

As written



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

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STATEMENT

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Mr. Chairman,

At the outset, I would like to join other speakers before me in congratulating you for your election as Chairman of this Commission. My congratulations also extend to the other member of the Bureau. I am confident that under your able guidance, we will arrive at a successful conclusion of the work of the Commission. I would also like to thank the secretariat for the comprehensive introduction of the four documents under our consideration.

As you may realize, during the past couple of years, the state of the world economy has been a turbulent and devastating one, affecting particularly developing countries. Natural disasters and environmental degradation caused by unbalanced growth and resource mismanagement under the name of economic and technological development have worsen the situation. Only the poor and the less privileged, the majority of whom live in developing countries in all regions of the world are the silent victims and stand to suffer the most. Recovery from this severe hardship is expected to be a long and uphill road for many, including my country.

After the realization of the difficulty and complexity of the situation to be encountered in the future course of population and development, Thailand has placed great importance on a new approach to the population and development strategies at all levels whereby, for the first time, the concept of people-centered development versus state centered as it used to be, earlier has become an integral part of all related plans aiming at improving the people's quality of life as well as their participation in sustainable growth and development activities.

The present Thailand's population trends and structure have shown a pattern of classic progress which enable the country to remain enjoying its demographic bonus. This is evident in a number of indicators, namely, a decline in annual population growth rate which is currently at 1.1 per cent, a reduced infant and maternal mortality as well as fertility, a controlled preventable and communicable diseases, an increased number and

proportion of young people and people aged 60 and older, a longer life expectancy at birth for both male and female population, an increase number of children and young people continuing their education beyond the 12 years of compulsory schooling. The country mapped out various plans, strategies and measures for providing basic social and health services and supporting system in order to cope with the changes in demographic and population structure as well as economic situation. The country also foresaw the needs to secure more intercountry cooperation in order to better cope with the problems brought by the international migrants.

However, the economic crisis starting in **1997**, coupled with some of the problems accumulating from unbalanced economic growth, too rapid urbanization, large scale internal and cross border migration in the previous years, has caused many health and social problems which may not merely hinder the overall development but also set the country's positive records of growth back for some years. For instance, a large influx of cross-border immigrants from neighboring countries came to Thailand during the economic prosperity to be illegally employed as minimum waged manual laborers in many areas of the country while up to **4** per cent of the Thai population became unemployed in **1997** alone. As a result, many health and social problems have emerged. The once eradicated or well contained diseases such as filariasis, malaria, tuberculosis, etc. have been increasingly reported in the past few years beside other social and infrastructure impacts. Other predominant health problems seen in young adults and adolescents who constitute a major proportion of the population, include HIV/AIDS, drug and substance abuse, mental health, nutritional status, unwanted pregnancy, etc.

At present, Thailand has made a considerable progress in terms of its crucial policies, legislation and political commitment to address and fulfill the **ICPD's** Programme of Action. The Government has strengthened partnership and **collaboration** with internal organizations of both public and private sectors as well as **NGOs** concerned in order to revise and redirect the implementation of existing programs, particularly those **of** the health and education based on the existing data and information. In so doing, Thailand hopes

to efficiently carry out and attain the ICPD goals. Moreover, there are some areas which Thailand still needs external cooperation and support, namely, human resource development, resource mobilization for specific priority issues and strengthening of information management and monitoring systems. We believe that education, especially for women and girls and the concept of south-south cooperation are highly appropriate for the present and future development mechanisms to help Thailand and other developing countries in carefully solving these problems and sustaining the desirable growth and development of the population.

Mr. Chairman,

Despite the difficult period, Thailand will remain firm on its strong commitment and determination to carry out and support the implementation of the population and development goals identified in the ICPD Program of Action so that they will be realized and fulfilled by the year **2014 as** set out in the ICPD.

Thank you.