

**Statement by H.E. Mr. Noppadon Pattama
Minister of Foreign Affairs of Thailand
at the Opening of the General Debate at UNCTAD XII
22 April 2008 at 16.30 hrs. Accra, Ghana**

Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon,
Secretary-General Supachai,
Excellencies,
Distinguished Ministers,

1. I wish to express the Thai delegation's deepest appreciation to the Government of Ghana for its warm hospitality. It is an honour for me to be in Accra to address this twelfth UNCTAD Conference. Allow me to share with you some key points that Thailand views of importance in guiding our deliberations.
2. First, we need to come up with fresh ideas that would give our efforts greater impetus. At the Bangkok Conference eight years ago, we took stock of the major challenges of globalization. These included coping with uncertainty over the WTO trade negotiations and the adverse effects of the Asian financial crisis. Today, these challenges, coupled with new ones, such as climate change, energy, and migration, are still very much with us and must be addressed. The Conference in Accra thus comes at an opportune time for us to reflect on the evolving landscape, to build upon the mandates from Bangkok and Sao Paulo, and to look ahead to the future.
3. Second, the lessons from the 1997 Financial Crisis remain relevant to us today, especially in the face of rising oil price, the sub-prime crisis and the expected financial instabilities ahead. For this reason, a successful conclusion of the WTO Doha Round is of crucial importance and would give the global economy a much needed boost. We must all use this Conference to reaffirm our commitment to the multilateral trade negotiations and to play a constructive role in shaping the structure of the global financial architecture. In this connection, we urge all Members to show the requisite leadership, political will and sense of partnership to allow us to reach a successful conclusion. This would enable us to achieve our common goal of ensuring a free and fair multilateral trading regime which fulfills the development agenda.
4. Third, we must bear in mind that this year of the "Bottom Billion" is a time for us to focus our attention on the world's poorest countries and to review our progress towards the 2015 Millennium Development Goals. It is our collective duty to ensure that "inclusive development" reaches those most in need. We are now facing a real and urgent crisis to address food security and its impediment to the achievement of the MDGs. The real solution to this problem requires concerted action from all of us. We must strive to boost the agricultural productivity through increased ODA for R&D and technology transfer as well as long-term investments on infrastructure.
5. In this context, Thailand wishes to reiterate our pledge of support to the African region in the area of economic and social development. As an active development partner, Thailand has provided development assistance to our immediate neighbours, particularly in the infrastructure and human resource development. We have also expanded our development cooperation programmes with Africa through the New Partnership for African Development (NEPAD) and the Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD). Our cooperation covers areas of mutual interest, ranging from human development, poverty reduction, and public health to Aid for Trade. I am confident that these initiatives will continually bear fruit for the benefit of the African people.

6. Fourth, we need to adopt a multi-dimensional cooperation approach. To be sure, a stronger and complementary global partnership for development between the North and the South is of the essence. At the same time, however, the countries of the South must also look at ourselves and try to draw upon our own inner strengths. Greater South-South cooperation and trade must be the order of the day and must continue to be a driving force for developing countries.

7. On our part, Thailand is proud to be part of the process of regional economic integration leading towards the creation of an ASEAN community. Later this year, Thailand will take on the ASEAN Chairmanship and is committed to strengthening our links, both within the region and with other regions. We have also pursued other sub-regional frameworks, such as GMS, ACMECS, and BIMSTEC, to bridge the “development” gap with our neighbours. We commend UNCTAD for its role in helping us foster South-South cooperation through various forms of partnership, including the Third Round of GSTP negotiations.

8. Fifth, the countries of the South should be prepared to share their experiences and lessons learnt with other developing countries. The Asian Financial Crisis which struck Thailand and the region over ten years ago taught us a very important and costly lesson regarding global financial markets. Over the years, Thailand has therefore adopted an alternative development philosophy called “Sufficiency Economy”, which is based on moderation, responsible consumption, and self-immunity against the negative effects of globalization. This alternative model developed by His Majesty King Bhumibol Adulyadej, King of Thailand has been recognized by UNDP and His Majesty himself has been awarded the first Human Development Lifetime Achievement Award in 2006.

9. Importantly, “Sufficiency Economy” has proven complementary to the current Thai Government’s policy to build up strong foundation for productivity, competitiveness and value creation for balanced and sustainable growth. It is compatible with our commitment to market economy, based on free and fair trading system and liberal investment regime, as well as our right and obligations under international trade and investment agreements. In this regard, we welcome interested developing countries and countries in transition to learn from our lessons and are willing to share our experiences.

10. Sixth, UNCTAD XII must not only be about words but also actions. At the end of this Conference, we hope to see action-oriented outcomes and agreement on a common platform to guide our deliberations for the next four years. As the UN’s principal organ on trade and development issues, UNCTAD must be given the mandate to emerge as a stronger and more efficient organization. The strengthening of UNCTAD’s three pillars, in particular its technical assistance programmes, such as development of supply side capacity and ability to negotiate in international agreements, are essential. We encourage Asian countries to make use of the expertise that the International Institute for Trade and Development (ITD), a regional institute established in Bangkok during UNCTAD X, can offer in terms of training and capacity-building in the Asian region.

Excellencies,
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11. There is no doubt that many daunting global challenges lie ahead of us. Yet, it lies within our power to make a significant positive difference here today. Thailand is optimistic that a global solution is achievable in the future, but this task cannot be done alone. A concerted global partnership for development remains at the heart of it all. Thailand stands ready to play our part in such a partnership and looks forward to cooperating with other countries in such an endeavour.

I thank you.