



**First Annual Forum on Building Coastal Resilience
in Cambodia, Thailand and Viet Nam
28th February – 2nd March 2012 Burapha University, Thailand**

OPENING ADDRESS

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Good morning,

Sompong Pogthai, Chancellor of Burapha University; Griengdet Khemthong, Deputy Governor of Chanthaburi Province; Professor Nguyen Chu Hoi, Deputy Administrator Viet Nam Administration of Seas and Islands; Khun Sokha, National committee for Disaster Management, Cambodia; Say Socheat, Deputy Governor, Koh Kong Province; Dr. Saut Yea, Deputy Governor Kampot Province; Lam Hong Sa, Vice Chairman Provincial Peoples Committee of Kien Giang; Cao Van Trong, Vice Chairman Provincial Peoples Committee of Ben Tre; ladies and gentlemen:

On behalf of IUCN, our Partners in implementing the project “Building Resilience to Climate Change Impacts: Coastal Southeast Asia” and the major donor of the project, the European Union, I am very happy to welcome you all to this First Coastal Forum.

I am particularly pleased that there has been such overwhelming enthusiasm for this event, and that so many of you have made the effort to join us here in Chanthaburi, where Burapha University has provided such wonderful facilities and great support for us.

Ladies and Gentlemen, Climate Change is real, it is happening now, and it will continue throughout the rest of our lifetimes. But Climate Change effects different people in different ways – depending on where you live, what you do for a living, your lifestyle, your age and your gender, as well as your access to natural resources and financial resources – the risks you face from climate change will be different, and consequently your concerns about climate change will also be different.

Last night I was discussing informally with some journalists that around the world we may need 200 million different local solutions for climate change adaptation. It is our belief that nature has a huge role to play in helping the world adapt to climate change. Natural or nature-based solutions will only work if local people have secure access rights to resources, and legal tenure of the land from which they make a living – and then only if they take full responsibility for their own stewardship role of the land and sea.

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Climate Change is one driver of social and ecological change – but in many cases right now it is not the most important one – but if left unattended it will make existing problems even worse in the long-run.

In this context, the main objectives of this forum are to:

Share approaches, experiences and lessons learned in climate change adaptation in the coastal zone, including

- Vulnerability and capacity Assessments
- Mangrove restoration and Coastal Erosion
- Integrating Rights-based approaches and nature-based solutions

Expose participants to key issues on the ground through site visits to local communities
Engage the media to develop more effective approaches to communicating climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction

In addition we also have some very specific small group hands-on skills training sessions including:

- Building skills in presenting stories from the field through pictures and words
- Shoreline Video Assessment Methodology (SVAM)
- Environment and Disaster Risk reduction

Each of these will help to build valuable knowledge and skills needed for the success of the project in achieving its objectives over the coming years.

So you can see that we have a lot of ground to cover in the coming days, and I am looking forward very much to some exciting discussions.

Finally I would like to thank our local partners who have all played a part in preparing this Forum:

- Thailand Federation of Fisherfolk Associations (FFF)
- Burapha Community Network
- Burapha University
- Thailand Research Fund
- The Centre for People and Forests (RECOFTC)
- Mangroves for the Future (MFF)

Thank You.