



Institute on Disability and Public Policy

Networking » Leadership » Accessibility » Inclusion

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

**Persons with Disabilities from the ASEAN Region Graduate from World's First
Virtual Master's Degree Program in Disability Policy:**
ASEAN Secretary General to Address Inaugural Graduates and Incoming Students

Bangkok, Thailand (14 August 2012) – [The Institute on Disability and Public Policy](#) (IDPP) for the ASEAN Region will hold its inaugural convocation ceremony for graduates of the [world's first virtual Master's program in disability policy](#). Graduates and [incoming students](#) who are blind, deaf, and mobility impaired from the Philippines, Cambodia, Vietnam, Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, Nigeria, and the U.S. will be addressed by ASEAN Secretary General [Dr. Surin Pitsuwan](#) and [Ambassador Luis Gallegos](#), Permanent Representative of Ecuador to the United Nations, on 14 August as graduates receive the first degrees from the Master's in Comparative and International Disability Policy (CIDP) program.

At the forefront of technological innovation, the Master's program, offered by [American University's School of International Service](#) (SIS) in Washington, D.C., cuts across geographic boundaries to allow faculty and students to teach and learn through accessible online courses from anywhere in the world.

“This marks a significant milestone in our collective efforts to enhance an inclusive, barrier-free, and rights-based ASEAN society; one where persons with disabilities are equipped with the skills necessary to influence the policies that directly affect them,” says [Dr. Derrick L. Coghurn](#), IDPP Executive Director and SIS Associate Professor.

The ceremony will take place on the opening day of the Second Annual IDPP Residency, which serves as a two-week orientation for the second cohort of incoming students. An international [IDPP faculty](#) will introduce incoming students to ASEAN affairs, cross-cultural communication, research methods, and the [UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities](#). Coghurn states that through a growing network of outstanding universities, accessible cyberinfrastructure, and fellowships provided by [The Nippon Foundation](#), the IDPP enables students to become international disability policy leaders in the public, private, and NGO sectors.

Supported by The Nippon Foundation, the IDPP is a [partnership](#) among American University; Mahidol University; Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy at the National University of Singapore; National Technical Institute for the Deaf at Rochester Institute of Technology; Universitas Indonesia; University of Malaya; De La Salle Philippines; Ateneo de Manila University; Asia-Pacific Development Center on Disability; and International Council for Education of People with Visual Impairment.

A press conference will take place on 14 August from 2:00-3:00pm in the Third Floor VIP Reception Room at the [Mahidol University Learning Centre](#) (999 Phutthamonthon 4 Road, Salaya, Phutthamonthon, Nakhon Pathom 73170). Graduating and incoming students, Dr. Surin Pitsuwan and Ambassador Luis Gallegos, and IDPP faculty and [Advisory Board members](#) will be present and available for individual interviews. Press are invited to attend the inaugural graduation ceremony following the press conference.

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