

**Welcoming Remarks by Ambassador Apichart Chinwanno,
At the “Travel Different Thailand” Discovery event
25 June 2013, 10.30 hrs. Les Larmes Du Tigres**

Ladies and Gentlemen,
Friends of Thailand,

Welcome to today’s “Travel Different Thailand” discovery event.

You may wonder why we call this event Travel Different Thailand. The simple answer is that we would like to show you how Thailand today is different from common wisdom of tourism business.

Many of you know Thailand as the “Land of Smiles,” a favorite tourist destination for Belgian travelers to escape for some winter sun and shopping. But there is more to be experienced in Thailand than beautiful sandy beaches and golden temples.

We invite you to discover a vibrant and creative Thailand deeply rooted in local wisdom, Buddhist and Eastern philosophies, and His Majesty the King’s Sufficiency Economy philosophy. This translates to development based on sustainable living and a balanced lifestyle. It is a way of life that emphasizes responsible consumption, conscious use of resources, and development from within.

To better understand the different dimensions of the Thai lifestyle, the Royal Thai Embassy in Brussels, together with Mr. Richard Werly, produced a book “Travel Different Thailand,” which you have all received this morning.

Furthermore, the Royal Thai Embassy organized, in cooperation with the Tourism Authority of Thailand in Brussels and Paris, and Thai Airways International, a trip for a few Belgian journalists, including Myriam Thys who is here today, to rediscover and experience these innate values firsthand.

Richard and Myriam will give testimony after me to reaffirm how Different Thailand today can respond even better to cool travel trends, from travel with a conscience on environmental protection and social well-being, to digital detoxing, soft adventure, ecotourism, glamorous camping or glamping, and babymoon holidays.

Thailand has a lot more to offer to the first-time visitors, the repeaters, and the long stayers, all year round. We are ready to target high travel segment such as quality and luxury seekers, double income no kid (DINKS) and high end sport lovers. Quality and value are indeed the names of the game in Thailand tourist products now.

I have also the pleasure to make public our next exciting project. During coming September to October, the Royal Thai Embassy and Team Thailand will join hands to brand Thailand, with highlight on its quality and values in all dimensions, through advertisement throughout Brussels Zaventem Airport, where not less than 19 million people travel through each year.

With different and competitive tourist products of high quality and diversity, complemented with easier connection between Brussels and Bangkok, and with constant tourist promotional activities, we are confident that we could target a growth rate of Belgian travelers to Thailand of 10 percent in 2013 and another 10 percent in 2014, bringing the target number of travelers to almost 114,000, from a mere 80,000 in 2011.

You are all invited to be our partners the many business potentials that the Different Thailand can offer to your customers. Please let us know what the Royal Thai Embassy, and – if I may say on behalf of our co-hosts today – the Tourism Authority of Thailand and THAI Airways International – can be of any support to you.

I would like to also invite you to a journey to re-discover Thailand, and one lucky person will be winner of today's tombola drawing to win a round trip ticket from Brussels to Bangkok complimentary of Thai Airways. A dynamic and innovative Thailand based on the principles of sustainable living awaits you.

For quality and value, Travel Thailand.

Thank you.
