



**PERMANENT MISSION OF THAILAND
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by

H.E. Mr. Supark PRONGTHURA

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**Agenda Item 138: Proposed Programme Budget for 2022:
Seismic Mitigation and Life-Cycle Replacements Project
at the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
(ESCAP) Premises in Bangkok**

**at the Fifth Committee during the 76th Session of the General Assembly
of the United Nations**

11 November 2021, New York

Mr. Chair,

1. Thailand aligns itself with the statements delivered by Guinea on behalf of the Group of 77 and China and by Singapore on behalf of ASEAN. We wish to express our sincere appreciation to Mr. Chandramouli RAMANATHAN, Controller, Assistant Secretary-General for Programme Planning, Budget and Finance, for introducing the Secretary-General's report on this agenda item. We would also like to thank Mr. Abdallah BACHAR BONG, Chair of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ), for presenting the Advisory Committee's related report.

Mr. Chair,

2. It is with honour that Thailand has been serving as ESCAP's host country for more than seven decades. We recognize the Commission's crucial role as the most inclusive intergovernmental platform in the Asia-Pacific regions. This notably includes assisting the Member States towards the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its SDGs. At this critical time, the role of ESCAP has been recognized through its support for the socio-economic response of Asia and the Pacific to the COVID-19 pandemic. These contributions ensure a concerted regional approach for sustainable recovery from the crisis and further enhance regional cooperation among Member States and relevant partners.
3. As ESCAP will celebrate its 75th anniversary next year, it is timely for us to build on the Commission's past achievements to further strengthen its role and support its work. This extends to reiterating our full support for the successful and timely completion of this important project in 2023, with adequate resources being provided.
4. Despite our commitment to the successful implementation of the project, the COVID-19 pandemic situation in Thailand has posed a number of challenges. Several nation-wide shutdowns of businesses and some restrictions on international travels have caused uncertainty in procurement and supply chain management which further delayed the construction phase. However, we commend ESCAP for being able to adapt and work with resilience during this crisis. The construction phase will begin by late November 2021, with the signing of key procurement contracts with potential bidders, including the general construction contract.
5. We also trust that, with the easing of health and safety measures put forward by the Thai Government to respond to COVID-19, the construction work will proceed as per the revised schedule and in line with local regulations as well as the established guidelines. All this is to ensure the health and safety of all personnel, delegates, and visitors at ESCAP's premises in Bangkok.

Mr. Chair,

6. Thailand believes that **close coordination between the organisation and the host country** is vital to ensure smooth and successful completion of the project. In this regard, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has been working closely with ESCAP, particularly to **facilitate the Commission's engagement with local and national entities**, including the Bangkok Metropolitan Authority and the Council of Engineers of Thailand. This engagement enables **knowledge sharing** on important aspects such as adherence to local law and regulations, best practices and local expertise related to the construction works, as well as sourcing of local materials which helps reduce cost overruns.
7. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs also **supports ESCAP's outreach effort to local, national and foreign vendors**. Together with ESCAP and the UN Procurement Division (UNPD), the Ministry co-hosted two seminars on business opportunities with the United Nations in July and December 2020 in Bangkok. We are pleased that the seminars provided opportunities for local vendors to learn about the Seismic Mitigation Retrofit and Life-Cycle Replacements Project and that many competent vendors are interested to do business with ESCAP. To this end, Thailand reaffirms our support for ESCAP and the project team to ensure that the project will be completed on time and within approved budget.

Mr. Chair,

8. As for the remainder of the project implementation, we would like to highlight the importance of **voluntary contributions**, including in-kind contribution of technical experts from Member States. We therefore encourage ESCAP to remain actively engaged with Member States on this matter.
9. While there are concerns over project risk in June 2021, we cannot stress enough that project governance, oversight, cost-effectiveness, transparency and accountability are keys to ensure proper management and successful implementation of the project. Thailand therefore encourages the project team to continue engaging closely with the **Global Asset Management Policy Service (GAMPS)** at the UN Headquarters on risk mitigation and alignment with lessons learned from other UN capital projects. We also appreciate the work of the **Office of the Internal Oversight Services (OIOS)** and support full implementation of its recommendations by the project team.

Mr. Chair,

10. In conclusion, Thailand would like to assure you of our commitment to work constructively with all delegations in the deliberations on this important agenda item with a view to reaching a positive and timely outcome.

I thank you.