



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

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Statement

by

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at the

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**Madame Chairperson,
Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

At the outset, the Thai delegation would like to congratulate you, Madame Chairperson and members of the Bureau, on your election and extend to you our full cooperation in undertaking the important mandates of the Commission.

Thailand reaffirms its commitments to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the Millennium Development Goals on the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women. Let me assure you that the Thai Government has pursued both legislative and administrative efforts at the national and regional levels to ensure that such commitments are translated into action.

For Thailand, this year's priority theme, 'The empowerment of rural women and their role in poverty and hunger eradication, development and current challenges' addresses some of the most fundamental issues underpinning the ultimate aim of realizing a global gender-equal society. On this occasion, therefore, please allow me to highlight some of Thailand's initiatives in empowering women, and in particular, rural women.

Madame Chairperson,

Education is the most powerful tool in empowering girls and women. Based on this firm understanding, Thailand's National Education Act of 1999 and its amendments of 2002 ensures universal access to education for all, especially girls and women in rural areas. In addition, life-long learning is also one of the priority policies of the Thai government, and the National Informal and Non-formal Education Act of 2008 was enacted to ensure equal access and quality of education throughout life. In 2010, approximately 2.5 million girls and women benefitted from informal education. In 2010, Tele-learning Centers in the community were launched to promote non-formal education aimed at empowering people with information

technology skills as well as access to information for self-learning and self-development. In 2011, 65% of those using the 880 such centers throughout the country were girls and women.

Madame Chairperson,

The role of women, and in particular rural women, in national development must be recognized and nurtured. In Thailand, we organize National Women's Assemblies on an annual basis at the provincial, regional and national levels with themes corresponding to the twelve critical issues identified by the Beijing Platform for Action. Individual women, women's networks, and women's organizations from all walks of life congregate at the Assemblies for important deliberations. They brainstorm, share experiences and best practices on different themes and are given this platform to review progress on women's advancement and national development, to discuss challenges that women and their communities encounter, and finally to provide suggestions and recommendations to the government which are incorporated into national development measures and the National Women's Development Plan. Significantly, young girls also take part in the Assemblies and it has proven to be an excellent opportunity for young girls to learn and promote their leadership skills.

Madame Chairperson,

Rural women must be empowered and equipped to eradicate hunger and poverty. In Thailand, we have put in place 95,301 community organizations throughout the country which offer leadership training for women, support job creation opportunities, as well as community banks and community welfare projects, which are fundamental tools in the eradication of poverty and hunger.

Furthermore, our allies from the non-government organizations and the private sector have also made meaningful contributions to mainstreaming gender issues in rural areas. The Women Constitution Network, Women in Politics Institute, Gender and Development Research Institute and Female Labour Union Movements are some of the prominent examples, noted for their effective advocacy strategies for empowerment of rural women and equal

participation of women and men. Their combined efforts have clearly resulted in awareness raising on gender equality and integrating gender perspectives into the development narrative.

The Thai government has also recently established 'The Development Fund for Women's Advancement' as part of our continuing commitment to empower women, especially rural women. The fund is aimed at encouraging women to utilize their full capacity in advancing the country in all aspects. It aims to increase women's access to both physical and intellectual resources in order to equip Thai women with knowledge, income, as well as security for a sufficient life and a better quality of life, in keeping pace with globalization.

Madame Chairperson,

Financing for gender equality and the empowerment of women is crucial and we believe that gender mainstreaming and gender financing go hand in hand. In recent years, we have invested in training, workshops and forums for all line ministries and local administrative organizations to strengthen the concept of gender equality and ensure integration of gender perspectives into their plans, policies and practices. Recently, a Pilot Project on Gender Responsive Budgeting was implemented, and currently 19 units have joined this Pilot Project and benefitted from intensive training on gender analysis and methods to incorporate gender perspectives into policies and programmes. We have also drafted a manual on gender-responsive budgeting to serve as a guidance tool for all organizations to formulate and integrate gender financing.

Though various efforts have been made, Thailand recognizes that challenges still remain. One of the main challenges is gender bias and a patriarchal structure, which we view are root causes of gender inequality. Our current National Women's Development Plan aims to fully address these root causes; however, more efforts need to be made, especially in engaging men and boys as allies. Furthermore, the equal sharing of responsibilities between women and men of the household is another issue that needs to be promoted. Women's "double burden" in this respect is an important hindrance prohibiting women from enjoying their full potential in the public sphere. Lastly, increasing the number of women in decision making positions both at national and local levels is also crucial. Although the number of women in decision making positions in Thailand is increasing, we still need to do much more.

**Madame Chairperson,
Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates,**

We have all traveled a long way since the 1995 Beijing Conference, but our task is far from over. In this regard, Thailand would like to take this opportunity to reaffirm our commitment to work with our partners in all sectors, both at national and international levels. We are confident that our collaboration will lead to success in the promotion of the women's rights and advancement as well as the creation of a peaceful and equitable society.

I thank you, Madame Chairperson.

