

**Remarks by H.E. Mr. Kasit Piromya,  
Minister of Foreign Affairs of Thailand  
at the cocktail reception to introduce  
Thailand's Human Rights Commitments and Pledges,  
Vithes Samosorn, Ministry of Foreign Affairs,  
Friday 19 February 2010, 17.30-20.00 hrs.**

**Excellencies,  
Distinguished guests,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

It gives me great pleasure to welcome you here on this special occasion. I thank you very much for your interest in human rights and how Thailand intends to contribute to the Human Rights Council (HRC) as a first time member. Let me take this opportunity to share with you some insights on what human rights mean for Thailand as well as what we are committed to do if we were to become a member of the world's most important human rights body.

Historically, Thailand has always been an open and tolerant society with fundamental freedoms as its bedrock. In the modern era, we have striven to progressively promote and protect human rights, and the Thai Constitution contains all the key principles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. All this forms a solid basis for human rights for all in Thailand.

But human rights also thrive on an enabling climate and a supportive environment. Since entering office, the current Government has emphasized the importance of key principles of democratic rule with a multi-party system, particularly the rule of law, accountability and good governance. Furthermore, it has declared the government's policy before the parliament that the promotion and protection of human rights will be one of its top national agenda. Therefore, it is with full confidence and firm believe in our human rights policy that led Thailand decide to present its candidature to the Human Rights Council for the term 2010-2013.

Allow me to highlight some of the polices which the Government has initiated to enhance human rights of the Thai people at all levels here for your kind understanding. Firstly, the Second National Human Rights Plan 2009-2013 has been approved and is now being translated into action at various levels down to the communities.

Secondly, welfare oriented policies have been fully implemented to protect the rights of vulnerable groups, namely children, women, persons with disabilities, and the elderly. The social dimension of Thailand's development has been emphasized. Accordingly, the economic stimulus package, initiated to

alleviate people's immediate economic difficulties, has considerably been geared towards the free education programme for all children and universal monthly subsistence allowance for the elderly and disabled persons.

Thirdly, the rights of marginalized groups in the society which include ethnic persons, migrants and also those in need have received the Government's close attention. It is working incessantly to ensure that these people can realize basic rights, be they the right to nationality, the right to birth registration, the right to health and education or the right to equal wage and welfare, as appropriate.

Fourthly, the democratization process and the maintenance of good governance are placed high on the agenda. 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.

Let me now venture briefly into our contributions and pledges on human rights at the regional and global levels. Thailand is one of those countries in Southeast Asia that have long advocated the establishment of a human rights body at the regional level. We have fulfilled our responsibilities as ASEAN Chair with the inauguration of the ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights (AICHR). Thailand pledges to exercise its utmost efforts to keep up the momentum of the AICHR, and we are pleased to see Dr. Sriprapha Petchamesree, Thailand's Representative to AICHR, with us tonight. Furthermore, Thailand will host the Asia-Pacific Workshop on Regional Cooperation for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights in April 2010, to which the 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. Meanwhile, at the global level, Thailand has cooperated in providing humanitarian assistance to fellow human beings regardless of race or nationality.

On the work of the Human Rights Council, since tonight we have with us Ambassador Sihasak Phuangkitkeow, Permanent Representative of Thailand in Geneva, I will leave it to him to say a few words on what we have been doing and what more we could do to support the work of the Council. But I can confirm is that we are certainly committed to ensuring the effective functioning of the Council, its special procedures as well as engaging in the review process in a spirit of dialogue and cooperation.

**Excellencies,  
Distinguished guests,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Last but not least, I wish to conclude that nobody can escape criticism when it comes to human rights. Thailand certainly continues to face its fair share of human rights challenges. But we commit to approach those challenges in a balanced but cooperative spirit and with an open mind. I do hope that the presentation of Thailand's candidature will be conducive and meaningful to the Human Rights Council, and trust that our candidature will received the valuable support of your governments at the elections to be held at the UN General Assembly this May in New York, as well as that of other stakeholders.

Thank you.

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