

Welcoming Address and Opening Keynote Speech by
H.E. General Prayut Chan-o-cha, Prime Minister of Thailand
CLMVT Forum 2018: “CLMVT Taking-Off Through Technology”
Thursday 16th August 2018. 9:15 - 10:00 am.
Centara Grand & Bangkok Convention Center, CentralWorld

Deputy Prime Minister
Ministers from CLMVT Countries,
Excellencies,
Distinguished delegates,
Business leaders,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

- First of all, let me express my warm welcome to all of you to CLMVT Forum 2018. Two years ago, we gathered in Bangkok to demonstrate our unity and commitment in creating the shared prosperity together. This has brought about the increase of our cooperation that enhances competitive advantage of each CLMVT country.

- The Royal Thai Government is delighted to, once again, be a host of the CLMVT Forum 2018 in Bangkok. The forum is aimed to drive seamless connectivity in all dimensions throughout the value chain between the CLMVT countries and beyond. Another objective of the forum is to facilitate networking between prominent business leaders, young entrepreneurs, key policy makers, and renowned academics from CLMVT and beyond to promote a shared prosperity in accordance with sustainable development principles amid an era of technological disruption. Accordingly, the theme of this year’s forum is CLMVT Taking-Off Through Technology.

- I still strongly believe in the “Stronger Together” principle of mutual benefits, mutual respect, and win-win outcomes and inclusiveness. Standing in the middle ground between competition and cooperation will definitely bear fruits for our people. Such constructive engagement will finally lead to a shared prosperity among CLMVT.

- We should be proud of the fact that CLMVT is seen by major world economies as a key destination for investment and trade as evidenced by ‘Look East’ policy of the European Union and India as well as ‘Look South’ policy of China, Japan, and Republic of Korea. In order for our region to reap the benefits, CLMVT countries should get together and determine our own way to promote seamless connectivity within our region and increase corporation with other countries under the context of the new economy that is principally led by the private sector and academia. This is to collectively promote equitable economic development of our region and a truly single market and production base that is closely integrated into the global economy.

- Private sector and academia will have significant roles to play as key drivers of innovation creation and commercialization and to foster collaboration among related partners. During these two days, all of us will be exploring issues determining our future against rising wave of technologies, thereby shaping our collective actions to enhance competitiveness and inclusive growth, while reducing disparities of all five CLMVT countries.

- I, thus, encourage all of us to identify issues and offer solutions for adapting to the fast-paced technological transformation. As the CLMVT economies are deeply intertwined, our close collaboration is instrumental in promoting absorption and utilization of new technologies, as well as to encourage new generations to take next step forward for our future growth.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

- We are entering the era of the Fourth Industrial Revolution; the age of amalgamation of multiple types of advanced technologies, namely digital technology, physical technology, and biological technology. This major turning point will change our way of life and business operation in all sectors, be it agriculture, manufacturing, or services. Therefore, it is crucial for us to promptly embrace the wave of changes and it is not too late to start today. We, CLMVT, thus have to help each other upgrade our technological capabilities as soon as possible.

/● Technology...

- Technology determines competitiveness both in pre- and post-production. This means that businesses would have to rely increasingly on value creation based on technology and creativity rather than cost-cutting and mass production which have now become obsolete. In particular, digital technologies enable us to instantly respond to new and existing customers' demand and to adjust the customization with greater precision and speed. In the CLMVT context, in particular, technologies can be used to enhance our strengths in agricultural and agro-based industries, thereby uplifting standard of living of millions of farmers along the value chain.

- Digital technology should be integrated in all areas of business in order to upgrade and increase efficiency of how business operates and delivers value to customers throughout the value chain. Digital technologies can improve product development to better meets customers' needs, production of goods and services to be faster and more efficient, distribution and marketing to reach the right customers at the right time, and after-sales services to provide better customer experiences. The adoption of digital technology is, therefore, a much-needed forward step for CLMVT businesses if they want to remain competitive in the new economic environment.

- Digital transformation in the current wave of globalization has led to a rapid rise of digital trade. We should, therefore, revamp business ecosystem that is conducive to the growth of digital trade. This includes creating fast and secured e-logistics and e-payment system, developing cross-country digital connectivity and interoperability, and promoting consumer confidence in online marketplace. Today we are truly honored by the presence of several leading experts on these fields here. Therefore, I hope that we can share our visions and ideas to figure out how to together cope with the emerging challenges and how the public sector can proceed to unlock regulatory obstacles for implementing new business ideas.

- Service sector will also be fundamentally altered, as what has already happened in the financial service sector with the advent of the fintech industry. Other service sectors have also been undertaking a serious digital transformation which has led to innovative new business models. Consumers will benefit as well from cheaper yet faster and more customized products and services. Given the considerable gains to the economy, the private sector should

promptly adopt new technologies into their production and business operation. Meanwhile, the public sector itself must fully embrace the digital change in order to provide better services to the public and to promote these new types of businesses.

- Creative economy has long been recognized for its potential contribution to the CLMVT economy as the region is well-known for its unique creativity and cultural diversity. A key challenge for us is to utilize the cultural capital and try to incorporate digital technology into the production and distribution of our creative products and services, thereby realizing the full potential of the creative economy in driving economic development of our region.

- More importantly, I would like to emphasize that digital economy must grow alongside local economy and increasing participation of small businesses and entrepreneurs. Digital technology can be leveraged to increase an access to new business opportunities, new market channels, and new business intelligence for small businesses. All this will help upgrade their business operation to the next level.

- Furthermore, new business opportunities must be created for new generation of entrepreneurs who are more agile and committed to be responsive. These people will be our new economic warriors whose development will revolutionize our business landscape throughout the whole value chain. This is vital to get the full potential of our region realized.

- Therefore, our immediate challenge in the context of new economy is to find out how to utilize the new technology for the shared prosperity among the CLMVT countries and I can assure you that the Thai government has taken it very seriously. From now on, capacity building for entrepreneurial development focusing on preparation for the new economy should be provided for all CLMVT entrepreneurs. Moreover, region-wide digital trade ecosystem for CLMVT should be developed and nurtured. This includes the region's own e-commerce platform, efficient cross-border transport and logistics, payment systems as well as common standards and interoperability. Not only will this help expand the role of our own e-commerce platforms, but it can also serve as a bridge, which we ourselves made, that can connect our products and services to various global E-marketplaces.

Furthermore, ...

- Furthermore, we must not forget to seek strategic partnerships with more technologically advanced non-CLMVT countries, notably China, Japan, the United States, and the European Union, to name a few. These non-CLMVT friends can complement our region's strengths and offer best practices for linking "local to global" and promoting "balanced growth" that lie at the hearth of inclusive growth where no one is left behind.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

- I urge all of us to endeavor to prepare for this new chapter of technological development, and to enhance cooperation between ourselves in upgrading and utilizing technologies. Our meeting today represents our collective efforts to take another step forward from the success of CLMVT Forum in 2016 to ultimately achieve inclusive growth and sustainable development in our region.

- One year after this, I hope we could share updates of our progress and have a chance to meet each other again. Last but not least, I thank all related ministries and agencies for their supports in organizing this event. And I wish CLMVT Forum 2018 a great success. Thank you very much.
