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## Towards the 21st Century

by Chira Hongladarom, Executive Director, Human Institute, Thamm asat University.

IN THIS WEEK'S HRI-POST CO-OPERATION COLUMN, Dr. Chira calls for a long-term view from the new govern-ment, welcomes a Mongolian delegation to the HRI, and applauds Khun Anand Panyarachun's chairmanship of the NESDP sub-committee on Human Resources. and

By the time you read this column the result of the election will be known to everyone. Life before and after the election will of course be different, but the most important thing is whether the political parties can make a long-term contribution to our development.

As I have said before, if political parties don't offer people any hope, the prospects for the long-term development of democracy are dim. Politicians must be able to mobilise the support of other elements in society, such as communities, NGOs, academics, mass media, and most important of all, the private sector. I also hope that political parties will become sources of knowledge and wisdom.

As usual the HRI has been busy. Let me welcome a group of senior officials from Mongolia who are attending a training course and study tours on the subject of economic and social development with the support of the Department of Technical and Economic Cooperation and the HRI. I am quite excited about this because it is a new challenge for us. In the past, we have trained several officials from Indochina, but this is the first time we have trained officials from Mongolia. I will let you know more about this project later, and if anyone wishes to contact any of these senior officials, please let me know.

Another interesting event which took place over the last two weeks was a visit from an Israeli expert on Human Resources and Agriculture, Mr. Yoseph Elkana, which was with the support of the Israeli government.

During his fortnight at the HRI he cooperated with me on a consultancy project for the Office of Agricultural Economics of the Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives.

I must admit that since I am a bit of an outsider in the agricultural sector, Yoseph's views on human resources in this area were very helpful. We debated a lot about where the emphasis should be placed between income based training and production and commodity based training. In the end we both modified our original stands, and the result should be good for the ministry, because as a result the recommendation will be more realistic and acceptable.

It has long been our policy at the HRI to network with experts from anywhere in the world who can reinforce the quality of our work. So I would like to thank the Israeli ambassador for supporting this particular project. I hope these channels of cooperation will continue to stay open.

Finally, it is worth noting that despite all the election fever, important things still get done in Thailand. Under the chairman-ship of Khun Anand Panyarachun, the sub-committee for Human Resources for the 8th National Economic and Social Development Plan (NESDP) met as scheduled last week. I was on one of the committees, and I was impressed with Khun Anand's leadership and vision. He's the kind of chairman who gets things done.

My only advice to the sub-committee is to make sure they link the human resources policy to the rural sector. We cannot leave the weaker sectors of our society behind. Rather we need beliefs, and a commitment to representative allocation of resources. We have to influence the thinking of politicians away from maximising short term gains and change the mentality of bureaucrats away from placing their belief on their own system and framework first and foremost. To this end, the results of the implementation of all recommendations must be measurable. If not, nothing will change.

I have worked in HR for 15 years so I know how difficult this is, but with the leadership of Khun Anand, I have the feeling that it can be done. Let's pool our efforts to support him.

