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

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Statement

by

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Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Thailand**

General Debate

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Building Bridges for Partnership

THAILAND

ASEAN Candidate for the UN Security Council 2017 – 2018

Mr. President,

On behalf of the Royal Thai Government, I would like to join with other leaders in expressing my warm congratulations to the UN on the occasion of its 70th Anniversary.

I wish to sincerely thank all countries for their condolences and solidarity in the aftermath of the bombing in Bangkok on 17 August. Thailand strongly condemns this barbarous act, which took the lives of many innocent civilians. We will never condone this kind of violence. Let me, therefore, pledge our firm and unwavering determination to work with all countries to uphold peace and stability everywhere.

During the past 70 years, the United Nations has made significant contributions to alleviating the plight and problems of peoples in all four corners of the globe. The UN has also played a pivotal role in maintaining peace and security, in protecting and promoting human rights, and in advancing the welfare and well-being of all humankind.

In the area of peacekeeping, the UN has been recognized for its success in preventing many armed conflicts from escalating into global war. Nevertheless, the UN remains duty-bound to shoulder a heavy humanitarian burden and build sustainable peace. There is thus a constant need to carry out development work and assist people on the ground. Thailand is determined to provide support to UN peacekeeping operations, especially in the field of development. And we wish to reaffirm our principled position to contribute military units for civil development, engineering and medical teams, where and when requested.

In the area of human rights, Thailand has always accorded priority to protecting and promoting human rights for all groups of people. We proudly served as a member of the Human Rights Council from 2010 to 2013 and as its Chair during 2010 to 2011. During our tenure, we advocated ourselves as a bridge builder among nations and groups of nations with diverging views and ideologies. We uphold the principle of non-discrimination and constructive partnerships. We also support the capacity building of individual nations in their human rights protection and promotion efforts.

In the area of development, the United Nations deserves credit for bringing progress and prosperity to all Member States, large and small. Thailand is proud to be a part of this transformative world agenda which places people at the center of development and which aims to eradicate poverty and reduce inequalities, to ensure universal health care and well-being, to promote good governance and the rule of law, to reduce disaster risks, and to promote sustainable agriculture and integrated management of water and natural resources. Climate change will pose a major challenge to the achievement of various SDGs. It is, therefore, our shared responsibility to ensure that the outcome of the COP 21 will be both ambitious and viable.

We live in a borderless world marked by a complex inter-linkage of problems, and solving them will require a comprehensive approach because we cannot rely on a one-size-fits-all solution. And since the circumstance of one country is different from the next, so there ought to be different approaches to addressing common global challenges. Today, close international cooperation and enhanced partnerships are indispensable to tackling the problem of irregular migration, especially displaced persons from conflict, which has created protracted humanitarian crises in many parts of the world. Thailand reaffirms our commitment to working closely with all countries to address this pressing issue in full respect of international humanitarian laws.

Mr. President,

The United Nations at 70 has a commendable track record in the maintenance of peace and security and the prevention of human right abuses. Nevertheless, numerous challenges persist and require a holistic approach to solving them, especially via the path of development. The imperative now is to focus on crafting a truly sustainable solution to peace and security via the nexus of development and human rights.

Thailand's socio-economic success of the past three decades, its ascension to the rank of middle-income country, and its current status as an equal partner for development, owe a great deal to the Sufficiency Economy Philosophy of His Majesty the King of Thailand. Fondly known as the "Development King," His Majesty has been working tirelessly for over half a century to raise the livelihood of His peoples.

Thailand's approach to development takes inspiration from His Majesty the King's Sufficiency Economy Philosophy. This philosophy espouses moderation, prudence and resilience. It teaches people to be moral, wise and self-reliant and to live modestly and in harmony with society and nature. This people-centred development is indeed consonant with the UN's sustainable development agenda.

His Majesty the King's Sufficiency Economy Philosophy has been recognized internationally. In 2006, His Majesty the King was awarded the UNDP Human Development Lifetime Achievement Award in tribute to His tireless efforts to raise the quality of life and welfare of His people and for His country's development.

The strategy underpinning my Government's approach to national development inspired by His Majesty's Sufficiency Economy Philosophy – is to make the country stable, prosperous and sustainable. The goals include reducing disparity and inequality, promoting the rule-of-law and good governance, fostering national unity among the population, enhancing economic connectivity with neighboring countries, and pursuing development that would not compromise the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

It is my conviction that Thailand will be stable only when we have developed ourselves into a nation filled with virtuous, competent and enlightened citizens, who live their lives responsibly for the greater good. The Government has a role to play in the promotion of such a society – one in which individuals actively take part in building a stronger and better future for themselves and for the community, one in which individuals constantly strive to develop self-resilience to cope with future changes.

To make our people prosper – economically, socially and culturally – the Government will strengthen social and cultural relations, and will empower communities by encouraging them to combine local wisdom with science, technology and innovation so that they remain competitive in the world market.

Sustainability requires that humankind must learn to live in harmony with nature and lead a balanced life in a green society. Today, the adverse impacts of climate change and natural disasters can reverse decades of sustainable

development gains. It is, therefore, incumbent upon every person and every country to join hands in solving this pressing global challenge. On Thailand's part, we reaffirm our commitment under the INDCs to reducing our greenhouse gas emissions between 20 and 25 percent by the year 2030.

Furthermore, sustainability can only be achieved when we put in place a framework of fair rules for all to abide by, when we promote good governance that, in turn, leads to greater transparency and accountability. Successful implementation of the new sustainable development agenda will require joint ownership and collective efforts across all sectors, since people are, after all, the main agents of change – and that change must begin from within.

Thailand is currently undertaking comprehensive reforms on several fronts to make our country stronger and better. Hopefully in the process, the reforms will help us to achieve security, prosperity, sustainability, and pave the way towards resilient democracy. Some of the major reforms include amending laws and strengthening the justice system; improving public sector efficiency; creating trust, social reconciliation and unity; and harmonizing social order.

Mr. President,

What we do today will become tomorrow's history. Therefore, we must make the best of today, so that ten or twenty years from now we will be remembered for our actions. We want Thailand to be stronger, better, and become more actively involved in the work of the UN to shape a brighter future for us all.

We often expect the strongest to help the weakest and the most vulnerable. But given the widening gap between the strongest and the weakest, we must not overlook what those in the middle can do. This middle group of countries actually constitutes the majority. They may be strong enough to stand on their own feet while still remaining in touch with the instructive experiences of their growth and development. Therefore, they can serve as a crucial link between the strongest and the weakest.

As a middle-income country, Thailand firmly believes that development cannot be truly sustainable when some countries forge ahead and leave others behind. That is why we have pursued the “Thailand Plus One” policy for all-inclusive, region-wide economic and industrial development, so that our neighbours can advance alongside us. Examples of development in tandem with our neighbours include projects of transport connectivity in Southeast Asia and the creation of special economic zones along our borders with neighbouring countries, all in support of the ASEAN Community that will come into being in by the end of this year.

At present, the majority of people in developing countries are in the agricultural sector. They currently face a host of challenges, such as trade barriers, competition on the world market, climate change, debt and poverty, and diminishing workforce. All these challenges put the world’s food security at risk. Therefore, we must join hands to help developing countries, particularly through North-South and South-South Cooperation, as well as through strengthening the agricultural sector in order to lay a solid foundation for a strong and resilient real sector.

Mr. President,

Aside from looking after our farmers, we must also empower other vulnerable groups such as women, children and the disabled, and those at risk of having their human rights violated and becoming victims of human trafficking, such as workers in the fisheries sector.

The current Thai Government accords priority to solving the problem of human trafficking because it is a serious violation of human rights and necessitates humanitarian assistance. The comprehensive efforts that we are now undertaking in the areas of prevention, suppression and rehabilitation will contribute to regional and global efforts to tackle this problem.

As regards other major transnational challenges, such as pandemics and drug trafficking, these are issues that require enhanced international cooperation. Thailand stands ready to share our experiences and best practices in areas where we have expertise, namely universal health coverage, infectious disease

surveillance and sustainable alternative development. In a few months, we will be organizing the second International Conference on Alternative Development (ICAD), building upon our successful initiative of hosting ICAD I.

Thailand attaches importance to building a culture of peace. We have also actively participated in the international efforts to address global challenges. It is for these reasons that Thailand has decided to run for a non-permanent seat on the United Nations Security Council for the term 2017-2018. We believe that we can constructively serve as a bridge-builder among UNSC Members and non-members. We believe that we can play a constructive role in bridging different cultures and beliefs. In undertaking this important responsibility, we hope to be able to promote good understanding and enhance international cooperation in our collective pursuit to achieve the common goals of the United Nations.

Mr. President,

As we enter a new era of development, the concept of sustainability should be integrated into all three pillars of the United Nations' work. We have been emphasizing for decades how these three pillars are mutually reinforcing, but in reality we have been taking somewhat of a silo approach to peace and security, to development and to human rights. It is time to change all that. Now is the time to converge all three paths so that the road ahead for humanity in the next 70 years will be one of promises fulfilled, of visions transformed, in the realm of peace and security, sustainable development and human rights. Let us make it happen together now. Let us turn our road into one that makes a difference.

It is our firm conviction that, together, we – the Member States of the United Nations – hold the power to change the world for the better. I hereby reaffirm Thailand's readiness to partner with all Member States in our continuing efforts to address both traditional and non-traditional challenges. We are indeed united in our aspiration to make the UN a true beacon of hope for humankind.
