

**International Conference
on
Happiness and Public Policy**

**18-19 July 2007
Bangkok, Thailand**

- ❖ The Public Policy Development Office (PPDO), a new policy & research unit within the Government House in Bangkok, in partnership with the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP), invite you to participate in the international conference on "**Happiness and Public Policy.**" Though the focus is global, the gathering takes advantage of the current interests in Thailand's in which policy makers and civic leaders are intent on making human well-being the basis of a new development paradigm. The conference will be held on 18-19 July 2007 at the United Convention Center (UNCC) in Bangkok, Thailand.

Background and Rationale

As happiness is the ultimate goal of human beings, development paradigm needs a rethinking. Development goal is not only an economic prosperity – which is only a material mean for happiness, but development should also be conceptualized as an instrumental goal of happiness. Higher levels of human happiness involve other factors such as physical, mental, social and spiritual happiness. Public policy, therefore, plays a key role to improve conditions of happiness at all levels of people in the society. It is therefore important for policy makers, as well as policy support units such as PPDO to design a policy scheme to increase social happiness that measures the quality of life, or address the conditions of human's physical and emotional well-being. Thailand's policy environment is now supportive to discuss and implement public policies that take happiness as a goal and the local operated concept of "sufficiency economy" have been committed by the current Thai government and supported by the Royal Family. However, the dialogue on such concept and model can apply to the circumstance of many other countries.

Happiness study or happiness development model has been one of the main PPDO's working themes since its inception. Last year PPDO organized an international workshop to discuss Bhutan's Gross National Happiness development framework, compared with Thailand's similar concept of Sufficiency Economy. This year, in addition to series of national workshops, PPDO endeavors to broaden the knowledge on happiness studies and their policy implications by widening the discussion of happiness concepts in the global perspectives and their operations in local environment. PPDO aspires to facilitate intellectual exchanges of innovative means of measuring national development that accounts more for fully societal and human realities than the conventional

measures that focus merely on economic gains. An international conference to discuss societal happiness development models and their policy implications from valuable studies from all parts of the world would enrich such knowledge development in this area. PPDO aims to be a change agent for fostering such knowledge development process and for connecting it with policy implications.

You can be a part of this knowledge development and policy innovation by taking part in this international conference. For further information, you may visit our website or www.ppdoconference.org

Conference Objectives

The aim of this public policy development international conference is to enrich and enhance the quality of public policy through the exchange of insights, debates and observations on how to transform concept into operations, develop methodology, evaluate national models and offer new paradigms for institutional shifts through development of the conceptual framework for innovative policy.

The conference will provide a platform for debating interesting ideas on the new development paradigms which also contribute to happy societies and more meaningful development measurements with implications for sustainable development. It is expected that the conference will lead to the generation of new ideas and new frontiers of knowledge contributing to the academic world and government public policies, as well as public awareness. Discussion, papers and presentations will be categorized into the following sub-themes.

❖ 5 Sub-Themes

1. Happiness in Global Perspectives: Why we Need a New Paradigm

This sub-theme discusses the problems of the conventional approach: what are the shortcomings of the conventional approach and the existing measurement of GDP, and whether there should be a new paradigm. How will this new paradigm contribute to sustainable development, measure progress and guide our societies? What is the value come out of it?

2. Conceptualization of Happiness and Indicators

The scope of this sub-theme is as follows:

- To conceptualize and discuss happiness development approaches and how to operationalize them.
- To discuss the development of happiness or the well-being indicators at the national and international levels: from the Human Development Index to Ecological Efficiency Index. What should be included in the

indexes of social progress? What are the next steps? What are the meaningful factors or significant implications to be included?

3. Local Interpretation on National Happiness

This sub-theme compares the international models of happiness from various countries. What are the strengths of nations leading to people's happiness? Discuss the successful factors of development of the Scandinavian, European, Asian countries, among others, highlighting human development, social institutes, ecological efficiency, infrastructure development, etc. Discuss local development concepts/models leading to people happiness such as Thailand's sufficiency economy, Bhutan's gross national happiness, China's harmony society, etc.

4. Happiness and Socio-Economic Policy

This sub-theme deals with a wide-range of studies on happiness and public policy: what are the conditions for happiness and how to design public policies (i.e., family, health, education, work) leading to the increase in individual and social happiness. The focus will be on social happiness affected by public policies. What are some of the significant factors of happiness being affected and how can policies effectively address these factors? What are policy priorities that the governments have to be concern with?

5. Technology and Neuroscience

We live in a technology-driven age. Increasingly, technology research laboratories around the world are seeking to understand how technology contributes to "information overload" and other forms of stress. At the same time, these same labs are formulating new technologies that aim to calm users, delight them and empower them. A panel organized by Dr. Craig Warren Smith of the University of Washington will bring together researchers who will explain new streams of research within corporate and academic labs. These studies show how new technologies can foster "user empowerment" – a concept closely aligned with happiness. Can "happy technologies" find a place in the market forces that shape technology deployment? Can happiness be a design principle? Can happiness be generated through user-generated content – a process commonly referred to as "Web 2.0."? Can government officials use "carrots and sticks" of public policy to encourage technologies that foster happiness and discourage those that do not? What public/private partnerships could be envisioned to generate happiness-inducing technologies in such fields as multimedia (including gaming), health care, and education?

Recently cognitive sciences, particularly neuroscience, have generated objective information about how happiness is expressed through measurable changes in the human brain.

- How is happiness approached as a subject within neuroscience: past, current and future perspectives?

- How can neuroscientific studies of happiness be used as a basis for measurement or as a factor that could be integrated into the design of systems for health care, education, etc.
- How can neuroscientific data on happiness combine with other measures of happiness in the formulation and execution of public policy?

Expected Results

The proceedings from the workshop will be synthesized and utilized in various forms of publications; for example, books (in both English and Thai), policy reports to the government as well as several short series of policy briefs. Also, main conclusion from the workshop will be used as research/academic input and present to the third GNH International Conference which mainly organized by Sathienkoses-Nakaprateep Foundation and Center of Bhutan Studies during November 22-28, 2007 in Nongkai and Bangkok.

Who Should Attend

- Government/policy makers
- Academics and social researchers
- Economists, educationists, social scientists, psychologists, etc.
- International development organizations
- NGO's, businessmen and interested persons

Conference Venue

UN Convention Center, Ratchdamneon Nok, Ave.

Bangkok, Thailand. For information on Thailand, please consult the following website:
<http://www.tourismthailand.org>

Conference Eormat

- Plenary & Opening sessions, key note speeches in the morning of 18 July . The opening ceremony by Thailand's Prime Minister.
- Parallel sessions based on 5 sub-themes in the afternoon of 18 and the morning of 19 July
- Plenary & Closing session in the afternoon of 19 July.
- Related programs or short field visits & Departure on 20 July.

Important Dates

- 30 May 2007: deadline for abstract submission (on-line submission and registration will begin in early March 2007 through this website www.ppdoconference.org which will be activated in a later date).
- Notification of acceptance: accepted abstracts/papers will be notified via email to corresponding authors
- 15 June 2007: deadline for paper submission
- 13 July 2007: deadline for registration

Submission

One-page abstract and full papers or presentation materials can either be submitted through the website (www.ppdoconference.org) or sent by e-mail or fax to the conference organizer as follow:

Dr. Sauwalak Kittiprapas
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Government House, Dusit, Bangkok
Thailand, 10300
Fax: (66)2-2809000 ext. 559
Tel: (66)2-3560760 ext. 105
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Committees

The local organizing committees and international committees (listed below) warmly invite you to submit papers or presentation materials relevant to the above sub-themes. All accepted papers will be available to the conference participants in hard copies and published on a CD distributed at the conference. Selected papers will be published in the conference proceedings and on our website (www.ppdoconference.org).

List of International Committee:

- 1) Ron Colman; GPI Atlantic, Canada
- 2) Richard Easterlin; U. of Southern California, USA.
- 3) Allister McGrefor; U. of Bath, UK.
- 4) Craig Smith; U. of Washington, USA.
- 5) Andrew Oswald, U. of Warwick, UK.
- 6) Nathavudh Powdthavee, U. of London, UK.
- 7) Takayoshi Kusago, U. of Osaka, Japan
- 8) Kamar Ura, Center of Bhutan Studies, Bhutan
- 9) Tashi Choden, Center of Bhutan Studies, Bhutan
- 10) Jon Hall, OECD

List of Local Organizing Committee:

- 1) Sauwalak Kittiprapas, Public Policy Development Office (PPDO), Thailand
 - 2) Pan-aj Chairatana, PPDO, Thailand
 - 3) Nathabhol Khanthachai, PPDO, Thailand
 - 4) Rae Kwon Chung, UNESCAP
 - 5) Aneta Slaveykova Nikolova, UNESCAP
 - 6) Direk Pattamasiriwat, Faculty of Economics, Thammasat Univeristy, Thailand
 - 7) Chaiyuth Panyasawassut, Faculty of Economics, Thammasat U. , Thailand
 - 8) Somboon Siriprachai, Faculty of Economics, Thammasat U., Thailand.
- Plus local co-organizers of each sub-theme.

We hope to attract the expertise of practitioners, policy makers and academics across a wide range of disciplines both within and outside the Asian and Pacific region to exchange and debate on the issues in this forum. We also welcome participation of policy makers and practitioners who do not necessarily present papers.

About Main Organizer - Public Policy Development Office (PPDO)

Vision

The Public Policy Development Office (PPDO) is an innovative policy agency under the Office of the Prime Minister, the Government House, officially commenced in November 2005. PPDO works as a “connecting bridge” between the government, academics and civil society. PPDO works on innovative public policy development process where the people of all the sectors in the Thai society collaboratively push for the successful execution and implementation of the policies.

Mission

PPDO’s operations support innovative public policy management process to ensure higher efficiency and effectiveness, under the following scope of works:

1. Conduct policy research based on analysis, synthesis and innovation of policies as well as provide policy options to develop and improve public policy guidelines for the benefits of the people and the country.
2. Create policy network within the public policy management process to support policy research, production of public media and encouragement of public participation in public policy development process.
3. Develop policy entrepreneurs as human resource base for national public policies.
4. Encourage participation in policy advocacy through policy execution which includes the process of preparing practical strategies, plans and projects in accordance with the policies approved in principle by the Cabinet, the administrative bodies of ministries, departments or organizations.
5. Monitor policy coordination to ensure successful implementation of the plans.

6. Evaluate policies, provide policy consultation for projects implemented according to such policies, and report on the results to related agencies for further policy development.
7. Prepare policy intelligence/information to serve as policy information center at the community, regional and national levels, and utilize information from public participation network.