



Alumni address by Dr. Tint Lwin Thaung, Executive Director, RECOFTC

Very good afternoon AIT academic council chair and members, President Professor Worasak, vice presidents, faculty members, researchers, fellows AIT alumni, graduating students and family members, First of all I would like to congratulate to all freshly graduated students today.

It is my great honor to be here together with all of you on this very special day of our lives. My sincere thanks go to Professor Worasak for his kind invitation to me to give this graduation speech.

23 years ago, I was one of the graduate students who was sitting in this room to accept Master of Science degree award. Since that time, my life was never the same as AIT equipped me with knowledge, skills and confidence to march the long journey that is with full of challenges and opportunities.

First year of life in AIT was a remarkable one. We all were overstressed with assignments and we even call the name of AIT as "Assignment Institute of Technology". Although we have had difficult times at the beginning of AIT, we took time to enjoy resident student life of AIT. Living in the campus through thick



and this made us our friendship and attachment to be more solid and memorable in our lives. AIT was full of enjoyable events that had been flourished with various kinds of English accents including body language. AIT provided us learning opportunities, cutting edge technologies and thinking process that allowed us to face challenges and to grab opportunities.

AIT 25 years ago was not the same as AIT today. The time we studied in AIT was known as “Golden days” as there were many full scholarships, many academic exchange programs between AIT and the best universities from the developed countries, and many seconded faculty members from well known universities. AIT was a star among the post-graduate universities in Asia-Pacific region and beyond.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

AIT today is different from AIT 25 years ago. As global trend of funding mechanism has been changed from time to time, I understand AIT faced tougher competition to available resources while national academic institutions are growing rapidly. I also understand that AIT itself faced the challenge of “sustainability” the subject that we all learned very comprehensively here. Even AIT became the victim of recent flood in Thailand although it produced the best



water engineers in the region. It was a heartbreaking moment in my life to see AIT under the water. People with very negative thinking say that AIT was gone.

I did not accept that message. I truly believe in the resilience of AIT and the unity of AIT alumni from around the world. Learning lessons from the past mistake, I believe that AIT is now even more robust and dynamic with a variety of study programs and regional academics who are mostly AIT alumni. I still believe that AIT will ever be a relevant academic institution and the impact of AIT graduates to local, national, regional and global development will even be stronger. AIT may now promote the knowledge of “Adaptation” and “Resilience” after using its own lessons how to survive and grow in the challenging time.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The time I graduated from AIT, the countries like USA, Canada, UK and Australia were very popular destinations for AIT graduates to migrate even though they supposed to go back to their own countries and contributed to the development of the countries. I want to share a few things about this trend. I met AIT graduates frequently wherever I go around the world. The graduate who moved to developed countries faced mixed results of success in their lives. A few people got a better career and also could apply what they learn from AIT. Many were



not. Just end up by doing different kinds of available jobs to cope with living standard of those countries. Some of them are physically wealthy but most of them are not happy and they feel that their contribution there is just nothing. I also met AIT alumni who went back to their own countries or worked within the region. Many of them are successful in their careers and more importantly they are happier and feel great about their contribution to the society.

Asia-Pacific region recently experienced rapid economic development. Many jobs are created and poverty has been significantly reduced in the region.

Democratization and economic liberalization are emerging in the landscape of Asia- Pacific. However, with this rapid economic growth, natural resources become depleted and serious environmental threats such as air pollution, water scarcity, deforestation, and climate change are more serious than ever. All of you have a role to play in addressing these issues and grabbing opportunities of the growth for the better future of our countries and region.

I will encourage you to make a right decision for your future. Let's further enlighten the spirit of AIT alumni wherever you will be and let's contribute back to the society that needs you.

Thank you.