ICT in Education in China:  Practices and Experiences

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Mr. Chairman,

His Excellency Dr. Suchart Thada-Thamrongvech, Minister of Education, Thailand,

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good Afternoon! This Forum on ICT in Education is a fantastic occasion to exchange experiences among Asia-Pacific countries on the use of ICT in education. First of all, I would like to express my sincere thanks to the Government of Thailand – the host country for its warm hospitality. My gratitude also goes to UNESCO Bangkok Office for its great efforts in making this meeting possible. Last week, China just held National Conference on ICT in Education. I would like to take this
opportunity to share with you some of our experiences on the use of ICT in education.

Today, ICT has profound impact on the ways in which people live and learn. It can create extensive learning environment and contribute to the construction of a learning society. With more than 265 million students and 15 million teachers, the promotion of the use of ICT in education has been listed as one of the priority areas in China, as it can greatly improve the quality and equity of education in this country.

China started its efforts to promote the ICT in education in 1978 when the government approved the two institutions: National Center for Educational Technology and Chinese Radio and Television University. Distance education programs have been provided nationwide via radio and television broadcasts. After three decades efforts, China has built a solid ICT infrastructure system for education.

China emphasis the development of online educational resources and has established the network available to the needs and use of different types and levels of educational
institutions.

The use of ICT helps to increase the efficiency of educational management. China has established a national ICT platform for exams, enrollment, and security monitoring education which is the largest one in the world, providing supportive services for university and senior middle school enrollment, which involve millions of students every year. Student dossier administration and diploma validation platforms have provided the effective service for the students and society.

The ICT literacy of teachers and students is significantly improved. Since the year 2005, China started to implement the capacity building program with the participation of more than 5.5 million school teachers. As a mandatory subject, ICT is now taught in all senior middle schools, 95% of junior middle schools, and 50% of primary schools.

Since 2010, China’s education has entered a new phase. The government issued the *National Plan for the Medium and Long-term Reform and Development of Education (2010-2020)*. The Plan states that the application of ICT in education must be
accelerated. In 2012, the *National Plan for Educational Informatization (2011-2020)* has been issued and sets out the major targets as follows: Establishing an ICT-integrated learning environment in which everybody is able to access high-quality teaching resources; Building an ICT service framework to support the construction of a learning society; Achieving a full broadband coverage in all areas and schools; Improving significantly the educational management; and Increasing the level of ICT-pedagogy integration.

The above stated objectives will be realized by the implementation of the China Action Plan for Digital Education 2020. This plan includes five initiatives: development and sharing of quality digital teaching resources; capacity building in the use of ICT in schools; construction of a national information system for education administration; capacity building for the sustainability of ICT in education; and the delivery capacity for the ICT in education.

The core goals of ICT in education in China during the period of the Five-year Plan are described as follow:

- Connecting schools with broadband aiming to improve the
infrastructure in schools for the application of ICT in teaching.

- Enabling high-quality resources in every class with the purpose to accelerate the development, sharing, and application of digital teaching resources.
- Universal accessing to internet study to promote the transformation of teaching and learning methods.
- The development of a national public service platform for sharing education resources to provide an overall supporting foundation for the ICT in education.
- The development of a public service platform for education administration to increase the efficiency administration.

The practice of ICT in education is a very challenging and long-term task. Following many years of practices, I wish to share some reflections as follows:

Firstly, during the process of applying ICT in education, we might value the approach of ICT-pedagogy integration. In order to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of ICT in education and student-centered approach, we need to avoid the isolation each other from curriculum, teaching, and information
technology.

Secondly, ICT in education needs the engagement of stakeholders such as the government, schools, social organizations, enterprises, and other institutions. The government should establish the market accessing rules and regulation mechanism in order to encourage enterprises’ involvement.

Thirdly, Open Education Resources plays a more and more important role to promote the ICT in education. The responsibility of the government is to encourage various institutions and schools in the development of resources to assure the quality and education equity.

Fourthly, teachers’ capacity-building is a crucial factor to ensure successful use of ICT in education. The development of the effective and relevant training program are very necessary to improve teachers’ competence and moreover to lay down the solid foundation to promote the use of ICT in education.

Fifthly, the standards system of ICT in education should be listed on the agenda. The development of the technical
standards and indicators, teachers’ competences standards, system of assessment and evaluation is very important to ensure the regulated and effective development of ICT in education.

Last but not least, ICT in education needs international exchanges. An international open platform is needed for the countries due to the disparity in the development, to facilitate the countries to share the experiences, the lessons and to learn the best practices of others.

I would like to conclude my presentation to express my sincere thanks to UNESCO for giving us the opportunity to share and to learn from each other. I am sure, that this forum will witness the revolutionary changes of education due to the intensive use of information technology and serve to promote the healthy development of ICT in education in this region.

Thank you very much!