

Thailand hosted the ASEM Symposium on “Inter-Regional Partnership for Sustainable Development”

Thailand hosted the ASEM Symposium on “Inter-Regional Partnership for Sustainable Development” on 25-26 May 2017 in Bangkok, which was an initiative of the Prime Minister of Thailand announced at the 11th ASEM Summit in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia, on 15-16 July 2016 to promote cooperation between Asia and Europe in the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The Symposium attracted more than 170 participants. Panelists from Thailand, the EU, China, Germany, Vietnam, Finland, Japan, Switzerland and the Philippines were invited to share their experiences in sustainable development field and explore ways to promote cooperation between Asia and Europe in achieving the SDGs.

Mr. Songpol Sukchan, Director-General of the Department of European Affairs and ASEM Senior Official of Thailand, delivered opening remarks, emphasizing on the strengths between Asia and Europe which could help complement each other to promote further cooperation in sustainable development. Mr. Sukchan cited the Sufficiency Economy Philosophy (SEP) as a key guiding principle for Thailand in achieving sustainable development and presented Thailand’s “SEP for SDGs Partnership” to promote SEP as an alternative approach in achieving the SDGs.

Participants commended the SEP as a great example of methods to achieve the SDGs by engaging relevant stakeholders, so that development approach fit the needs of different societies, as well as focusing on the involvement of people, balanced use of resources and social responsibility.

The panelists shared their experiences in achieving the SDGs in both national and regional levels. Sustainable strategy and prioritisation, national mechanism to engage with stakeholders, statistic collection as framework for SDG indicators, and the ASEM process toward SDGs were emphasized and elaborated to drive a nation to sustainability.

On 26 May 2017, more than 30 participants joined an excursion to Khao Hin Sorn Royal Development Study Center. After a briefing on the history, objectives and current projects of the Center, participants also gained practical knowledge on the application of SEP at the Learning Center for Sufficiency Economy and the Botanical and Herbal Garden. New Theory agriculture based on the SEP and herbal processing products were demonstrated to the participants as means for the Thai people to wisely manage the land and to earn extra income within the household.
