



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

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**Statement
by**

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to the United Nations**

to the 65th General Assembly of the United Nations

**on Agenda Item 28:
Advancement of women**

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Mr. Chairman,

Let me begin by commending the Secretary-General, the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, and the Development Fund for Women for their excellent reports on this agenda item. Allow me also to extend my delegation's appreciation for the important presentations and statements delivered yesterday morning. The Thai delegation would also like to align itself with the statement made by the delegation of Yemen on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

Mr. Chairman,

Gender equality and empowerment of women has been among the top priorities on our agenda since the 1980s. Since 2005, Thailand has achieved Target 3A of the Millennium Development Goals on the elimination of gender disparity in education, with the number of girls in secondary and tertiary education exceeding that of boys. Despite the challenges, Thailand remains committed to meeting our "MDG-plus" targets, which aims, in particular, to double women's political representation, both at the local and national levels. Certainly, Thailand firmly believes that women's participation in *all* economic, political and other decision-making processes, including in peacekeeping and peacebuilding, is important and will contribute in a pivotal manner to the successful and meaningful resolution of social problems such as violence against women, domestic violence and trafficking in persons.

Our efforts in promoting gender equality and empowerment of women are also demonstrated by crucial amendments and introduction of new laws, for example, laws that allow married women or divorcees the right to choose their titles and surnames and laws that formally expand the grounds for divorce in the Civil Code for women to equal that for men. Moreover, a draft Gender Equality Bill, which would see the elimination of any discrimination on the grounds of sex, is also now in the pipeline.

In addition to national efforts to promote gender equality and the empowerment of women, Thailand has also made contributions at the regional level, including in the establishment of the ASEAN Commission on the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Women and Children (ACWC), tasked mainly to promote the implementation of the CRC and CEDAW and to encourage ASEAN countries to review legislation that may contain elements of discrimination against women. The ACWC has thus, been hailed as an important step in achieving both *de jure* and *de facto* equality for women in the region, as called for in the Beijing Platform for Action.

Mr. Chairman,

Thailand's commitment to gender equality and the empowerment of women does not only extend to ordinary women but also to those in correctional facilities. As many of you are aware, last week, Her Royal Highness Princess Bajrakitiyabha Mahidol of Thailand launched her exhibition titled "Standard Minimum Rules: A New Horizon for Women Prisoners". The exhibition is meant to highlight the "Draft UN Rules for the Treatment of Women Prisoners and Non-Custodial Measures for Women Offenders" otherwise known as the "Bangkok Rules", which were initiated to complement the existing Tokyo rules by addressing prison and correctional management policies worldwide to ensure sensitivity to gender and the specific needs of women in prisons. We sincerely hope that with the expected forthcoming adoption of the Bangkok Rules

here at the 65th session of the UNGA, this would be Thailand's substantive contributions to the issue of mainstreaming gender in an area that is perhaps one of the most neglected.

Mr. Chairman,

With regard to the issue of violence against women, Thailand would like to continue to lend its full support to the Secretary-General's initiative "UNiTE to end violence against women" which Her Royal Highness had the welcome opportunity to be personally engaged with through her participation at the launch of the Network of Men Leaders last November. Also, last year, Her Royal Highness was recognized with an award from UNIFEM (part of UN Women) for her role in raising awareness for the "Say No" campaign which generated over three million out of the world's five million signatures committing to ending violence against women in its first phase.

On the national front, Thailand has amended the Criminal Code to criminalize wider categories of sexual violence, including marital rape, and has been working hard to enforce two important pieces of legislation. The first is the Domestic Violence Act, which provides comprehensive legal measures to address sexual violence, including, notably, criminalization of perpetrators, and compensation and rehabilitation for victims regardless of their status. The second piece of legislation is the Prevention and Suppression of Human Trafficking Act, which for the first time clearly defines human trafficking and more severely punishes offenders. But for all of the government's efforts, we need to remember that awareness begins at home. In this regard, the Thai government is now conducting an innovative campaign called 'Gender Equality starts at home' to raise public awareness on this issue.

Mr. Chairman,

Thailand's efforts to fight trafficking in persons, particularly women and girls are not limited to the national level. Recognizing that the problem is a shared responsibility not resolved by a finger-pointing exercise at any one country, Thailand has seen the usefulness of cooperation between countries of origin, transit and destination. We have, therefore, signed a number of memoranda of understanding on combating trafficking in persons with our neighbours, and are active in various regional fora, especially the Bali Process on People Smuggling, Trafficking in Persons, and Related Transnational Crime. Having co-hosted with New Zealand and the IOM a Bali Process regional workshop on awareness-raising information campaigns, we look forward to hosting another workshop later this year on mutual legal assistance and law enforcement.

Apart from already-existing frameworks, Thailand concurs with the important recommendation and emphasis in the Secretary-General's report that the implementation of bilateral, regional, and multilateral agreements will ensure effective action in all areas of combating trafficking of women and girls. In this regard, Thailand continues to discuss with a number of other countries the possibility of concluding further agreements and welcomes the adoption, earlier this year, of the Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons.

Mr. Chairman,

Thailand remains committed to MDG 5, and has done its utmost to ensure that impoverished mothers in rural areas can access universal healthcare and regular check-ups, which has led to a significant reduction in the risk of maternal death. The Thai government's comprehensive focus on early childhood development also includes the promotion of maternal and

child nutrition, particularly iodine nutrition in pregnancy and mother's breast feeding. Better family planning and wider universal healthcare have also led to a reduction in the transmission of HIV/AIDS from mother to child. Currently, Thailand is in the process of considering the proposed Reproductive Health Act aimed at the enhancement of reproductive healthcare and the establishment of a reproductive health fund. In this regard, we would like to express our support for the Secretary-General's initiative "Global Strategy for Women's and Children's Health," agreeing that investing in the health of women can play a vital role in building stable, peaceful and productive societies.

Mr. Chairman,

Last but not least, as a longstanding supporter of the concept of system-wide coherence, we cannot but welcome the establishment of UN Women, and would also like to congratulate former President of Chile Michelle Bachelet upon her historic appointment as the Undersecretary-General responsible for this new entity. Thailand lends her full support to the work of UN Women, with a view to a reinvigorated push towards gender equality and the empowerment of women and the achievement of equality between women and men as equal partners and beneficiaries of development, human rights as well as peace and security.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman.