



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

5 Rue Gustave-Moynier, 1202 Geneva, Switzerland

TEL (22) 715-1010 • FAX (22) 715-1000

Statement

by

H.E. Mr. Virasakdi Futrakul,

Vice Minister for Foreign Affairs,

Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Thailand

High-Level Segment of

the Thirty-First Session of the Human Rights Council

Geneva, 2 March 2016

Mr. President,
High Commissioner,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Human rights and sustainable development are among the top priorities for Thailand. The Royal Thai Government is fully committed to implement the Sustainable Development Goals that were adopted at the UN Summit last year. Thailand believes that sustainable development and human rights go hand in hand. In our view, there are three principles of human rights that are essential to the realisation of these Goals.

First, we must ***address the issue of inequalities and discrimination*** among people. Despite economic growth in most countries during the past few decades, some groups of people do not enjoy any benefits. We must therefore implement development policies that aim to narrow the gap among people, particularly the protection and the empowerment of the most vulnerable and disadvantaged groups in the society to ensure their security and improve their opportunities. In Thailand, several welfare schemes have recently been introduced or upgraded such as Early Child Support Grant Scheme and Women's Development Fund. The Justice Fund Act was also passed last year to serve as a tool to guarantee all people's access to justice.

Second, we have to ***promote greater inclusiveness***. The process towards achieving the SDGs should not be the sole work of the Government, but rather a partnership of all sectors in the society. Participation will be the key to ensure that all stakeholders have the opportunity to express their voices and concerns, thereby creating development that puts people at the center and making the SDGs a real agenda for the people. Towards this end, the Royal Thai Government has always ensured that all our National Economic and Social Development Plans setting out the country's development direction be drafted with participation from all stakeholders.

Third, we must promote ***acceptance of differences and respect diversity***. In our diverse world, it is important that we live in harmony and be tolerant of other viewpoints as well as accept differences in social, economic, cultural and political context of each society. Development therefore has to be flexible in its approach and suitable to the needs of each particular country. In order to foster peaceful co-existence and religious tolerance among people of different faiths, the Royal Thai Government hosted an interfaith dialogue in January this year. We hope that this interfaith dialogue will provide an example for each region to promote religious tolerance and harmony.

Mr. President,

We must also bear in mind that when we talk about “people”, it should not mean only national citizens as narrowly confined by the nation state concept, but any human beings who deserve no less than their full human dignity. In the past four decades, Thailand has provided refuge to more than a million people escaping fighting in their homelands. At present, Thailand still harbours over a hundred thousand displaced people. The growing challenge of migration crisis, for example, puts all of us to the test, particularly on our ability to uphold both national security and humanitarian values. It is when we manage to protect the most vulnerable, regardless of their nationalities or origins, while at the same time, reassure our citizens of their security concerns that our governments would be able to maintain and promote our citizens’ support for development that leaves no one behind.

Mr. President,

In gearing towards achieving the SDGs and Agenda 2030 and bringing about social and economic growth in the country, the Thai Government has been implementing several policies, taking into account those three principles.

In this connection, Thailand has presented His Majesty the King’s Sufficiency Economy Philosophy as a development model that is in accord with SDGs at an international meeting of UN Permanent Representatives in Bangkok this past Monday. The Thai Government has also been working to improve socio-economic conditions, develop social protection, and ensure equal access to services as well as justice for everyone. Our protection efforts also extend to the groups of non-Thai nationals, ranging from providing migrant workers from neighbouring countries with the same medical care provided to our citizens and with the same protection provided to Thai workers under our labour laws.

Realising that inclusiveness is the key to achieve the people-centered development, the Government has introduced a mechanism called “Pracharat” or public-private-people sectors’ partnership (PPPP), to jointly promote effective implementation of development policies.

Nevertheless, to have a condition favourable and conducive to economic growth and sustainable development, there needs to be order in the society. As the authors of the Story of Civilization, the historians, Will and Ariel Durant once wrote, “Only in order is there true

freedom.” Therefore, the Royal Thai Government is working to ensure stability and bring about sustainable democracy in the country. In this connection, the Government has undertaken comprehensive reforms in order to bring about free, fair and transparent elections and corruption-free administration. The new Constitution is being drafted to realize these objectives. The Constitution Drafting Committee (CDC) seeks to ensure that the constitution-drafting be done in an inclusive manner and will lay a strong foundation for sustainable democracy in Thailand.

Mr. President,

This year marks the 10th Anniversary of the Human Rights Council. We wish to share Thailand’s views and expectation from the Council as follows:

First, the Council must be able to address chronic and emergency situations of human rights violations in an efficient and timely manner so as to prevent undesirable consequences to the people. As the old adage goes, no one size fits all, therefore the Council should also take into account each country’s specific contexts in order to win the hearts and minds of all countries in the Council’s effort to foster the expansion of human rights across the globe.

Second, the Council should not limit its works to the protection aspect, but also focus on the prevention aspect through the promotion of understanding and education on human rights to peoples.

Third, the Council should be mindful that naming and shaming and politicization of human rights issues are counter-productive. This is why we support the Universal Periodic Review as a useful mechanism that ensures equal treatment for all countries while respecting their sovereign rights to develop their countries in accordance with their historical background and cherished values.

Mr. President,

With these three expectations in mind, Thailand has therefore tabled an annual resolution on the enhancement of technical cooperation and capacity building in the field of human rights. Because we believe it is the most constructive way to promote human rights. For this session of the Council, Thailand will organise a thematic discussion focusing on technical cooperation

and capacity building to promote and protect the rights of all migrants. We hope that the discussion will allow us to compare best practices and better equip all of us with necessary capacity in coping with this pressing key issue.

Mr. President,

Finally, I would like to reiterate Thailand's commitment to human rights principles. We stand ready to work closely and constructively with all partners to support the Council's work in order to make more positive impacts on the ground.

Thank you, Mr. President.