

## *W*elcome Remarks from *the Acting President of Mahidol University*



**Prof. Banchong Mahaisavariya, M.D.**

Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen

It is my privilege and great pleasure to welcome you all to the *6<sup>th</sup> Ratchasuda International Conference on Disability 2019*. Mahidol University has been supporting quality of life of persons with disability since the establishment of “Siriraj Hospital” in 1888, then developed to Mahidol University in 1969. At present, there are many faculties, colleges, and institutes that provide educational opportunities to persons with disabilities or special needs to earn higher education degree both in undergraduate and graduate levels, especially Ratchasuda College, that has been working to enhance education, research, and rehabilitation services for persons with disabilities and special needs over 25 years.

Ratchasuda international conference on disability is one of significant projects of Ratchasuda College which can bring many experts across the world to share knowledges and experiences related to persons with disabilities and special needs. The conference theme this year “Creating a World of Opportunity for All” challenges participants to share knowledge and experiences of how diverse people gain equal opportunities in society especially people with disabilities. The term “Opportunity for all” is based on an inclusive principle that aims to minimize barriers and enhance the success of all people with equal rights and opportunities to access and receive all services in society, particularly educational services.

According to inclusive principle, in terms of persons with disabilities and special needs, Universal design of learning (UDL) is the key to success of educational opportunity for these learners. Important goal of UDL is to maximize access to learning by reducing cognitive, physical, emotional, and environmental obstacles to learning that can support all needs of individual learners to accomplish their educational goals. UDL encourages educators and other staffs to deliver all learners with multiple pathways of learning including multiple ways of acquiring information and knowledge, multiple ways of demonstrating what the learners know, and multiple ways of motivating the learners to engage in learning. Therefore, designing the instructions and educational experiences based on UDL principles can provide opportunity to the learners with disabilities and special needs in order to fully participate in learning activities and demonstrate their knowledge together with peers in the same school and class equally. This will be beneficial to all learners in not only academic skills, but also friendships and social-relation skills.

In this conference, there are many experts and scholars sharing on various topics related to creating a world of opportunity for all such as inclusive education; disability, health and education; rights and equality; policy on inclusive education; inclusive curriculum and pedagogy; school-family relations; employment of persons with disabilities; transitions; assistive technology and devices; as well as universal design of learning etc. I would like to express my heartfelt thanks all participants for attending, collaborating, and supporting this conference.

Finally, I hope that this conference will give you the opportunity to exchange knowledge, experiences, and best practices in order to create a world of opportunity to enhance quality of life in inclusive society for all.

May you enjoy this very valuable conference.