSP students' participation in the Thailand Sports School Games.

34. On **technical cooperation**, the Thailand International Cooperation Agency (TICA) of MFA Thailand and the Technical Cooperation Directorate (TCD) of MFA Singapore expressed satisfaction with the progress of South-South-South partnership cooperation under the Third Country Training Programme (TCTP) since the 11th CSEP. This year marks the 20th year of collaboration between TICA and TCD on the TCTP, which has provided a unique development cooperation dimension to the CSEP framework by allowing Singapore and Thailand to share expertise with other ASEAN friends.

35. Thailand hosted the 7th TCD-TICA Technical Cooperation Meeting on 16 March 2016 in Bangkok. Both sides reviewed the capacity building programmes held under the TCTP in 2015, which had focused on the themes of “ASEAN Connectivity” and “Sustainable Development”. In 2016, TCD and TICA will jointly organise programmes on the theme of “Food Security and Agriculture”, which will also support the UN Sustainable Development Goals. For future collaboration, both sides agreed to continue extending technical assistance to regional countries under the TCTP to support resilience and community-building efforts in ASEAN.

36. On **transport cooperation**, the Marine Department of Thailand and the Maritime and Port Authority of Singapore (MPA) reaffirmed their cooperation under CSEP through the exchanges of study visits and best practices on vessel traffic management information system, marine investigation and the International Maritime Dangerous Goods (IMDG) code, the implementation of the 2010 Manila amendments to the Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping (STCW) for seafarers and shipping pollution control.

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