



**PERMANENT MISSION OF THAILAND
TO THE UNITED NATIONS**

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Statement

by

**His Excellency General Prayut Chan-o-cha,
Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Thailand**

**at the General Debate of the 76th Session of
the United Nations General Assembly,**

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United Nations Headquarters,
New York**

(pre-recorded)

**Mr. President,
Distinguished delegates,
Very warm greetings from Thailand,**

1. First of all, I am delighted to extend my warmest congratulations to His Excellency Mr. Abdulla Shahid on his election as President of the 76th session of UN General Assembly.

2. At the end of last year, we believed that the rollout of vaccines would be the beginning of the end of the COVID-19 pandemic. However, in reality, viruses are constantly mutating, taking new forms and spreading faster than earlier forms. The variants have raised concerns about the efficacy of existing COVID-19 vaccines and tend to become endemic which means that the viruses are here to stay for years to come. Thus, it is crucial that all countries learn to coexist with COVID-19 and foster quality societies in the ‘next normal’ world.

3. With COVID-19, the global community is confronting one of the most serious multi-dimensional challenges of our lifetime. To compound this situation, climate-induced catastrophes have also aggravated the ongoing turmoil caused by the pandemic and created tremendous losses, while further disrupting global efforts towards the realization of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). These unfortunate events also affect the livelihoods of the global population, especially those living in developing countries.

4. In this connection, I would like to congratulate the Secretary-General for his “Our Common Agenda” report, which envisages closer global cooperation on key issues and reinvigorating inclusive, networked, and effective multilateralism in order to foster a peaceful international environment, as well as a better and more sustainable future for all.

5. I agree with you, Mr. President, that in this world full of chaos, the most important things for us are “hope” and the aspiration towards building a better future by focusing on balanced and people-centric development that leaves nobody behind. I believe that the crises and challenges we face today have presented us with an opportunity to learn from past lessons, to reorient our approach and to better prepare for the future. With this in mind, I would like to encourage everyone to turn crisis into opportunity – an opportunity to reform multilateral cooperation and make it a genuine driver of change. This demands a reaffirmation of faith in multilateralism since no national capabilities, however large, can on their own be adequate to effect meaningful change or transition. We need global-scale solidarity and cooperation that is commensurate with the scale of the crisis. We must build global immunity and deal with challenges in a sustainable and concrete manner.

Mr. President,

6. The COVID-19 pandemic is living proof that nobody is safe until everybody is safe. In this regard, I urge that COVID-19 vaccines and medicines be considered as global public goods which can be accessible to all in an equitable and rapid manner. Any country that has surplus COVID-19 vaccines and medicines in hand is encouraged to share them with those in need, either through donations or swap arrangements. At the same time, research and development on vaccines, medicines and necessary medical equipment must also be encouraged in order to better equip and elevate the medical industries of countries around the world to deal with emerging diseases of the future.

7. Moreover, every country must take actions to strengthen public health systems, particularly on achieving Universal Health Coverage (UHC) and supporting efforts within the scope of the World Health Organization (WHO) to collectively enhance global health security. This includes the call for a new Pandemic Treaty and the imperative to rethink the paradigm of global health security – one that focuses on equal and borderless access to public health services. As for Thailand, we have also been promoting integration and coherence between health and disaster risk management, both natural-related and emerging diseases-related. Thailand encourages the international community to utilize the Bangkok Principles which provide guidance on the implementation of the health aspects of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction. I believe that the building of a resilient, equitable and fair global health system will be a fundamental basis for our recovery in a sustainable manner.

8. Indeed, fighting against COVID-19 is not an individual competition that has a definite winner or loser. Instead, it is a team sport and we are all in the same team. So, a win-all situation is our shared goal. Recently, we have seen positive trends in coping with the COVID-19 pandemic in many parts of the world, as well as enhanced collaboration in vaccine production and distribution through bilateral and multilateral frameworks. Thus, I strongly believe that we will overcome this health crisis together.

Mr. President,

9. As I mentioned earlier, due to unbalanced growth and development, the world is facing a growing existential threat of natural catastrophes connected with climate change on an unprecedented scale. Over the past centuries, we have carelessly enjoyed and, at times, exploited planet earth's environment without listening to the repeated warning

signals sent over time. We are now inevitably left with self-inflicted consequences that we have to bear with for the next 30 years.

10. Such a future might not seem to be bright and shiny. But if we continue on our current path, the global temperature change might rise beyond 2 degrees Celsius which would result in even more catastrophic changes. Heat waves and extreme weather events are likely to be more frequent and increasingly intense, leading to disruptions in agriculture and harvesting seasons and may lead to food security crises. It is, therefore, a quintessential agenda on Thailand's priorities as we are rich in biodiversity with a large agricultural sector. I view the organization of the Food Systems Summit this week as reflecting the due importance that should be given to food security, and hope that the global community will be able to find sustainable solutions.

11. Thailand is in the process of preparing the National Energy Plan with an aim to achieve carbon neutrality by 2065-2070. At the same time, we have set the target to increase the proportion of renewable energy to at least 50 per cent of the total amount of electricity generated. We are committed to increase the use of electric vehicles (EV) to 30 per cent of total domestic vehicles. In this regard, Thailand urges developed countries to take lead in significantly reducing in greenhouse gas emissions, and calls on the global community to take collective actions to ensure constructive and concrete outcomes at COP26.

12. But I believe that every cloud has a silver lining. I would like to emphasize that we must turn the crisis into an opportunity to reengineer the way the world works to better prepare for the transformative reset to ensure "Balance of All Things". It is particularly important to foster balanced development that is environment-friendly. Accordingly, the global community has to accelerate cooperation on Science, Technology and Innovation (STI), especially by investing in clean and renewable energy, energy storage technology, electric vehicles, and relevant infrastructure. For its part, Thailand remains committed to carry forward our initiative on the Eastern Economic Corridor or the EEC to be a jewel in the crown for international creative economy. We emphasize the importance of financial assistance and technology transfers for research&development and innovation extended to developing countries through various cooperative frameworks. This would boost their capacities and increase their participation in addressing global problems as well as enable them to swiftly adjust to changes, build immunity and better recover from global warming in a sustainable manner.

**Mr. Presidents,
Distinguished delegates,**

13. Driving forward realization of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) across all sectors is a key instrument to respond to the challenges the world is facing, and to deal with inequalities exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. Financing for development, therefore, is of crucial importance. The international community must place due importance on the implementation of the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, as well as to other economic measures vital for stimulating economic recovery in developing countries, especially the Least Developing Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States. Therefore, I call on the international community to mobilize utmost efforts to assist these countries in overcoming pressing development challenges. Thailand, as the ASEAN Coordinator on Sustainable Development Cooperation, is committed to promoting complementarities between the ASEAN Community Vision 2025 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development to boost the post COVID-19 pandemic recovery, as well as to contribute to global immunity against future challenges.

14. I firmly believe that balance is at the heart of the realization of the SDGs and is a key instrument for dealing with crises and challenges, whether from emerging diseases, food security, threats to biodiversity, human rights problems, or poverty eradication. Last July, Thailand submitted our second Voluntary National Review (VNR) on the Implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The report placed emphasis on the application of the Sufficiency Economy Philosophy (SEP) as guidelines for achieving the SDGs including through the promotion of the Bio-Circular-Green Economy Model. The BCG Economy Model constitutes a balanced and sustainable approach to development, encompassing economic, social and environmental aspects through application of technology and innovation that are connected to global supply chains. Moreover, Thailand pays great attention to the promotion of global food security through the adoption of the New Theory Agriculture, accompanied by initiatives such as the Agriculture for School Lunch Project, under the patronage of Her Royal Highness Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn, as prototype to instill a sustainable consumption approach into the youth.

Mr. President,

15. Peace and stability are an indispensable foundation for driving forward the Sustainable Development Agenda, leaving no-one behind. It is, therefore, crucial for the global community to join hands in creating a peaceful environment by promoting mutual trust and solidarity, particularly among the major powers. Thailand has continuously played

a role on questions of sustaining peace and in peacekeeping and security processes, including by seeking a constructive role in the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) and making voluntary contributions to the Peacebuilding Fund (PBF). Meanwhile, Thai police and military forces continue to participate actively in UN missions in support of the vital work of peace building. In so doing, we also believe that promoting the development agenda in conflict areas will help resolve the root causes of problems.

16. The situation of Afghanistan has brought home the realization that the international community must come together to strengthen stability and security across the regions. Thailand is particularly concerned with the humanitarian situation as we, the peoples of Thailand and Afghanistan, belong to the same Asian region. Thailand, therefore, has pledged a financial contribution of 150,000 USD to support the work of UN organizations in order to alleviate humanitarian crisis there. We have also made financial contributions to assist with the situation in Haiti.

17. Thailand and other Core Group states consider the entry into force of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapon (TPNW) on 22 January 2021 as an encouraging manifestation of the determination of the global community to comply with commitments under the UN Charter in promoting a world that is free from nuclear weapons for succeeding generations. Given this positive development despite current international tensions, the global community should take heart and seek to collectively deepen collaboration in various fields, such as on cyber issues and peaceful applications of nuclear technology. In this connection, Thailand further supports building complementarities between cooperation under the TPNW and the Treaty on the Non – Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT).

18. Thailand is committed to supporting efforts in fostering an environment of peace and reconciliation in Myanmar through multilateral diplomacy. As a close neighbour and fellow ASEAN Member State, Thailand has been closely following developments, and fully supports the implementation of the Five-Point Consensus agreed upon by ASEAN leaders, accompanied by cooperation on health and humanitarian assistance. Thailand has continuously provided concrete humanitarian assistance to the people of Myanmar, particularly in dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic, through various channels such as the ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance on disaster management (AHA Centre) which has a satellite warehouse in Thailand's Chai Nat Province, as well as through UN agencies.

**Mr. President,
Distinguished delegates,**

19. At the moment, the COVID-19 situation in Thailand is still as challenging as in many other countries. However, I do believe that ongoing endeavour to build the immunity of people against the virus remains crucial. In this regard, Universal Health Coverage (UHC) will continue to serve as an efficient tool to deal with health challenges and emerging diseases. Thailand has also leveraged the strength of our Village Volunteers system and Thai traditional knowledge to fight against COVID-19. We are proud of having been able to draw on 'Fah Talai Chon', a local Thai herb, as an alternative medicine to relieve COVID-19 symptoms. It has become an example of how local Thai wisdom can be further developed to generate wider benefits.

20. December this year will mark the 75th anniversary of Thailand's membership in the United Nations. As the representative of Thailand, I am immensely proud that, throughout the past 75 years, Thailand has been a responsible, reliable and constructive member and development partner of the UN across all 3 pillars. Moreover, Thailand is honoured to act as a superhub for the UN in Asia, hosting over 40 agencies. We, hereby, reaffirm our commitments as host country and will continue our strong support for the Life-cycle Replacement and Seismic Mitigation Project (SMP) of the UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP).

21. Furthermore, Thailand has strong determination to be a regional centre for international cooperation and training. We have always attached importance to promoting development cooperation and assistance in various areas through South-South and triangular cooperation. Thailand, in collaboration with the UNESCAP and the UN Office for South-South Cooperation, will therefore, co-host the Global South-South Development Expo in Bangkok in 2022.

22. And in 2022, Thailand will be the host of Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC). The 3 main priorities that Thailand is driving forward are: (1) facilitating trade and investment; (2) rebooting regional connectivity, particularly in the travel and tourism industry; and (3) advancing sustainable and inclusive growth. These priorities underscore Thailand's commitment to promoting multilateral cooperation to ensure balanced development in the post-COVID-19 world. We hope to welcome the world to Thailand in the present context of constant change.

23. Excellencies, history has empirically taught us that after sufferings, comes growth and prosperity. Thus, I am confident that multilateral cooperation in the response to the COVID-19 pandemic, especially under the UN framework, will lead to great advances in the field of medical science. Equally, the strength of the international community in tackling the global warming crisis will serve as a catalyst for breakthroughs in advanced technology and innovation. Resilient adaptation and swift response to challenges will be an asset for us to address the problems of today, to be better prepared for challenges of tomorrow, to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, and ultimately to build back a better world.

Thank you, Sawasdee krab.

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