Welcome remarks

by

Dr. Wijarn Simachaya,
Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment

Director, Thailand Research Fund
Executive Director, Partnerships in Environmental Management for the Seas of East Asia (PEMSEA),
Distinguished guests and participants,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of co-host organizations and Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment, it is my pleasure this morning to welcome all of you to the first Blue Economy Conference 2017 in Bangkok, Thailand. We are here, under the banner of the Blue Economy-driven countries in the Asia-Pacific region, in recognition of the fact that our oceans, and the life they sustain, face threats more severe than at any time in our history. And as Asia-Pacific nations, it is critical that we lead the charge in advancing the responsible stewardship of our oceans and the sustainable management of our ocean resources.

Thailand is one of the countries in Asia and the Pacific region that is dependent on marine resources for the country’s economic growth. At the
same time, we are encountering new, more complex forms of environmental
crieses that the international community are aware of and pay increasing
attention to, such as natural resources degradation, climate change, Illegal
Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) fishing, and marine debris. These problems
require the integrated solution approaches that all relevant sectors who are in
the social and economic spheres, ranging from government sector, private
sector, academics and civil society have to take collaborative actions.

To be aligned with the United Nations’ Sustainable Development
Agenda 2030 and 17 SDG goals, Thailand is also gearing towards the
implementation to attain the SDG Goal 14 in terms of conservation and
sustainable use of marine and natural marine resources in the year 2030.

Currently, Thailand has tried to mobilize policies on the sustainable
marine and coastal resources at all levels. At the policy level, strategies,
action plans and legislation are linked with key national goals, such as 20-year
National Strategy, 12th National Economic and Social Development Plan (from
2017-2021), Promoting Marine and Coastal Resources Management Act
At the institutional mechanism level, there is the National Sustainable
Development Committee, Working Group on Mobilizing the Implementation
towards SDG Goal 14, and the Command Center for Combating Illegal
Fishing (or CCCIF).

In this forum, it is expected to create a platform for us to share
experiences on the Blue Economy initiative and learn from each other. The
success of this forum depends on you. Your active involvement in and
contribution to the discussion will be of vital importance in seeking effective
and practical measures on the marine and coastal resources crisis in the Asia-Pacific region. Finally, let me reiterate my sincere hope that this forum will result in success and with your cooperation will establish a cornerstone of Blue Economy initiatives in the region.

Ladies and gentlemen,

On behalf of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment, and also on behalf of the government of Thailand, I would like to convey to all of you participating in this forum my heartfelt welcome.

Thank you