

Statement by

H.E. Mr. Sihasak Phuanketkeow

Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Thailand

and Special Envoy of the Royal Thai Government

at the Adoption of the UPR Working Group Report on Thailand

12th Session of the Working Group on Universal Periodic Review

7 October 2011

Madame President,

Distinguished Delegates,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of the Thai delegation, I would like to express our sincere appreciation to the Troika, Cuba, Indonesia and Nigeria, as well as to the secretariat for their efforts and assistance in the preparation of the UPR Working Group Report on Thailand. I would also like to thank Ambassador Desra of Indonesia for presenting the report on behalf of the Troika.

Thailand very much appreciates the opportunity to submit our first report under the UPR mechanism two days ago, the preparation of which has proven to be valuable in furthering the cause of human rights in the country. The engagement of all stakeholders in the preparation of Thailand's national report has helped raise awareness and enhance dialogue on human rights in the Thai society. Indeed, the UPR process has become a catalyst for change in areas where improvements are still needed.

As recently as yesterday, we held a session with civil society organizations in order to listen to their feedbacks in regard to Thailand's presentation. We also discussed various pending human rights issues of concern and how to move them forward with the UPR recommendations. This is, I believe, a testament to the value of the UPR process in furthering the human rights agenda. I wish to assure you that civil society will continue to be an integral part of our follow up process.

During the interactive dialogue, Thailand received a large number of recommendations, most of which were valuable and constructive. In this regard, Thailand is very pleased to announce that at this stage 100 out of the total 172 recommendations enjoy our support. Others we agree to take back and come up with our response later. We accept most recommendations on the protection of the rights of vulnerable and marginalized groups, including migrant workers,

and aim to enhance the implementation of various national plans and policies in order to better protect the rights of these groups.

We also accepted most of the recommendations on equality and non-discrimination, including access to health and education, with a view to ensuring that all persons, especially the poor, have equal access to economic and social rights and opportunities which will enhance their adequate standard of living.

Recommendations on the strengthening of the judicial reform, administration of justice and the work of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission also enjoy our support, as we work toward combating impunity and building reconciliation in society based on the rule of law and equal treatment for all people.

Madame President,

Thailand also made additional pledges and commitments in order to further enhance human rights in the country, some of which I have already mentioned in my statement during the interactive dialogue two days ago. And in fact, some of them also represent the concrete implementation of recommendations we have received. They are as follows :

- Thailand will become a Party to the Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance, the ILO Conventions No. 87 on Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organize and No. 98 on the Rights to Organize and Collective Bargaining.

- Thailand will withdraw its reservation to Article 16 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. We will also withdraw our interpretative declarations to Articles 6 and 9 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and Article 18 of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

- Thailand will amend its laws to be more in alignment with international human rights instruments, which includes ensuring that criminal laws are aligned with the Convention against Torture and the Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance and improving the laws to better protect women and children.

- Thailand will issue a standing invitation to all the special procedures of the Human Rights Council.

- Thailand will accelerate our efforts to reform the justice system and strengthen law enforcement.

- Thailand will enhance human rights protection for migrant workers and will redouble our efforts to prevent human trafficking, especially through enhancing the labour inspection system.

- Thailand will promote the right to education for disadvantaged and marginalized children so that these children are able to access education for all on an equal basis with others.

- Lastly, Thailand will strengthen the implementation of the National Human Rights Action Plan.

These pledges, I believe, should go a long way to address the challenges we face in promoting and protection human rights.

However, our work does not end here and a more important task lies ahead of us with the implementation of all the recommendations we have accepted. This is by no means an easy task, but one that we are committed to follow through.

In fact, in order to maintain the momentum, in a couple of weeks' time, I intend to go to Bangkok to convene a meeting with all agencies concerned to consider the remaining UPR recommendations. We will hold consultations with relevant Government ministries and all other stakeholders in order to make clear our pronouncement with regard to the remaining recommendations at the 19th Session of the Human Rights Council in March next year. I will also conduct a public forum with civil society organizations to exchange views on ways to implement the recommendations accepted.

In order to keep the Council updated on the implementation of our accepted UPR recommendations, we hope to be able to present a mid-term report to provide an update on actions taken to follow up on these pledges and accepted recommendations. Ultimately, the success of the UPR depends on how it can make a difference to the lives of the people on the ground, and we have the duty to ensure that it does.

In concluding, I would like to once again thank all delegations for their comments and recommendations which are valuable contributions to Thailand's review.

Thank you.
