

**Mr. President,  
Madame High Commissioner,  
Excellencies,  
Distinguished Delegates,**

It is my great honour to address the High Level Segment of the 13<sup>th</sup> Session of the Human Rights Council. I would like to express, on behalf of the Royal Thai Government, our appreciation to you, Mr. President, for your contributions to the work of the Council. My appreciation also goes to the High Commissioner for her active role in advancing the cause of human rights.

More than 60 years have passed since the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Since then, we have seen much progress in the promotion and protection of human rights. We have seen new conventions come into force and the establishment of new norms and standards. However, many challenges still remain for all of us in terms of addressing human rights violations which undeniably still persist.

I therefore come before the Council today to describe how my government sees the common challenges facing us in this area.

Our most fundamental challenge is how to make the Human Rights Council a truly effective force upon which our hopes and aspirations can rest. In this regard, I am convinced that human rights begins very much at home. The duty of governments is therefore to empower the people and make them more aware of the inherent and inalienable nature of their human rights, which no government can deny.

Our second challenge is ensuring that governments do their part to create an enabling environment in which human rights can flourish and prosper. Since the current Thai Government entered office just over a year ago, we have declared before the Parliament that human rights will be one of the top priorities on the Government's agenda. With a firm belief in human rights, we have been working hard to translate those words into action by introducing policies to create an environment for a human rights culture in the society as a contribution towards peace, justice, democracy and the rule of law.

Indeed, Thailand has a long tradition of diversity and tolerance in our society. Before the common understanding of human rights was clearly articulated and standardized, the Thai people learned about their rights and respect towards other people in their way of life. In the modern era, we were among the first countries to endorse the Universal Declaration of Human Rights whose key

principles have already been reflected in the Thai Constitution that human rights are inherent and inalienable. And now the Thais have embraced the growing human rights consciousness with enthusiasm. All this forms a solid basis for human rights for all in Thailand.

**Mr. President,**

Allow me to highlight some of the policies which the Government has initiated to enhance the human rights of the Thai people at all levels. Firstly, the Second National Human Rights Plan 2009-2013 is now being translated into action at various levels down to the communities. Thailand is now party to 7 out of 9 core international human rights instruments and is considering becoming a party to the Convention on the Protection of all Persons from Enforced Disappearance, and withdrawing our reservations to the CEDAW, ICCPR and the CRC.

Secondly, many people-oriented policies are being implemented to protect the rights of vulnerable and marginalized groups in the society to ensure that these people can realize their basic rights. In such efforts, the social dimension of Thailand's development has been emphasized, including in the economic stimulus package, initiated to alleviate people's immediate economic difficulties. These will require substantial resources, but the strategies being employed aim at striking a balance between social well-being and national development while ensuring basic protection for human rights.

Finally, and most importantly, the democratization process and the promotion of good governance are placed high on the agenda. Indeed, the commitment to promote an open democratic and rights-based society by ensuring the rule of law, justice, non-discrimination, elimination of impunity and abuse of power cannot be doubted.

These are our contributions on human rights at the national level and they will continue to form the basis for our pledges and commitments to be pursued for more effective actions and results in the future.

**Mr. President,**

It is undeniable that globalization has its impact on the full enjoyment of all human rights. Human rights today is not confined to any one country but transcends borders. It is a common concern of the international community as a whole, and all must work together at regional and global levels toward the promotion and protection of human rights.

Looking beyond our domestic priorities, Thailand is one of those countries in Southeast Asia that have been advocating the establishment of a human rights body at the regional level for over 15 years. We have fulfilled our responsibilities as ASEAN Chair with the establishment of the ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights (AICHR) and the ASEAN Commission on the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Women and Children (ACWC). Such regional mechanisms can play a pivotal role in serving as a stepping stone towards a more region-wide mechanism. In order to work toward this goal, ASEAN is determined to do more. Our commitment is to continue to promote human rights and fundamental freedoms as a key feature of a rules-based ASEAN Community.

In order to generate further momentum, Thailand will host the Asia-Pacific Workshop on Regional Cooperation for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights in April 2010, to which representatives from other regional human rights bodies will also be invited to share their best practices and experiences on how to strengthen regional human rights mechanisms.

**Mr. President,**

At the global level, the hope and aspirations of the peoples with regard to their full and effective enjoyment of all human rights rest firmly with the Human Rights Council. Since the establishment of the Council in 2006, significant progress has been made in the right direction. States recognize the need for constructive dialogue and cooperation in furthering the work of the Council and avoiding repeating the pitfalls of the former Commission on Human Rights. Yet, the main challenge for all of us is how to enhance the impact of the Council beyond this hall and to ensure that it makes a real difference to the lives of the people on the ground. Thailand wishes to offer our humble opinion as follows.

We believe that there is a need for all of us to approach our task within the Council with a sense of accountability and responsibility. We need to reach out further and build more common grounds among different groups and regions.

There is no doubt that human rights violations can never be condoned. Therefore, it is important that we engage the countries concerned constructively, exhausting all available avenues without readily resorting to naming and shaming.

While human rights promotion and protection is a State-driven exercise, we need to engage with all other relevant stakeholders, recognizing that they too are players on the ground.

Most important of all in addressing human rights is to foster a culture of respect for human rights by taking various preventive measures to sensitize

governments and build their capacities in order to help them carry out their human rights obligations.

Thailand firmly believes that the Human Rights Council should be even-handed in addressing the many complex and pressing human rights challenges of today. The Council should be ready to respond to all human rights concerns whenever and wherever they arise. As we know, the best way to address human rights violations is to prevent them in the first place. Therefore, attention should be placed on human rights education and training.

As we approach the review of the status, work and functioning of the Council, Thailand believes that we should build upon what we have achieved so far, as all of us would agree that the Council is generally moving in the right direction. We should strive to focus on particular areas where further improvement and fine-tuning are needed. In this regard, Thailand is ready and committed to work with all stakeholders in this process in order to enhance the overall effectiveness of the Council.

**Mr. President,**

These are the challenges that we—members and observers of the Human Rights Council—face together. During the past 4 years, Thailand has been an observer to the Council. We have striven to do our part and have taken an active role in the deliberations of the Council.

Now, we are submitting our candidature to the Human Rights Council for the term 2010-2013, which reflects our faith in the Council and the high hopes we place on it. We are under no illusion about the task expected from any member of the Council. But I pledge to you that Thailand is committed to do its utmost to enhance the work of this body and to promote and protect human rights at all levels. We stand ready to work with all stakeholders towards this noble cause.

I thank you, Mr. President.

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