



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

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**Statement by  
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Adviser  
for the Delegation of Thailand**

**to the Third Committee of the 64<sup>th</sup> Session of the  
United Nations General Assembly  
on Agenda item 62: Advancement of Women**



Mr. Chairman,

Let me begin by reaffirming Thailand's continued and active commitment to the advancement of women. Our position is based on the belief that full social and economic development can only take place in a society where women and men enjoy equal rights, and are empowered to make the most of their natural abilities. Successive governments have thus done their best to ensure equal access to opportunities and resources for both women and men.

Our beliefs are matched by our actions. Thailand is committed to its obligations under the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women, and the Millennium Development Goals with regard to gender equality. Since 1995, Thailand has actively worked to implement the Beijing Declaration and Platform of Action as well as the outcome of the Twenty-third Special Session of the General Assembly. We also fully support the decision tasking the Commission on the Status of Women, at its fifty-third session in 2010, to discuss and review the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. We look forward to the contributions that the conclusion of those discussions will have on advancing the gender agenda.

Thailand recognizes the role and positive impact that CEDAW and its recommendations have in helping countries achieve and maintain their gender equality goals. Thailand's candidate, Dr. Saisuree Chutikul, who was elected member of the CEDAW Committee for the term 2007-2010, has had the golden opportunity to share with the Committee the experiences and challenges of promoting gender equality from the perspective of a developing country. Dr. Chutikul is now also advisor to the Working Group on the establishment of an ASEAN Commission on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Women and Children. When achieved, this would be a regional milestone in the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms in general and the promotion of CEDAW and CRC in particular.

Mr. Chairman,

Thailand has in place a midterm women's development plan as part of the 10th National Economic and Social Development Plan currently being implemented. This plan specifically aims to protect the rights of and promote opportunities for women to participate fully in the economic and social development process. As in many other countries, two facts stand out: first, women are the primary contributors to a country's economic growth, and second, figures consistently point to the feminization of poverty. In Thailand, we are working to reverse the latter, because we believe that the feminization of poverty not only affects a country's GDP, but also severely handicaps social advancement. It is this "social poverty" that we must avoid at all costs. For this reason, Thailand is working hard toward the MDGs, particularly with respect to the eradication of poverty among women.

Now more than ever, issues such as women's education, women's health, women and public policy, and women's empowerment are in the limelight. Gender mainstreaming is clearly reflected in Thailand current Constitution. During the past few years, various legal and policy frameworks have been established to enhance

women's equality of status. These include, among others, the right of women to choose to maintain their own surnames and titles even if they are married. Moreover, cultural barriers which have prevented women from stepping outside prescribed roles are being addressed, so that women have the opportunity to develop their abilities and interests as they freely choose, rather than those dictated by custom. Gender Chief Executive Officers are being put in place to ensure that public and private institutions are aware of the importance not only of gender balance but also gender sensitivity. As a result, more and more women are participating in public administration at local and national levels. Today, it is common for Thai women to make career choices ranging across a wide spectrum – from medical doctors, judges, engineers, to peace keeping/peacebuilding officers, to name just a few.

In 1995, the Beijing Declaration aimed to create new partnerships between women and men into the twenty-first century. Now is a good time to ask: Have we achieved the ideal launched 15 years ago? In some countries, the goal has been accomplished. In others, efforts are still being made, while yet others are still unaware of the cultural barriers that obstruct gender equality. The UN has done its part in advancing the gender agenda within its own organization, and Thailand is pleased to take note of the increase in the number of women appointed to key positions here. We look forward to ongoing intergovernmental negotiations on gender architecture, in a way that lives up to the true ideals of a “United Nations” for all.

Mr. Chairman,

In closing, gender equality must be addressed by society as a whole. It must not be seen as merely a “women's concern”. In the nineteenth century, Susan B. Anthony, the most prominent woman activist of her time, envisaged that, and I quote, “the day will come when men will recognize woman as his peer, not only at the fireside, but in the councils of the nation. Then, and not until then, will there be the perfect comradeship that shall result in the highest development of the race.” Thailand stands ready to work with the United Nations and other member states to make that day today.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.