



**Speech of Ms. Annette Sachs Robertson, APRO Deputy Regional Director,
at Thailand CO's launching of sexuality online interactive knowledge
for young people**

Khun Paul-Napasohg Santisuntornkul, Co-Founder and Chief Operations Officer of Dek-Dee Interactive

Representatives of the Planned Parenthood Association Thailand (PPAT)

Youth Representatives from the National Child and Youth Council

NGO representatives

Honorable Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen

On behalf of United Nation Population Fund –UNFPA, I would like to express our appreciation to Dek-Dee Interactive for their strong partnership with UNFPA.

We are delighted to be working together on ensuring access for in school and out of school young people to essential information on their Rights and Choices for Sexuality and Sexual and Reproductive Health, through their youth based on-line platform. Dek-Dee emerged out of the thinking of a group of young people who struggled with finding answers to their questions on health and well-being. The online platform has now become one of Thailand's largest youth-platforms to assist young people to access essential information, including on sexuality and sexual and reproductive health and rights.

UNFPA also appreciates the contributions from our key partners, especially **Planned Parenthood Association Thailand (PPAT)** for their technical support. We would like to thank the **youth representatives** from **National Child and Youth Council** for their feedback to make this knowledge package friendly to young people. Last, but not least, thank you to the **local NGOs who suggested the selection of topics**, which were considered to be challenges faced by young people. Without these organisations, this first online interactive knowledge platform, addressing five major topics, especially for 13 to 24 year old young people, would not have happened.



Ladies and Gentlemen,

I have been informed that this online interactive platform, on Sexuality, Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights “My Body, My Rights, My Choice” is intentionally being launched this week, as this is the week of Valentine’s Day! For some young people, Valentine’s Day represents romance and even unprotected intimate relationships. By being well informed about their sexuality, sexual and reproductive health and rights, young women and girls are in a better position to take control of their bodies, their rights and their choices.

Why is this important?

In Thailand, we have a situation with unintended teenage pregnancies.

UNFPA ICPD Report of Thailand stated that in 2018, an average of 199 women under age 20 gave birth every day, 7 of whom were less than 15 years old. In reality, the number of pregnant adolescents is likely larger, but there are no figures on how many of these pregnancies end in abortion. Approximately 22 percent of women aged 20-24 were married or in union before 18 years, many due to getting pregnant. Furthermore, 58 per cent of teenage mothers aged 15 to 19 who had a baby in the last two years stated that they did not desire the pregnancy.

I discuss these adolescent motherhood figures because in spite of Thailand’s economic progress and low fertility status, we have a situation with unintended teenage pregnancy.

And we are obligated to assist young girls become empowered, to receive information and services that would enable them to make the decisions about their own bodies, to be able to have children when and if they want, and to exercise their rights through making their own choices around education and job opportunities and have the life they want.

The Prevention and Solution for Adolescent Pregnancy Act issued in 2016 is the first rights-based act for young people in Thailand. However, it is still difficult for young



people to access rights-based sexuality and Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights information.

There are few, if any, specific sexual and reproductive health and rights information and education programmes providing information and services for vulnerable young people, including those with disabilities and other marginalized groups such as impoverished youth, young key populations and young migrants.

This online platform of Dek-Dee, on Sexuality, Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights is aimed at addressing this situation of teen pregnancy by getting information to all young people through its five episodes. It is broader and provides information related to gender diversity, negotiation skills, condom use etc but I won't go into this as Dek-Dee themselves will explain it.

In Middle Income Countries, like Thailand, private public partnerships are key to an enabling environment for all young people to be informed and empowered about their rights.

As we have seen with Dek-Dee, partnering with the private sector, who speak the “youth language” and understand well what young people want, can foster innovation, including on making accessible to young people sensitive information such as Sexuality, Sexual Reproductive Health and Rights, - contraception and HIV prevention.

In going forward, I am confident that this online interactive knowledge package will be well accessed by millions of Dek-Dee youth viewers.

I also hope that innovative partnerships with private partners, like Dek-Dee, academia, civil societies and young people will evolve to ensure that every young person in Thailand is reached with the information to enable them to be empowered and contribute to their own physical, mental, social and economic well-being.

Thank you.