

**Statement by Mr. Manasvi Srisodapol,
Deputy Permanent Secretary of Foreign Affairs of Thailand
at the Seventh Bali Democracy Forum
Bali, Indonesia, 10 October 2014**

**Your Excellency, Vice Minister Dino Djalal,
Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates,**

1. I am honoured and delighted to be here on behalf of the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Thailand. Allow me to convey his sincere appreciation to the Government of the Republic of Indonesia for kindly inviting Thailand to attend this important gathering and to convey his warm greetings to all delegates and best wishes for the success of this Forum.

2. I am certain that many of you may be curious about what Thailand has to say at this year's gathering having witnessed the turmoil and unfolding of events in Thailand since last year's meeting. May I say that all of us are here because we believe in democracy. And let me assure you that Thailand and the Thai people continue to believe in democracy and cherish our democratic values and ideals. And that is why Thailand is here to pay tribute to everyone who has struggled to bring about democracy to their countries and also to learn from the experiences and success of others because building a sustainable democracy remains a challenge that many of us face.

3. As in many countries, the democratic path for Thailand has not always been easy.

4. Before May 22, Thailand had gone through several months of political and administrative paralysis. Thai society became increasingly polarized and too often frequented by violent incidents. The economy was on the downslide, threatening to pull other economies in the region down with us. In the face of this deteriorating situation, the Royal Thai Armed Forces had to step in to take administrative control and to prevent further turmoil and bloodshed. None of us would have liked to see this happen. The unfortunate series of events made the

intervention necessary.

5. Thailand is now in transition. After four and a half months, peace and order has returned to the country. The economy has picked up boosted by improved public confidence and investors' sentiment. A provisional constitution has been promulgated, along with the establishment of a functioning government and a national legislative assembly. The priorities of the government include advancing reforms, promoting reconciliation, addressing inequalities, and fighting corruption.

6. Last week, a national reform council was established according to the provisional constitution to deliberate on 11 main areas of reform, namely politics, national administration, law and justice, local administration, education, economy, energy, public health, environment, mass media, and social issues.

7. The 250 members of the national reform council come from a broad spectrum of stakeholders including civil society, the academia, the media and various professional organizations as well as representatives from all 77 provinces. To make this process even more inclusive, public participation has also been encouraged. Academic institutions have already organized public seminars to debate on reform issues, some with the attendance of foreign partners.

8. The national reform council will submit their recommendations to the national legislative assembly, which will serve as inputs for the development of a new constitution and, thereby, pave the way for democratic elections by the end of 2015.

9. We all know that reforms are not easy. It will take more than a year. And it is expected that this long-term undertaking will have to be pursued by a future elected government. But we need to set things right and put Thailand back on track to become a leading economy in ASEAN and a reliable partner for all our friends in Asia and the Pacific once again.

Excellencies,

10. We come here today believing in democracy. The Thai people have been fighting for democracy for 82 years. We have been through ups and downs. We know from first-hand experience that democracy does not come easy and we

have to work constantly to strengthen it and make it more sustainable to meet the aspirations of the people.

11. And let me reassure you that Thailand remains fully committed to democracy, a democracy that is based on good governance, accountability, rule of law, and human rights. But we need political space to bring about reconciliation and reforms so that we can come back with a more sustainable democracy.

12. And I am certain that if all of us in this august forum can lend each other a helping hand to encourage a smooth transition to a more sustainable democracy, we will be able to help shape the evolving regional democratic architecture that is beneficial to everyone.

13. I thank you for your attention.
