Thank you, Cedric, for those kind words, and thank you, IJJO, for this recognition.

I am honored to be associated with all the inspiring people and organizations that have received this award in the past and today. But above all, I am pleased that it is IJJO that has given me this award. This organization is my favorite organization, because it brings together all those who share one interest – to improve the lives of the children in conflict with laws and to improve the lives of their families.

Our Department, the Department of Juvenile Observation and Protection or DJOP, under the Ministry of Justice of Thailand, is the organization that is responsible to providing services for juvenile and family in criminal cases and family cases.

Research and development is fundamental for our work. The DJOP has conducted the Juvenile Justice Reform Project (JJRP), a research project funded by the Thai Health Promotion Foundation, to carry out a long-term study to improve our Juvenile Justice System to be more responsive to the problems and needs of our youth and their family. With this research project, we have created classification systems and tools that can classify the juveniles according to their specific problems and needs. We created evidence-based intervention programs for juveniles that involved family and community, and developed a standard practice for pre-release and post-release care for the juveniles. These are our attempts to integrate research results into our practices, as guidelines and as procedures for effective juvenile classification and interventions.

Juveniles are a challenging population. Some people would say that they are impossible to work with, that they don’t want to change, or that they need to be punished so they will learn their lesson. I say that we need to improve the system and inform others. We must create awareness for the community and society to share responsibility for the juveniles and with open arms to take them back, and to be productive members of society. It is a cliché to say that our children are our future, yet they are the most misunderstood members in every society. So we have an
obligation not only to teach them, but also to teach the rest of society about them. That is our aim. That is our purpose. It is difficult but rewarding work, and we must never stop.

Now, this award means a great deal to our department, and for the Nation of Thailand. As Thailand is also preparing for the ASEAN community in 2015, we are developing relationships with others in our region who are working in the same field in order to encourage the improvement of juvenile justice standards and to be a children-friendly justice system. This award shows that we are indeed not only headed in the right direction, but also are leading others into the right future. It is for this reason that I am so honored. So once again, before I conclude, I thank IJJO for having selected us for this prestigious award. We’ll carry on the fight for juveniles today and tomorrow and continue to earn the recognition and trust symbolized by this award.

Thank you.