

**Workforce Development Side Meeting : Turning Crisis into Opportunities for
Field Epidemiology Workforce Development, 3-4 November 2020**

**A virtual meeting hosted by Thailand in connection to
The Sixth Global Health Security Agenda Ministerial Meeting
Keynote speech and opening address**

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“COVID-19: Turning Crisis into Opportunity for Field Epidemiology Workforce Development”
Tuesday 3 November 2020 at 17.05 hours

**My dear field epidemiologist, laboratory scientists, Medical and health care personnel,
public and veterinary health officers, Colleagues and friends,**

On behalf of the Ministry of Public Health Thailand, let me welcome all of you, the participants to this important virtual meeting on Workforce Development in connection to the Sixth Global Health Security Agenda Ministerial Meeting.

Your participation to this meeting, either on-line from wherever you are, or on-site together with our team in Bangkok, is very inspiring and most welcome. We are grateful for that.

It is my great privilege to deliver this opening address to you all who significantly contribute to the prevention and control of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Such unprecedented, massive changes prevail not only in the health aspect, but also in the socioeconomic angle, as evident by the present global economic regression.

Now, let me share with you my observation on health workforce development.

We could say that Thailand's effective response to the COVID-19 pandemic should be credited to the visionary efforts of our former public health leaders and international development partners in health workforce development, especially through the Field Epidemiology Training Programme and Primary Health Care Programme which have been in active operation in Thailand for the past 40 years.

For Thailand, the fight against COVID-19 pandemic is an option to invest more in workforce development. We turn the COVID-19 crisis into opportunity.

In this regard, I would like to highlight a few issues:

First is a **comprehensive human-resource planning** based upon health system needs.

Second is **human resource production and career advancement**. A country requires various types and amount of competent health workforce for both clinical and disease-prevention functions.

Thai government fully acknowledges the importance of maximizing the capacity of field epidemiologists and all other health workforce at all levels.

Third is **the preparation of surge capacity**. The public health authorities should have contingency plans to recruit additional workforce for pandemic response in order to ensure that they could work effectively.

Lastly, a **multidisciplinary on “one health” network** for prevention and control of emerging infectious disease is important.

Those are my humble thoughts that I would leave with you for further exchange of ideas in this two-day virtual meeting. Wishing you all the best of luck and may I declare that the Workforce Development virtual meeting is now open.
