



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

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STATEMENT

BY

HIS EXCELLENCY

GENERAL SURAYUD CHULANONT (RET.)

PRIME MINISTER OF THE KINGDOM OF THAILAND

AT THE GENERAL DEBATE

OF THE 62ND SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS

GENERAL ASSEMBLY

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**Mr. President,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

On behalf of the Royal Thai Government, let me first congratulate you, Mr. President, and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, on your election as the President of the 62nd Session of the United Nations General Assembly. The Thai delegation looks forward to rendering its full support for the work of this Session in the coming months.

I also wish to take this opportunity to express my sincere appreciation to Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon for his tireless devotion to the United Nations and its reform. The first year in office is crucial in setting the priorities and future direction of this organization. And Mr. Secretary-General, you are certainly faced with a great challenge.

Thailand is keen to work with you toward a renewed United Nations -- one that is more responsive and empowered to address effectively the needs of the peoples of our world. We are keen to do so because we are committed to what the UN stands for -- respect for equality, for diversity, for human rights, for people.

This commitment drives us to building a stronger democracy that is more transparent and has stronger safeguards for our people. This commitment guides us to building a sound, open economy and a more just and equitable society governed by the rule of law -- crucial underpinnings for sustainable development.

And all this is taking place in a very special year for the Thai people, namely, the 80th Birthday Anniversary of His Majesty the King of Thailand.

Mr. President,

As most of you probably know, exactly one year has passed since Thailand moved to address the unprecedented political paralysis in our democratic system. I wish to take this opportunity to assure our friends that we are keeping to the timeline for the revitalization of parliamentary democracy, with general elections scheduled for 23rd December this year.

And exactly ten years ago, Thailand suffered from a deep crisis of a different nature. Through globalization, that economic ailment quickly spread to many countries and regions. Yet, we have emerged from the 1997 Asian financial crisis a stronger and more vibrant free-market economy. And now, despite high oil prices and other challenges, Thailand's economic fundamentals are strong.

But while continued economic growth over the past decade has lifted millions of Thais out of poverty, some 10% have not benefited. Thailand, like other developing countries, continues to face challenges to sustainable development in the form of income disparities and an urban-rural divide.

I believe that governments have a moral responsibility to address disparities in income distribution. This is why Thailand has made it our national priority to promote growth with equity and to achieve development from within. Our approach has been based on His Majesty the King's Sufficiency Economy philosophy, which calls for moderation and mindfulness in consumption, prudent economic decision-making and careful risk management. The philosophy's recognition by the UNDP in its 2007 Thailand Human Development Report has strengthened our conviction that we are on the right track.

The Government is leading this effort through universal education and investing in basic infrastructures for people-centered development. We believe this emphasis on moderation and knowledge will lead to a more equitable society, which is fundamental to sustainable development and immunity from external shocks.

Mr. President,

In addition to promoting growth with equity, governments must also ensure that progress does not come at the expense of the environment. For Thailand, the Sufficiency Economy's concepts of moderation and mindfulness relate directly to the sustainable utilization of natural resources. Thailand aims to cut back on its reliance on fossil fuels and lower greenhouse gas emissions through energy conservation.

At the same time, we seek to meet our growing energy demand through renewable energy and bio-fuels. We are also considering the option of nuclear energy, paying heed to the crucial issue of safety.

But Thailand realizes that significant reduction of fossil fuel use will likely take a few more decades due to the high costs of new technology. There must be greater partnership between countries that have developed clean energy technologies and those who lack them. So, we reiterate our call for R&D cooperation and affordable transfer of clean coal and methane reduction technologies.

An inevitable consequence of climate change is the unpredictability of water supply. As a major food producing country, and in line with His Majesty the King's "Water is Life" initiative, water conservation is a priority for the Thai Government. We have made commitments to increase the country's forested and

water catchment areas. And I would like to call on all nations to make water management a priority in our agenda to address climate change as well.

Mr. President,

Thailand places great importance on promoting human security, and is an active member of the Human Security Network. I have spoken about Thailand's efforts to provide our people freedom from want: through democratic reform, human rights, people-centered development, and sustainable development.

The other side of human security is freedom from fear. Out of fear and mistrust, individuals and communities fall prey to extremist ideas that further divide humanity. I strongly believe that the best strategy to conquer this fear is winning hearts and minds, and Thailand is committed to fostering cross-cultural understanding.

But terrorism continues to draw its strength from extremist ideologies. So, we must appeal to the majority in the world who are moderates to join forces against extremism. Enhancing inter-faith and intra-faith dialogue and dialogue among civilizations should also take place at the regional level. We are doing this in Southeast Asia.

Mr. President,

As a neighbouring country sharing a land border of more than 2,400 kilometres and currently hosting more than a million Myanmar citizens, Thailand is gravely concerned with what we are seeing and hearing in Myanmar. Both Thailand and Myanmar, being predominantly Buddhist, share in the beliefs of non-violence and tolerance. Thailand therefore finds as unacceptable the commission of violence and bodily harm to Buddhist monks and other demonstrators in Yangon.

This morning the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) discussed the situation in Myanmar. ASEAN is appalled to receive reports of automatic weapons being used and demands that the Myanmar Government immediately desist from the use of violence against demonstrators. ASEAN expressed revulsion over reports that the demonstrations in Myanmar are being suppressed by violent force and that there has been a number of fatalities.

We strongly urge Myanmar to exercise utmost restraint and seek a political solution and resume its efforts at national reconciliation with all parties concerned, and work towards a peaceful transition to democracy. We call for the release of all political detainees, including Daw Aung San Suu Kyi.

ASEAN gives its full support to the decision of United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon to send Special Envoy Ibrahim Gambari to Myanmar. We ask the Myanmar Government to cooperate fully and work with him. Mr. Gambari's role as a neutral interlocutor among all the parties can help defuse the dangerous situation. ASEAN urges Myanmar to grant him full access to all parties in Myanmar, as they had done in the past.

Mr. President,

Thailand is undergoing changes that will make it a more capable partner for the international community and the UN. At the regional level, Thailand is eager to work with our ASEAN partners to create a closer Community. And fortified by a new ASEAN Charter, ASEAN will be able to cooperate more effectively with the UN and our partners.

Indeed, promoting closer cooperation between ASEAN and the UN, two organizations that share the same values and goals, will be one contribution to restoring faith in the multilateral system. Another is supporting ongoing UN reform efforts. Together with Chile, South Africa, and Sweden, Thailand has put forth the Four Nations Initiative (4NI) proposals for improved governance and management of the UN Secretariat, based on increased accountability and transparency.

Thailand's cooperation with the international community and the UN is further enhanced by new people-centered initiatives. The new Constitution has provisions for universal education and healthcare, gender equality, children's rights and providing a social safety net for the poor, the disabled, and the elderly. More than ever, we are committed to combating HIV/AIDS and other global health threats.

In poverty eradication, Thailand is also committed to going beyond our borders to assist our friends and neighbours. Our Mae Fah Luang Foundation's community development model is being replicated in Afghanistan and Indonesia. Thai troops participating in UN peacekeeping missions are recognized for their contributions in rebuilding basic infrastructures in post-conflict areas.

We see that the immediate resumption of the Doha Round of Multilateral Trade Negotiations is essential to help the developing world achieve their MDGs. And as the Twelfth UNCTAD session in Accra approaches next year, Thailand looks forward to discussing ideas for South-South and trilateral cooperation to address the opportunities and challenges of globalization for development.

Mr. President,

This has been a year of great reforms for Thailand. The current political and social reforms that are taking place in my country will allow us to make greater contributions to a world where people can live in security and dignity, free from poverty and despair; a world where the present generation enhances the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

As the world grows smaller every day, humanity is sharing, more than ever, a common destiny. Our faith in the UN and the multilateral process must be equal to the challenges and opportunities facing us.

Thank you very much for your attention.
