NACC (Thailand) Hosts Farewell Luncheon in Honor of Outgoing UNODC Regional Representative

Bangkok, Thailand – 1 February 2013 – The NACC hosted a farewell luncheon for Mr. Gary Lewis, Regional Representative of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime Regional Centre for East Asia and the Pacific (UNODC RCEAP), who will be leaving Bangkok to begin his new post in heading the UN mission in Iran.

Present at the luncheon were NACC Commissioner Professor Pakdee Pothisiri, Secretary-General Mr. Narong Rathamarit, Assistant Secretary-General Mr. Chairat Khanittabutr and UNODC Regional Anti-Corruption Advisor Mr. Shervin Majlessi.

Prof. Pothisiri commended Mr. Lewis’ many achievements during his distinguished tenure in Bangkok, and thanked him for his efforts in forging strong collaboration between the NACC and UNODC.

“Under his leadership, the UNODC RCEAP has taken a proactive role in assisting South-East Asian countries in their ratification of the United Nations Convention against Corruption (UNCAC),” noted Prof. Pothisiri. “Of the ten ASEAN nations that have ratified the UNCAC, seven, including Thailand, ratified the international convention during Mr. Lewis’ four-and-a-half year term as head of the UNODC RCEAP since July 2008.”
The NACC Commissioner also took the opportunity to provide Mr. Lewis with an update on the major activities currently being undertaken by the Commission. Prof. Pothisiri revealed that the Thai Ambassador to Austria, Her Royal Highness Princess Bajrakitiyabha Mahidol, was recently elected Vice-President of the Assembly of Parties to the International Anti-Corruption Academy (IACA) and that Thailand plans to host the 2nd IACA Assembly of Parties at the UN Convention Center in Bangkok during 9-11 December 2013 to coincide with the International Anti-Corruption Day.

Mr. Lewis praised Her Royal Highness' 'very active involvement and strong commitment' in promoting anti-crime and human rights issues domestically and internationally. He gave his assurance that his successor will provide his or her fullest support to the NACC in its hosting of this important international event.

On the issue of regional cooperation on anti-corruption, both sides agreed that although the establishment of the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) in 2015 will be a much welcome development for increased economic integration and business opportunities, ASEAN countries need to prepare themselves from 'being overwhelmed by the dark side of globalization'. Mr. Lewis added that UNODC is ready to work closely with ASEAN countries in helping them to strengthen their abilities to tackle transnational crime such as corruption, illicit trade and human and drug trafficking.

Towards the end of the luncheon, Mr. Lewis expressed his appreciation to the NACC team for the ‘friendship and trust extended to him and colleagues through these years’. He also expressed his love for Thailand and stated that he would like to come back to visit the country and friends whenever possible.

Mr. Lewis has been working with the UN for 25 years, having been stationed in Asia, Africa, Europe and the Americas. Since 2008, he has served as the UNODC Regional Representative at the Regional Centre for East Asia and the Pacific which covers 34 countries and territories. His prior postings include Regional Representative at the UNODC Regional Office for South Asia and Programme Manager (Drugs) at the Regional Office for Southern Africa. Mr. Lewis will serve as UN Resident Coordinator in Iran.

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