



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

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Statement

by

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of Thailand to the United Nations

at the General Debate

of the 61st Session of the UN General Assembly

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Madam President, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentleman,

At the outset, allow me to congratulate you, Madam President, and the Kingdom of Bahrain, upon your assumption of the office of the President of the 61st Session of the General Assembly. As a woman myself, I welcome your election with great pride and wish to assure you of my delegation's full support in any possible way.

I also wish to express my delegation's profound appreciation to President Jan Eliasson, your predecessor, for his hard work and dedication in advancing the United Nations reform agenda over the past year.

I wish to also take this opportunity to welcome the Republic of Montenegro as a new member of the United Nations.

Madam President,

I am speaking at a time when Thailand is going through critical times – a transition, following the military intervention, to a needed reform process to strengthen our democracy in both its form and content.

As a peace-loving country, we are grateful that the political change in our country has taken place peacefully. The situation has returned to normal within hours. On behalf of the Thai people, I wish to thank our friends for their understanding and support.

With the resilience of the Thai society, you can be assured that Thailand will emerge as a stronger and more vibrant democracy. We will ensure a swift return to democracy with a definite timeline. An interim constitution will be promulgated in the coming days, with the military being placed under the constitution once more. This interim constitution will provide full guarantees for civil liberties and rights under the supervision of the National Human Rights Commission. Under this interim constitution, a new civilian government will, again, within the coming days, be put in place, and we can well expect that one of the first tasks of the new civilian government will be to do away with martial law.

Constitutional reform will lead to a new constitution and general elections within one year, if not sooner. It is the hope of the Thai people that as a result of constitutional reform, independent organizations to be reestablished under the new constitution will become more effective in carrying out their tasks in checking and monitoring the work of the executive branch of government. This is the challenge and the promise. I wish to also assure this General Assembly that Thailand's foreign policy will remain unchanged. The conduct of our foreign policy will continue to be guided by the spirit and principles enshrined in the United Nations Charter and we remain firm in our commitment to obligations under international treaties and agreements which we are party to. Our thriving partnership with other countries shall continue to be fostered and enhanced. Thailand's international economic policy, including multilateral trade negotiations and free trade agreements, will be continued.

We will continue our active role in ASEAN and in the Asia Cooperation Dialogue. We will also continue to promote ACMECS, a sub-regional and self-reliant collective effort at speeding up regional integration, and BIMSTEC, an organization devoted to economic and social cooperation bridging the two sub-continent of South Asia and Southeast Asia. You can therefore be assured of the continuity in our foreign policy at all levels, bilateral, regional and multilateral.

Madam President,

The world today is weakened by misunderstanding and fear.

We judge one another, based on our perceptions, which often times, are not accurate.

Out of fear, we go to war to seek peace.

Instead of waging more wars, we should instead cultivate peace. We should learn to respect one another, starting from within one's own family, community and workplace, and extending it to other societies, peoples of different races, religions and beliefs. Starting from ourselves, we should expand our circle of friendship and peace, and do all that is possible to spread the message of peace within our nation and all over the world.

In this regard, Thailand commends various initiatives to bridge peoples across cultures and civilizations. We welcome and support the Alliance of Civilizations and the Interfaith Dialogue and Cooperation for Peace. We encourage that such initiatives be strengthened and promoted in order to promote peace and lessen the chance for armed conflicts.

Each year, the United Nations spends more than 70% of its 10 billion US dollars annual budget on peacekeeping and other field operations. This trend can only be reserved if the United Nations is to work more on creating a culture of prevention.

Prevention is, in the long run, less costly than peacekeeping operations. In this regard, it is particularly encouraging to see that two new important bodies have been put in place and will contribute to strengthening the role of the United Nations in prevention.

The Peacebuilding Commission is expected to enable countries to emerge back from conflicts and to sustain durable peace. The Human Rights Council, also in its first year of inception, is hoped to promote a culture of human rights for all. The Council should play a role to help prevent situations of human rights violation from deteriorating and turning into armed conflicts. The Council's success will be measured, not by the number of resolution it adopts, but by the real impacts on the grounds.

Madam President,

One of the most effective measures for prevention of armed conflicts is development. Thailand is encouraged that the theme of the general debate this year "Implementing a Global Partnership for Development" echoes the immediate need to ensure that development goals are achieved and that this achievement rests firmly on a global partnership. Developed countries need to honour their commitments, particularly in their official development assistance to developing countries and least developed countries.

Sustainable development is, however, not about aid. In fact, it is about trade and opportunity. Developing countries must not be denied an opportunity to trade themselves out of poverty. The suspension of the Doha Round dealt a serious setback to hopes for a true partnership between the developed and developing worlds. A global partnership for development must ensure win-win conditions for the rich and the poor alike. We must redouble our efforts to ensure that development does not become a casualty of domestic interests.

Global partnership is also not limited to relationship among States. The United Nations' work can never be at its best, if it does not reflect the voices of grassroots peoples. The United Nations must ensure a global partnership for development. It must engage partners at all levels. In this regard, Thailand commends the work of the United Nations Partnership Fund and encourages it to carry out more good work in assisting developing countries, especially those in Africa, in attaining sustainable development. We also thank Secretary-General Kofi Annan for having explored the possibility to engage the civil society and the private sector in the work of the United Nations. My delegation looks forward to more work being undertaken in this regard during this session of the General Assembly.

Madam President,

As the Secretary-General pointed out in his report to the General Assembly this year, the United Nations is a network of capacities and a source of operational capacity. In order to maximize this potential, there is an urgent need to reform the United Nations Secretariat.

Discussion on the Secretariat and Management reform has been occupying a large part of our time since the World Summit. I do encourage Member States to work closely together with a common goal of ensuring that this Organization works to serve the peoples in all corners of the world, in a transparent and most effective manner.

To enable the United Nations to deliver its best potential as a network of capacities, we also need to ensure that the work of the United Nations at its headquarters and in the fields are coherent and well coordinated. In this regard, Thailand looks forward enthusiastically to studying the report and recommendations of the High-Level Panel on System-Wide Coherence. We need to ensure that work at national, regional and

international levels are coordinated and respond to the needs on the grounds. The work of regional commissions and organizations should feed into the work of the United Nations at its Headquarters in such a way that maximize their synergies.

Madam President,

2005 was a year for vision and commitments. Our leaders met at the World Summit and laid out their visions for a better world, underpinned by effective multilateralism and a more effective United Nations.

We spent most of the year 2006 in mapping out details of the commitments laid out by our leaders. In addition to the Peacebuilding Commission and the Human Rights Council, another welcoming effort undertaken by the General Assembly this year is the recent adoption of the global counter-terrorism strategy. This reflects a good example of when political will is at work. Thailand also wishes to encourage Member States to exert an even greater political will to enable a speedy conclusion of a comprehensive anti-terrorism convention. Moreover, the importance of prevention in the fight against terrorism can also never be overstressed. Causes for marginalization and extremism, including particularly lack of development, definitely need to world's priority attention and must be properly addressed.

The General Assembly also adopted in June a strong political declaration as a follow-up to the 2001 Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS, in order to scale up significantly towards the universal access to comprehensive prevention programme, care, treatment and support for all those who need it by the year 2010. As AIDS has killed more than 25 million people and orphaned 15 million children since the first cases of AIDS were reported 25 years ago, and close to 40 million people worldwide are living with HIV/AIDS, Member States must take these commitments seriously and translate them into concrete actions at the national level.

Though much has been accomplished since the World Summit, this is simply just a beginning. Much more needs to be done. 2007 must be a year for action and implementation.

When the United Nations was founded sixty years ago, it was our forefathers' aspiration that men would be living free from want and fear, and living in dignity. Today, the United Nations continues to strive to attain that noble goal. To maintain peace and security, to promote development, and to promote and protect human rights of people worldwide is not a responsibility of any single nation. It is our "shared responsibility." Each and every one of us must serve as a change agent. We must serve as an instrument for peace.

Madam President,

Finally, it would not be completed to end this statement without paying a tribute to Secretary-General Kofi Annan for his decade of hard work and dedication serving in this most impossible job in the world and for his entire career of serving the humanity. This Secretary-General's shoes will be enormously large to fill in. Anyone who is elected to serve in this seat will have full agenda on his hands in ensuring that multilateralism works effectively and that the United Nations remains relevant.

The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) comprising Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam, has endorsed and supported the candidature of Dr. Surakiart Sathirathai, from Thailand, to carry on the work of Secretary-General Kofi Annan.

Dr. Surakiart's vast backgrounds in government, business as well as in the academic world, will enrich the work of the Organization. As someone from a developing country, Dr. Surakiart can serve as a bridge builder to link the North and the South and be a voice of moderation for the world community. Apart from his being an Asian candidate, Dr. Surakiart possesses outstanding personal qualifications. If elected, his experiences can become of great use to the work of the United Nations in the challenging time ahead.

I thank you for your attention.