



**Statement**

**by**

**H.E. Mr. Vitavas Srivihok**

**Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary  
Permanent Representative to the United Nations**

**Permanent Mission of the Kingdom of Thailand to the United Nations**

**at**

**the Formal Meeting of the Fifth Committee  
Agenda Item 136 Programme Budget for the  
Biennium 2018-2019: the Seismic Mitigation Retrofit and Life-cycle  
Replacements Project at the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and  
the Pacific (ESCAP) Premises in Bangkok**

**on 18 October 2018, Conference Room 3**

**Please check against delivery**

**Madam Chair,**

1. As this is the first time for Thailand to take the floor in the Fifth Committee of the 73<sup>rd</sup> Session of the General Assembly, we would like to congratulate you and members of the Bureau on the election.

2. Thailand aligns itself with the statements delivered by the distinguished representative of Egypt on behalf of the Group of 77 and China and by the distinguished representative of Singapore on behalf of ASEAN.

3. At the outset, Thailand takes this opportunity to thank Mr. Patrick Carey, Director of the Facility and Commercial Services Division, for introducing the report of the Secretary General on the seismic mitigation retrofit and life-cycle replacements project at the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) premises in Bangkok. We would also like to thank Mr. Carlos Ruiz Massieu, Chair of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions, for the related report and recommendations.

**Madam Chair,**

4. Thailand has hosted ESCAP for almost 7 decades. It is the most comprehensive regional development arm of the UN with 53 Member States and 9 Associate Members. Throughout the years, we have witnessed the active and constructive approaches taken by ESCAP to deliver its mandate in promoting sustainable and inclusive development, particularly the implementation of the SDGs and 2030 Agenda. ESCAP has worked hard to deliver on these mandates in Asia and the Pacific, a region that is home to 60 percent of the world's population. Thailand will continue to render our full support to the work of ESCAP and looks forward to working closely with the new Executive Secretary, Professor Armida Salsiah Alisjahbana.

5. Apart from the support for the mandated tasks of ESCAP, Thailand also supports its efforts to address health and safety issues through the implementation of the seismic mitigation retrofit and life-cycle replacements project at ESCAP premises in Bangkok. It is imperative to ensure a successful completion of the project. This will allow ESCAP to carry out its mandate effectively and serve its members in the most optimal manner. As the host country, Thailand stands ready to work closely with ESCAP throughout the planning and implementation of the project. We believe that close coordination between the Organization and the host country is key to success.

6. Since we last considered this agenda item, Thailand has continued to support the project through in-kind contributions. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in particular, facilitated discussions between ESCAP and relevant local authorities. Such local authorities have included the Council of Engineers of Thailand and the Bangkok Metropolitan Administration. They were called on to discuss the issue of providing local expertise and best practices in the area, as well as the issue of establishing procedures necessary for the smooth and successful delivery of the project.

7. Thailand is pleased with the progress of the project as indicated in the report of the Secretary-General. We welcome the decisions to apply the on-site swing space and refine the construction methodology. We hope that due regard has been paid to cost-benefit analysis and operational feasibility for the timely completion of the project and particularly within the approved cost plan. In addition, we would like to commend the continued efforts of ESCAP to implement the project, with due consideration given to efficient building performance, energy conservation and maximum space utilization. Space efficiency, in particular, will accommodate more UN entities to the complex. Thailand welcomes additional UN presence in the country as it is our policy to promote Bangkok as the hub of international organizations and conferences, reaffirming our positioning as the “**Geneva of Asia**”. After its entry into force, the Act on Privileges and Immunities for International Organizations and International Conferences in Thailand will expedite and facilitate the process of setting up an office of international organizations in Thailand.

**Madam Chair,**

8. Thailand attaches great importance to the project governance, oversight, cost-effectiveness, transparency and accountability as they are keys to ensure proper management and the successful implementation of this project. In this regard, we encourage ESCAP to continue to interact and coordinate closely with the Secretariat in New York, including the Office of Central Support Services (OCSS), in order to ensure smooth implementation of the project.

9. In conclusion, Thailand would like to assure you of our commitment to work constructively with other delegations and to engage in constructive deliberations on this item in order to reach a positive outcome in a timely manner.

I thank you, Madam Chair.