Welcoming Remarks

Professor Charas Swanmala:
    "Distinguished guests, conference conveners, ladies and gentlemen, it is a great pleasure of the Faculty of Political Science at Chulalongkorn University to welcome you to this international conference on Mainstreaming Human Security: The Asian Contribution. Beginning this year and running through the coming years, the Faculty of Political Science is celebrating our 60th anniversary together with Chulalongkorn university's 90th year. The faculty has taken this opportunity to address fundamental issues facing international and regional communities as well as those at home. This international conference is more or less an inauguration of the overall series of democracy watch programs to be carried out throughout the 2008 academic year. The host organizations find that it is most timely and imperative for academics and intellectuals to take another step towards redefining our security agenda and shedding light on the possibility of new security realities. The unprecedented change around us from physical, medical, political, economics and different forms of violence and vulnerability are more convincing than ever that the persisting and emerging threat to human kind is much more complex. It needs collective deliberations and international learning mechanisms. On behalf of the host organizations, I would like to express our great appreciation to the international conveners who have contributed to the different elements of the conference. Our conference secretariat office, led by the Master of Arts program in International Development Studies, has received evaluation ideas and suggestions to make the conference take shape. After a year of almost constant communications, we have learned about the strong commitment among the conveners on the issue of human security. Our partner organizations have supported themselves and some were able to extend additional help to other participants to be able to be here today. So I would like to thank the global city network for human security research at Shabu University, the Mekong program on Water Environment and Resilience M-POWER, ASEAN public intellectual fellowship programs and the gender and development studies program at AIT for their contributions. It is important to recognize that, without assistance from other sponsors, a number of international participants, good papers, and other participants might not be able to be here. The host organizations would like to express our sincerest gratitude to the Southeast Asian Regional Cooperation for Human Development (SEARCH). The community organization and development institute, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Social Development and Human Security for their valuable friendships and contributions. This conference is organized in the house of political science so let me welcome you to the atmosphere of the final exam today. At Chulalongkorn University there's not very much traffic today because most of the students are taking their exams. So thank you very much for being with us today and tomorrow and your contributions and I wish you a very pleasant stay in Bangkok."

H.E. Paiboon Wattanasirtham:
    "Distinguished participants, friends, ladies and gentlemen, contrary to what Professor Charas has said about the traffic condition, I had to come through very serious traffic jams which resulted in my having to take the sky train to Siam Square followed by a taxi here. I had to come a little bit later than I expected. Anyways, friends, ladies and

gentlemen, it's a great pleasure to be around all of you, most of whom come from academia and civil society. I can't help but feel overwhelmed by the intellectual strength gathered in this building. I had to decide whether I should give a written speech or a spoken speech, and I decided to give you both. You already have my written speech, so with your permission I'd like to add my spoken speech which will be more from my heart and from my own experience.

Friends, ladies and gentlemen, your topic is mainstreaming human security. To mainstream human security, I think, is a shift in paradigm. If there is a shift in paradigm of development from economic wealth to societal wealth, then there can be a shift from national security to human security. And then mainstreaming human security will be possible. After all these years, the objective of development has been economic wealth. Even today, in Thailand, although we have had the past three economic and social development plans that have emphasized human well-being; in spite of that reality, Thailand is still pursuing economic wealth on the whole. However, in the case of Thailand, I think we have gradually shifted from the purpose of development being economic wealth to human well being, or if I may use the words, societal wealth as societal health. The shift in paradigm and the shift in purpose of development from economic wealth to societal health would include such concepts as gross national happiness, a term that all of you have heard or at least thought about. This year in Thailand there will be international conferences on gross national happiness, the most important one being in November of this year. It will be the third international conference on gross national happiness. The concept of society of health also includes human peace and happiness. In the tenth national economic development plan, it is stated that the vision of the tenth economic and social development plan, is society with peace and happiness together. In other words, it represents a society where people live together in peace and happiness. The words 'people living together' are important. And it is supposed to mean not individual happiness but rather mutual happiness. In Thailand, we also have the benefit of our beloved King's advice and initiative on what is called sufficiency economy, which I think many of you have heard about. Sufficiency economy has to do with living in moderation: a society with balance and ethics. In Thailand we also have had the progress in grassroots development in the form of community empowerment by communities themselves through such activities as community planning and management. Groups of people in communities get together to design their own plans, do their own research, gathering information – including household data in terms of incomes and expenses – resources and so on. From the information that people have gathered, they are able to design their own plans which are holistic and inclusive of all aspects that are deemed important to the communities. When communities get together and design their own plans, I have noticed no community that stresses economic wealth as compared with total community peace and happiness. So, in Thailand, we can say that many grassroots communities have been able to think for themselves to have their own vision of development, which is more akin to the concept of societal health or community health, which, again, includes peace, happiness, welfare, and security. In many communities, they have designed their own objectives and goals for development and such words as 'livelihood security, social security, safety security, and environmental security' are thought of and express although not in academic terms. In some places, they have gone further to set up indicators of community development. Again, you see that

these indicators are not just economic well-being – they include social and human health and well-being as well. So I think that in Thailand we are gradually, if not rapidly, moving from the paradigm in development of economic wealth to societal health including community health and community happiness and community security. So your subject matter of mainstreaming human security, and the fact that you are holding this conference in Thailand, is an opportunity to exchange information and knowledge between the various countries that are represented here – fourteen, I believe, including Thailand – and the fact that you are from academia and civil society should lend yourselves the opportunity to explore ways and means of increasing your knowledge, increasing the various methods of furthering the concept of human security which in my opinion is part of the paradigm of societal health as opposed to economic wealth. As academics, your activities will include knowledge creation, and also knowledge management, both within the academic communities, academic institutions, and your role of facilitators for society at large, communities including, to also create knowledge, exchange knowledge, and manage knowledge. An example in Thailand is that a number of universities have staff that go out to communities and facilitate knowledge management, both within a community and among different communities, much to the satisfaction in terms of enabling communities and community members to learn and develop much more rapidly and much more effectively than they would otherwise be able to do without the facilitation of people such as members of academia. So ladies and gentlemen, I think you have organized a very good conference, Mainstreaming Human Security: The Asian Contribution. I have noticed that there are many useful and important topics, covering many aspects so I am sure that your conference will be most productive and valuable, especially in furthering the cause for the shift of thinking, the shift in emphasis, the shift in paradigm concerning development from the concept of economic wealth, which has been practiced for many decades, to the emphasis on societal health, which includes human well-being, human happiness, and human security. With that I would like to give you my best wishes for your innovative conference. I'm sure you will all benefit from the conference's subject matter but also the opportunity of being together in Bangkok. I hope you use the opportunity to be in touch with and learn about the happenings in Thailand which, for those of you who follow events in Thailand, are in the midst of change and the past two weeks have been exciting to say the least in Thai politics and Thai society. We are in the process of change. This government, of which I am part, will come to the end of our term very soon. I am not a professional politician, I am more of a civil society practitioner which I have been doing over the past twenty years after my profession as a business executive and before that as a staff member within the government sector and you probably know that the whole of the government is only temporary, we are in for a short time. In any case, the subject matter of the purpose of development, economic wealth vs. societal health, with the initiative of sufficient economy, with the vision under our tents of national, economic, and social development plan. With the development of our grassroots communities, facilitated by agencies of the government including the community organizations, development institutes, which is part of the organizers of this meeting. With all this I'm sure you have very rich subject matter to learn and exchange. All the best and have a good stay in Thailand. Thank you."

[Keynote Speech presented]

Dr. Chantana:

"Thank you very much. I would like to steal only five or ten minutes of your tea time to apologize. It's good to see you after months of communication online. I said I have to apologize because the program looks very chaotic in the sense that you might not know where to begin. But there is some truth to it. When we started this conference we wanted to capture the perception and perspective of human security in this region. Therefore we wanted to be inclusive, or as inclusive as possible, and we chose a number of possibilities for dimensions related to human security. It turned out that there were a lot of responses concerning a number of different dimensions – we might miss a few related to technology, we don't have a lot on that. Within two days, we must compress all the papers together and assemble all those papers within a limited time and try to capture all the participants within the conference. So we need to play a little trick, dividing this panel or that panel to reduce the possibility that…" [Tape ends]

Dr. Chantana [Continued from previous tape]:

"…we want to gather all the participants from all the panels as much as we can. It turns out to be very much like what you see. I won't explain everything panel by panel but I'd like to share with you why we're doing this topic of mainstreaming human security. I think that after a decade in which human security has been the agenda in the international community it's about time that we move one step further, therefore the term mainstreaming be introduced. Going a step further is a challenge. And I was warned that it could be equally risky – talking about mainstreaming could lead to old traps because there's the fact that there are rhetorical and cooptational possibilities are also high. Therefore, I think that this occasion will open for us to rethink, from the beginning of the discrepancies, within the concept in itself and investigate further whether there are initiatives within the region. To help guide the direction of the discussion in different panels, I'd like to share with you my thoughts. I raised questions and I would like you to also ask questions as opposed to providing answers. I asked under this theme of mainstreaming: 'what does it take to challenge the traditional security discourse, what does it take to transcend traditional security, or do we need to transcend it at all'? I think this is a question that will probably be addressed in a number of different panels. The second question is: 'do we have a clear understanding of the complexity of the threat and the security of the people'? Are we using the same old glasses or are we wearing new ones and either way what do we see? I hope that a lot of narratives and descriptions in different papers will somewhat reflect whether we have a full understanding of the new emerging threats that are pressing upon us or not. My third question that I'd like to invite you to think about is: 'can the existing system of governance handle the emerging threats to mankind'? This will have to investigate both political system regimes and public administration and other social innovations in dealing with the new problem. With those three questions. In the end, it really depends on what you think or want to direct this conference towards. These are three main questions, three main keywords I mentioned before: we hope to discover the real security issue; policy innovation of trans-disciplinary and transnational nature; a new form of governance, perhaps across national borders. These three aspects can come across in one way or another through a lot of discussion

and hopefully on the second day we will have some reflections from conveners of the conference to share whether we are moving towards mainstreaming and what are the things we need to ponder in the process in addition to what sort of actions a university and a public intellectual should invest time into. I will leave those questions for you to think about throughout this two-day conference. Maybe I'll have to explain the venue a little bit. The venue is divided into three buildings—four rooms, but in three buildings. The meeting room is here so a lot of people may have to come in and out. The second venue is the next building just to the right of this building. Do not cross the road. All the buildings are on the same side. The next building will be the Social Research Meeting Room. Further down, to your right, there is the Political Science Building, or building number three, which has two meeting rooms – one is conference room thirteen and attached to that is the Alumni Conference Room. I hope you won't get lost and if you do it's time to get to know political side much better. It's time for tea so thank you very much for your attention."