

Opening Remarks by
His Excellency Mr. Chutintorn Gongsakdi,
Deputy Permanent Secretary
of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Thailand
at the APEC Host Economy Communications Planning I
Monday, 22 March 2021, via video conference (09.00 hrs.) (5 mins.)
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Dear Colleagues and Friends of APEC,
Hi Michael, good to see you again.

1. I welcome you to the first APEC Host Economy Communications Planning to prepare for APEC 2022 Thailand.
2. I thank the APEC Secretariat for organising this workshop. My appreciation also goes to the speakers who are joining us today. APEC has become much more well-organised and complicated than the early days when I was involved in APEC.
3. APEC always brings back many happy memories since I first got involved in 1996, including my time at the APEC Secretariat from 2001 to 2004. We opened the Secretariat building during our host year in 2003. Then I participated as Thailand's SOM Leader in 2013 and through 2015 to 2017. APEC is a collective journey of 21 economies towards an open, dynamic, resilient and peaceful Asia-Pacific community, as reflected in the APEC Putrajaya Vision 2040.
4. We are committed to transforming the way we conduct our business to promote an ecosystem that nurtures innovation and digitalisation towards inclusive and sustainable growth. To this end, we will work closely with APEC member economies to turn our vision into reality for our people.

5. There are some new elements that were not there before. In the beginning, it was only about trade and investment; how everyone can benefit from that. Now there is digitalisation, innovation, science and technology. Essentially, how to make the quality of life better for everyone. One thing that has not changed is the element of working for the people. That is something, I hope, all host economies try to communicate so that everyone can understand.

6. We can achieve our vision only if all our stakeholders in all segments of society, be they MSMEs, women, young entrepreneurs or groups with untapped potentials, can participate and take ownership in this evolving process towards a community with free and open trade and investment as a key driving force.

7. One thing that APEC has sometimes been accused of is being a rich man's club in terms of participation; our primary focus is business people. That is not true. The APEC fora spans far and wide. Everyone is involved in APEC. APEC has become a major multilateral institution. It is one of the main drivers of how an economy like Thailand moves. Through the years we have introduced new players like the OECD, but APEC remains a key player in economic future as well as our country's future.

8. Therefore, an effective communications strategy is key to translating our work in APEC for our people to understand our good intentions and the tangible benefits that APEC will bring to them and how they themselves can play a role. The language we use and our messaging should be tailored for each target group. But it all starts with empathy.

9. I would like to highlight two groups, to whom we should give special attention:

- First are the policymakers, CEOs and established businesses. Even though they are aware of APEC's ongoing work and contribution to multilateralism, we should continue to actively engage them in our journey towards our shared vision of free and open trade and investment.

- Second, is the young generation who will drive our future. Multilateralism may not be a topic they will normally share on TikTok. APEC's relevance depends on how young leaders, entrepreneurs, MSMEs and start-ups, can understand, participate in, and benefit from what we are doing.

10. We look forward to hearing from the APEC Communications and Public Affairs Unit and previous APEC hosts' experiences to help us craft impactful messages of our theme and priorities during our host year.

11. I welcome the APEC Secretariat's initiative to conduct a perception survey on Multilateralism in the Era of COVID-19 where initial findings show that people recognise APEC as an important institution to promote multilateralism and cooperation in the region, as well as our critical role in overcoming the COVID-19 pandemic.

12. Let us work together to maintain and generate greater awareness of APEC to our people and promote their active engagement on our journey towards an open, dynamic, resilient and peaceful Asia-Pacific community. By the end of this year or next year, let us have as many member economies lining up to host an APEC year as we did in the past.

13. Thank you.

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