

Welcome Remarks from the President of Mahidol University



Prof. Banchong Mahaisavariya, M.D.

Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen

It gives me immense pleasure to extend a warm welcome to you all to the *Seventh Ratchasuda Virtual International Conference on Disability 2021*. Mahidol University has been promoting social inclusion and quality of life in persons with disability for over 133 years since the establishment of “Siriraj Hospital” in 1888, then developed to Mahidol University in 1969. Nowadays, there are many hospitals, faculties, colleges, and institutes under affiliation of Mahidol University working collaboratively to support the persons with disability both in medical and social aspects, particularly Ratchasuda College, that has been taking direct responsibility for promoting education, academic services, rehabilitation, research, and innovation to enhance the quality of life in persons with disability for over 30 years.

Ratchasuda international conference on disability is one of remarkable even organized by Ratchasuda College. This conference is one of the learning community on disability and special needs which can bring researchers, scholars, and participants across the world to contribute and share their experiences and diverse perspectives in order to build and expand the knowledge on disability and persons with disability.

This year’s conference theme “*Inclusion Futures: Policies, Practices and Funding*” challenges participants who are working in Inclusion career to share their experiences with peers in order to promote academic collaborations of Inclusion for persons with disability in the worldwide. The terms of “Inclusion” is one of key principles of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to reduce the global challenges of

inequality for all people in society, especially in SDGs 4 which focus on ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education. Mahidol university has been promoting this goal to create inclusive and equitable education for all students, particularly the students with disability or significant needs who are included in various programs both in undergraduate and graduate levels. We provide accommodations and supports for the students to overcome the barriers to accessing education and learning environments inside and outside the classroom. We aim that all students can reach their highest academic potential and succeed in their learning. I believe that the benefits of successful inclusion are numerous, not only for the students with disabilities and their families but also for all students, teachers, administrators, and other staffs to learn acceptance, respect, and harmony for diversity in our community.

This year's conference has changed to virtual platform due to the COVID-19 pandemic that has required social distancing to help prevent the spread of the virus. However, I believe that all participants will benefit from many experts and scholars sharing on various topics throughout online platform. I would like to express my wholehearted thanks to all participants for attending, collaborating, and supporting this conference.

Finally, I hope that this conference will give you a great opportunity to exchange the knowledge and experiences in order to create the successful inclusion and to enhance the quality of life for all.

May you enjoy this very valuable conference.