



**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 63rd Session of the UN General Assembly

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Please check against delivery

Mr. President,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

The attachment that Thailand has had with the ideals and principles that gave birth to the United Nations is long, enduring and natural. From the very first day in this family of nations more than sixty years ago, Thailand, or Siam at that time, had made known to all that we are for peace, for freedom and for tolerance because peace, freedom and tolerance are parts of our national character – a part of who we are. Today, our commitment to peace, freedom and tolerance anywhere and everywhere remains unwavering and shall remain so.

Therefore, I warmly congratulate you, Mr. President – yourself a man of peace, freedom and tolerance - on your election as President of the Sixty-third Session of the General Assembly. Your cause is our cause. And you can rest assured that the Thai delegation will give you its full support and cooperation.

Mr. President,

We are living in a world of enormous opportunities for progress. But we are also living in a world that is undergoing a state of flux – a world that is drifting from one crisis to another. Information technological revolution and transportation advancements have brought people from all corners of the world closer together than ever before. We are now living in a “global village”. But sadly, this “village” is not united as one. This “village” is deeply divided along political, economic, social, racial, religious and cultural lines. This is not sustainable. This is not healthy. This should not be allowed to go on and on. All of us have a stake in it. All of us must not take this division for granted or as a given, because it is not.

We need to reclaim the ideal that brought us together in this place – the ideal of “We the Peoples”. We need to cultivate and nurture a “we feeling” among us. We must try our best to focus on what binds us together rather than what keeps us apart. We must be fully aware that to continue to see the world through “us versus them” glasses can only lead to confrontation. And confrontation helps no one because, at the end of the day in this interconnected globalized world, no one wins everything but everyone can lose everything. Like what Mahatma Gandhi once admonished: “An eye for an eye will make the whole world blind.”

So, we do have a choice between progress and self-destruction, between cooperation and confrontation, and between amity and animosity. The choice is for all of us to make and the choice is clear. There is no other better alternative than progress, cooperation and amity of nations and peoples.

Mr. President,

The Thai people have made their choice. It is for democracy. The challenge now in Thailand, as in other countries around the world, is to find a right balance between the political culture and the desire for democratic ideals. Nurturing a democratic culture in any country, therefore, takes time and an appreciation that it is an evolutionary process in which ups and downs are to be expected. Thailand's democratic evolution is no exception.

What is unique for the present state of political evolution in Thailand is the consistent expression of our national character: for peace, for freedom and for tolerance. Indeed, Thai political developments have made a lot of headlines lately. But we trust that good eyes and informed minds would not mistake events for the trajectory of a nation. Thai people are resilient people. The Thai society is a resilient society. And Thai people and society are determined to move ahead along the democratic path.

Mr. President,

The world has made a choice on development. That choice is embodied in the Millennium Declaration and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). We are now midway towards the target year of 2015. While there have been many remarkable and encouraging success stories or progress so far in reducing poverty, hunger and disease, to name a few, there are also unremarkable and discouraging stories or setbacks. For far too many countries, the realization of the MDGs by 2015 has become somewhat more and more difficult to achieve. Thailand therefore is pleased to see the international community coming together as one in its determination to work harder to help people in each and every country enjoy the fruit of developmental progress and well-being.

To help each other to have a better life is a moral imperative as well as a practical necessity. Can anyone afford to live happily and sleep soundly in an island of opulence in the middle of the sea of poverty and despair? The answer is no. It is after all an enlightened self-interest of every country to ensure the MDGs targets are met as many and as soon as possible.

Mr. President,

Our unity as "We the Peoples" is all the more important in the face of a "perfect storm" of global oil crisis, food crisis and financial crisis. These multiple crises threaten to derail MDGs achievements or even undo hard-won gains of the past in many countries.

Developing countries need stability and security in the world energy market. Every dollar hike from speculation of future oil price being traded on the floor of a future market means development cost for governments of developing countries and affects livelihoods of ordinary people around the world.

But in every crisis exists an opportunity. The exponential rise of oil price has made it a necessity for countries to adapt their patterns of consumption and rethink their strategies for energy security. Thailand is not spared of this global oil crisis. Our people have been adversely affected by the skyrocketing oil prices in almost every aspect of their lives. At the same time, Thailand has learned to adapt and adjust. Energy efficiency and development of

alternative energy sources, such as liquefied gas, biofuels and gasohol, are now being pursued with greater urgency. Because of the global oil crisis, more and more vehicles in Thailand today have shifted to various sources of alternative energy. This market for alternative energy is booming in Thailand and across Asia. There is so much potential in this market. Thailand stands ready to work together with our friends from around the world in all endeavors pertaining to research and development of alternative energy.

Developing countries need stability and security in the world food market. In addressing this challenge, we should not forget that the current food crisis has had multiple causes, such as the global oil crisis, drought and flood. Any attempt to address this world food crisis must be comprehensive and concerted to be effective. It must look at the short-term imperative of keeping the supply flowing in the world market while working towards a longer term imperative of stabilizing food prices and enhancing productivity.

As a "rice bowl of the world", Thailand will continue to ensure a constant supply to the world rice market. We will continue to work with countries to enhance productivity and ensure food security. In the past, we had Industrial Revolution and Information Technological Revolution. Bit now, we believe, it is a time for the next revolution: a "Green Revolution". At the same time, we will continue to work with countries around the world to ensure an open international food market and establish agricultural trade rules that help the world's poor farmers and shore up food security in developing countries. To this end, the Doha Development Round should resume as soon as possible.

Developing countries also need stability and security in the world financial markets. The current turmoil in the world financial markets, if not effectively addressed soon, threatens to cause widespread economic downturns than can push millions below the poverty line and severely affect the MDGs achievements. To have the world financial crisis piling on top of the world energy and food crises is the last thing that people in the developing countries want to see. This is particularly true for people in Thailand and across Asia. We have learned through our painful experience how such phenomenon that started off as a financial crisis in 1997 could spiral into multi-faceted crisis that drove millions of people into abject poverty and despair, strained social fabrics of societies and created social tensions that developed into political tensions.

We, who have lived through those dark days, do not want to see a repeat of this type of crisis again. All countries, therefore, have a high stake in the current financial turmoil. We must work together, and quickly we must, to arrest the downward spiraling effects before it is too late.

Mr. President,

Besides the "perfect storm" of world energy, food and financial crises, this year, Southeast Asia witnessed a massive storm in the Cyclone Nargis that struck Myanmar in May. Nargis was the most devastating cyclone to hit Myanmar. Many lives were lost and many livelihoods were severely affected. But Nargis was not an isolated case. In the past few years, we stand witness to a changing pattern of our climate that has produced successive monster storms and severe weathers in all corners of the world. Ice in the North Pole and the South Pole is

melting at a frightening speed. Sea level is rising steadily and threatens to engulf low-lying areas around the world. Drought has increased and many areas, once arable, have turned into desert.

We can no longer turn our eyes away from the gathering threats of climate change. They are threats that recognize no political boundaries. Large and small, powerful and weak, we are all bound together by our common vulnerability and a common destiny as residents of the Planet Earth. We therefore have a collective responsibility on this issue.

The choice is clear and has been made. When the world gathered to discuss climate change at the Bali Conference in December last year, the world chose collective responsibility over collective irresponsibility. For Thailand, we will spare no effort to work actively with all parties to ensure that the journey that started off under the Bali Road Map last year can be realized at the Copenhagen Conference scheduled for next year. This is a critical time that requires critical action by all parties. The time is simply not on our side.

Mr. President,

There is a saying that there is always a silver lining after the storm. This is true for the Association of the Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), which Thailand is a member. Facing with the challenge in the aftermath of the Cyclone Nargis, ASEAN had to make a choice between doing nothing and lose its credibility, or doing something and be seen as a force to be reckoned with. ASEAN chose the latter. Acting as a bridge between Myanmar and the international community, ASEAN has successfully forged a working tripartite partnership between ASEAN, Myanmar and the United Nations. This partnership has continued to work effectively until today and could serve as a model for future humanitarian partnership in other parts of the world. Through this process, ASEAN has once again proven its effectiveness and resilience.

ASEAN has also made another choice – a big and profound one. ASEAN is moving towards a rules-based and people-centered organization with the signing of the ASEAN Charter last year. The upcoming Fourteenth ASEAN Summit, to take place in Bangkok, will carry the theme “ASEAN Charter for ASEAN Peoples”, to mark a new era for ASEAN, with people at the heart of our cooperation. As Chairman of ASEAN, Thailand has launched a “Three R’s” campaign. First, we want to realize the purposes and vision of the Charter. This includes the realization of an ASEAN human rights body, one of the new organs envisaged in the Charter. Second, we will revitalize the people-centered community to enhance their participation in building an ASEAN community. Third, we will reinforce ASEAN cooperation to better contribute to the well-being of our peoples, especially in the areas of human development and security.

Thailand shall carry forwards the work of the previous ASEAN Chair, Singapore, to realize the dreams of ASEAN’s founding fathers of turning Southeast Asia from a community of good neighbors into one ASEAN Community where the feeling of “We the Peoples of ASEAN” takes root. The world will benefit from having a more rules-based, effective, predictable and people-centered ASEAN as a partner. Through greater integration with the regional countries in Asia, ASEAN can become a natural bridge that connects China and India - the two emerging global economic centers of the 21st Century with billions of people combined

in market size. We believe that it is not too much or too distance to see a new, modern "Silk Road" passing through ASEAN.

Mr. President,

Let me conclude with what I started. We need to reclaim the ideals of "We the Peoples of the United Nations" to work together, to resolve our common problems, and to survive. It has never been more imperative for the members of this organization to put aside for a moment our narrow self-interest, and come together to forge solutions that are in the interest of us all. The United Nations can only be what the collective membership wishes it to be. "We the Peoples of the United Nations" have a choice to make.

Let what one astronaut gazing at the Planet Earth from a space station once said and served to remind us all of our collective responsibility: "For those who have seen the Earth from space, and for the hundreds and perhaps thousands more who will, such experience would most certainly change all perspectives. The things that we share in our world are far more valuable than those which divide us."

Thank you, Mr. President.