

The Institute on Disability and Public Policy Celebrates its First Convocation Ceremony

The world's first virtual graduate institute focused on the complex intersection of disability and public policy - the Institute on Disability and Public Policy (IDPP) for the ASEAN region - held its inaugural convocation ceremony for graduating students in the Master's of Comparative and International Disability Policy (CIDP) (degree offered by American University's School of International Service (SIS)) at the MU Learning Centre, Mahidol University. The ceremony, held on 14th August 2012, was attended by H.E. Dr. Surin Pitsuwan, Secretary General, ASEAN; H.E. Ambassador Luis Gallegos, Permanent Representative of Ecuador to the UN; Mr. Shuichi Ohno, Executive Director, The Nippon Foundation; Ms. Violeta Eittle, Vice Provost, American University and Dr. Derrick L. Cogburn, Executive Director, IDPP and Associate Professor, SIS, amongst many others.

The institute, which was first envisioned by the Nippon Foundation and formally established at a ceremony at Mahidol University in April 2011, is an international network of universities and outreach partners focused on the ASEAN region and based at American University in Washington, DC. Utilizing e-learning and cyber-infrastructure technologies, IDPP helps to enable ASEAN students who are blind or visually impaired, deaf or hard of hearing, or mobility impaired become disability policy leaders. During a press conference preceding the ceremony, Dr. Cogburn explained the institute's focus on "*Universal Design for Learning*" – the principle that students should be able to receive information and knowledge in multiple ways, in this case utilizing accessible information and communication technologies. Mr. Ohno added that the CIDP program is now not only open



to those with disabilities, but also to those who are interested in the issues surrounding disability and public policy. Mr. Jimmy Trianto Utomo, an incoming CIDP student from Indonesia, summarized the ambitious aims of the institute and its students, stating "*I want to contribute to change*".

For more information on this innovative and unique collaboration, please visit <http://aseanidpp.org>