



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

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Statement by

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the Kingdom of Thailand**

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As delivered

**Madam President,
Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

It is a great honour for me to represent the Kingdom of Thailand in this august assembly of the nations of the world.

Permit me at the outset to express our deepest condolences to the Government and people of Viet Nam on the passing away of President Tran Dai Quang. His dedication to Viet Nam and contributions to ASEAN will always be remembered with respect.

I also would like to express our heartfelt sympathy to and solidarity with the Government and people of Indonesia for the terrible loss of lives, injuries and damages following the catastrophic earthquake and tsunami that hit the island of Sulawesi last week.

And I join others in paying tribute to the memory of the late former Secretary-General Kofi Annan. His efforts to streamline human rights into the work of all United Nations organs has brought the United

Nations closer to the people. He will be long remembered as the Secretary-General who tried to make this world more humane.

Madam President,

We are living in a VUCA world characterized by volatility, uncertainty, complexity and ambiguity. The United Nations needs to adapt to meet the challenges of the VUCA environment in order to fulfil its noble mission of peace and security, development, and human rights.

Thailand therefore supports efforts of the United Nations Secretary-General to reform the United Nations System to make it more effective, efficient and human-centered.

Madam President,

Thailand has been active in translating the principles enshrined in the United Nations Charter into practices, to promote peace and security, to foster sustainable development, and to safeguard human rights.

On peace and security, Thailand supports efforts to make the Security Council more representative, more inclusive and more democratic.

We support the Secretary-General's commitment to forge stronger linkages between peace, security and sustainable development, as we believe that it is indeed the economic and social development of the communities, and of the people, that stands at the centre of sustaining peace.

Since 1950, over 27,000 Thai military and police personnel, men and women, have proudly served in more than 20 UN peacekeeping and related missions. And we will do more. In addition to a number of military and police officers who are currently stationed at three peacekeeping missions, we are getting ready to deploy a Horizontal Military Engineering Company to join the UN Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS). Wherever Thai peacekeepers go, they simultaneously seek to keep peace and foster sustainable development or to engage in both peace-keeping and peace-building.

Thailand also supports a rules-based international order. Last year, Thailand became one of the first states to sign and ratify the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW). And just last week, I deposited our instrument of ratification for the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) which complements ASEAN's objective of making Southeast Asia a Nuclear Weapon Free Zone.

We also support efforts to achieve a peaceful and denuclearized Korean Peninsula. We also hope to see one day a Nuclear-Weapon Free Indo-Pacific region. The late Senator Robert Kennedy of New York once said, “some men see things as they are, and ask why. I dream of things that never were, and ask why not.” Today all ten Southeast Asian Nations have ratified the CTBT, why not all countries of the Indo-Pacific region. As an Asian proverb states “a journey of a thousand of miles begins with the first step.” Southeast Asia has taken the first step towards a Nuclear-Weapon Free Region. Why not the rest of the Indo-Pacific countries?

On development, Thailand supports the reform of the United Nations Development System to become more effective, efficient and people-centered. We are also reforming our whole country in implementing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Committing ourselves to realize the SDGs is one thing. Implementing them locally is another. This is why the Thai Government strives to empower our local communities, in urban and rural areas, to change for the better – the way we produce and consume, the way we work and travel, the way we live – in order to achieve sustainability, in order to

realize the SDGs. As Mahatma Gandhi once said “we must be the change that we wish to see in the world.”

Sustainable development can only be achieved when it is inclusive and responds to the needs of people in the society. In Thailand, we have launched our reforms based on what we have called the “Pracha Rat Principle” or Public-Private-People Partnership. Under this principle, the people, the government and the private sector have worked closely together to pursue sustainable development. We have applied a holistic approach uniting all three sectors – public, private, and people – to ensure that all stakeholders are engaged in the country’s development efforts – leaving no one behind.

In realizing SDG 14 – to conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources – Thailand is the first Asian country to join a global initiative to clean up the oceans around tourist hotspots like Koh Samui, Koh Tao and the famous Phuket. We are working on raising public awareness on climate change. We are also cooperating with other countries in the region to mitigate the risks of natural disasters like what just happened in Indonesia. Last year, in order to mitigate the manmade disaster of the pollution, in particular by plastic garbage to the seas and oceans, Thailand hosted a meeting of ten Southeast Asian Nations to

pool our efforts to clean the seas in our region. Thailand also hosted a meeting of ten ASEAN countries with China to map a strategy also to clean up our regional seas. We are mindful of the warning by the marine biologist Rachel Carson in her book “The Sea around Us,” “It is a curious situation that the sea, from which life first arose should now be threatened by the activities of one form of that life. But the sea, though changed in a sinister way, will continue to exist; the threat is rather to life itself.” When we are seeking to save the seas and the oceans, we also seek to save the humankind.

On human rights, we are finalizing the draft 4th National Human Rights Plan for 2019 to 2023 to address a range of human rights challenges, including issues such as access to land and natural resources, the rights of LGBTI persons, human rights defenders, and freedom of the press. We are also drafting a National Action Plan on Business and Human Rights to make our private sector an indispensable partner in streamlining human rights into all sectors of the Thai society.

The Thai Government’s policies aim at addressing human rights challenges in a structural manner and laying the foundation for a sustainable democracy in Thailand. To address discrimination and protect people in vulnerable situations, we have enacted the Gender

Equality Act, the Protection of Vulnerable Persons Act, the Justice Fund Act, and the Equitable Education Fund Act.

A number of new laws are also in the pipeline such as the Community Forest Bill to promote people's participation in natural resource management, the Bill on Community Banks, the Land Tax Bill to reduce the gap between the rich and the poor, and the Prevention and Elimination of Forced Labour Bill to protect the rights of workers and to tackle trafficking in persons. Thailand recently ratified the ILO's Protocol to Convention 29 on Forced Labour as a part of our continued commitment to improve Thai labour standards.

The Thai Government firmly believes that engagement with the civil society is key to an inclusive approach to human rights and sustainable development. Our relevant agencies have been holding periodic consultations with NGOs working on sustainable development and human rights issues, including in our voluntary national review on the SDGs and in our national presentations to the human rights treaty bodies.

Madam President,

Our continued commitment to the three pillars of the United Nations – peace and security, development, and human rights – has contributed positively to the stability and prosperity of the Kingdom of Thailand.

Since the current Government assumed office four years ago, Thailand's GDP has grown from 0.9 per cent in 2014 to 3.9 per cent last year. This year, our GDP is expected to grow between 4.4 and 4.9 per cent. National competitiveness has risen from the 37th place in 2014 to the 32nd place last year. Tourists have returned, with over 35 million visitors last year. This year, the number of tourists coming to Thailand is expected to be close to 40 million, thereby reflecting the tourists' confidence in Thailand's peace and security.

Our efforts to realize the SDGs have also improved our people's lives. Maternal mortality ratio stands at 26.6 deaths per 100,000 live births. Mortality rate of children under five is at 8.6 per 1,000 live births. People's access to universal health care stands at 99.9 per cent. Access to education at primary level is at 100 per cent, lower secondary school at 88.3 per cent and upper secondary school at 72.7 per cent. Furthermore, sixty percent of our labour force are now women.

In our efforts to realize the SDGs, the Royal Thai Government has been guided by His Majesty the late King Bhumibol Adulyadej's Sufficiency Economy Philosophy or SEP.

The SEP teaches us that development must be home-grown and rooted within each citizen in order to be sustainable. In other words, strength from within builds strength from without. The Government has therefore focused its resources to empower households and communities through our policies in community banking, community land deeds, community forest, lifting household debts, and providing universal health coverage. Thailand has also shared our philosophy of development, SEP, with the Group of 77 and China which endorsed it as one development model. We have also been working closely with over twenty countries around the world under the SEP for SDGs Partnership to share our SEP developmental approach.

Madam President,

Looking ahead, the Royal Thai Government is laying a strong foundation for stability and development through the 20-year National Strategies in order to transform Thailand into a strong and modern

economy ready to cope with the present day VUCA environment and the challenges of the remainder of the twenty-first century.

Madam President,

Thailand was the birthplace of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations or ASEAN. In 2019, Thailand will become the Chairman of ASEAN.

Our goal during our chairmanship of ASEAN is to foster the creation of a truly people-centred Community, where no one is left behind. Such a Community would need to be resilient, dynamic, inclusive and forward-looking.

During our chairmanship of ASEAN, we will further strengthen our partnership with the United Nations on the three noble missions of the United Nations: peace and security, sustainable development and human rights.

Madam President,

In our partnership with the United Nations on sustainable development, we believe that ECOSOC can help shape the directions and build policy

coherence to support the realizations of the SDGs. Therefore, Thailand seeks membership of ECOSOC for the term 2020-2022. We will try our utmost to support ECOSOC in advancing the 2030 Agenda.

I am also glad to announce that, to reaffirm our support for the repositioning of the United Nations Development System, Thailand will contribute 200,000 US Dollars to the Special Purpose Trust Fund to reinvigorate the Resident Coordinator System, in order to enhance the United Nations' work on the ground and to make the United Nations more relevant to the people.

Madam President,

As a small country, Thailand takes to heart the statement by the late United Nations Secretary-General Dag Hammarskjöld that ultimately international law is the last defence of small countries. Thailand views the United Nations as an embodiment of international law in action. Thailand therefore pledges our full and wholehearted cooperation with the United Nations.

I thank you, Madam President.
