



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

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Statement

by

His Excellency General Prayut Chan-o-cha (Ret.)

Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Thailand

at the United Nations Sustainable Development Summit 2015

New York, 27 September 2015



Building Bridges for Partnership

THAILAND

ASEAN Candidate for the UN Security Council 2017 – 2018

Mr. President,

1. I come to this historic Summit to reaffirm that the Government and people of Thailand stand with the global community in our resolve to realize the new sustainable development agenda.
2. I am pleased that the 2030 agenda places people at its core. For people are the ultimate agents of change and hold the key to our sustainability. Our actions today will determine the survival of future generations.
3. We have transcended doubt that human activity has been the prime contributor to climate change, the greatest threat to ever face humankind.
4. Knowing what we know now, we have a choice to make. We can continue on the path of rampant consumerism and maximize growth at all costs. Or we can choose to live sustainably, focusing on quality, moderation and balance in our lives. We can choose to respect nature, rather than viewing it as merely a commodity to be exploited.
5. What I have just said derives from His Majesty the King's Sufficiency Economy Philosophy. This philosophy – with its emphasis on reason, moderation and building resilience – saw us through several crises, including the 1997 financial crisis and the 2004 tsunami. It also helped Thailand achieve nearly all the MDGs, and guides our 2015-2020 Vision and the forthcoming national economic and social development plan.
6. Another pressing challenge in our time is inequality. It is the root cause of such problems as poverty, conflict over resources, and irregular migration – problems which may in turn spawn violence.
7. To address inequality, we must first have effective laws. The Thai Government has passed a number of bills, for example, on the protection of the homeless, gender equality, and promoting equitable access to resources and public services. We want to create a level playing field for all. Effective laws are also needed to promote good governance, accountability and transparency in public administration and to combat corruption and nepotism.

8. Second, the intrinsic worth of each and every human being must be recognized. The Thai Government is working to empower the vulnerable and the disenfranchised. Various measures have been put in place, such as universal health coverage, a savings fund for retirement, an increase in the monthly allowance for the elderly and the disabled, and a subsidy for babies newly born into poor families. We are also striving to strengthen the individual and the family, enhance community involvement and promote social cohesiveness.
9. Similar support is also extended to non-citizens. The Thai Government offers social and legal protection to unskilled migrant workers. Last year alone, over 1.6 million migrants were registered and regularized for employment to protect them from human rights abuses and human trafficking.
10. Nevertheless, many people still need help. And to reach them, especially the vulnerable groups, we must improve on our statistics and disaggregated data so that they become visible and their needs are more precisely addressed in policy.
11. At the same time, social recognition of such groups is also important. We have to build a society that is compassionate, respects humanity and embraces equality – values that need to be inculcated from childhood.
12. Third, we need to create an environment that enables and sustains development. To lay a strong socio-economic foundation, the Thai Government has been empowering local communities through establishing village funds, including women empowerment funds, across the country. These funds are used to assist local SMEs, and they have been effective in helping generate jobs and income for the rural masses.
13. We are also helping farmers settle their debts and promoting sustainable agriculture practices and agro-industry through local knowledge-sharing and modern technology.
14. While Thailand enjoys full employment, the Government has also been helping low-income people find jobs through “Smart Job Centers”.

15. Fourth, we believe in reducing inequality not only within countries, but also among them through partnerships for development. We have been working to narrow the development gaps in mainland Southeast Asia, starting with our neighbours by promoting connectivity and setting up six Special Economic Zones along our borders under the “Thailand Plus One” initiative.
16. Thailand also aims to strengthen partnerships for development with our friends from outside the region through South-South and trilateral cooperation.

Mr. President,

17. Only when individuals and communities are strong, can our nations and the global community find true strength. With our shared commitment to the 2030 agenda for sustainable development, the world in 15 years should see unprecedented reductions in inequality and poverty. Thailand is ready to work with all countries and the United Nations to this end. Let us work together, so that we may grow stronger together, and leave for our children a stable, prosperous and sustainable world.
