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Statement

by

**H.E. Mr. Vathayudh Vichankaiyakij,
Ambassador and Deputy Permanent Representative of Thailand
to the United Nations**

**at the General Discussion of the Fifty-Sixth Session of the
Commission on Population and Development**

New York, 10 April 2023

Mr. Chair,

1. Thailand wishes to congratulate you and other members of the Bureau on your election. My delegation is confident that the **56th session of the Commission of Population and Development** will be successful under your able leadership.

2. As we reflect on the implementation of the **Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD)**, Thailand continues to stress that **people are the most important and valuable resource** of any country and should be given the opportunity to make the most of their potential. In this regard, allow me to share **three points**.

3. First, Thailand's **changing demographic structure** have added complexity to our efforts to achieving sustainable development. Thailand is an **“aged society”** with more than 20 per cent of our population aged 60 years and over. This poses a major challenge for the country, both economically and socially.

4. Thailand is focusing on maintaining a **healthy and productive workforce**, enhancing social protection, and improving the fiscal system to ensure the population's well-being. Our priority is to equip people of all ages with skills necessary for them to reach their full potential.

5. We have adopted a **human-centered approach** towards development, which is guided by the **Sufficiency Economy Philosophy (SEP)** and is also our guiding path toward the SDGs.

6. Second, Thailand believes that every child has the **right to education and learning** and **young people** can make a significant contribution to their societies. **Ensuring equitable access to quality education** is one of our priorities. The **Thai National Education Plan** therefore guarantees **15 years of free education** regardless of background and we continue to advance opportunities and incentives to promote **life-long learning, digital skills and entrepreneurship** for people of all ages. We have

also given particular attention and assistance to disadvantaged populations, especially those that experienced **learning loss** as a result of the **COVID-19 pandemic**.

7. On the issue of **sexual and reproductive health awareness**, we believe that education and awareness about population and health issues, including sexual and reproductive health, are crucial to enhance **gender equality**, promoting **responsible sexual behaviour** and protecting adolescents from **early and unwanted pregnancy**, **sexually transmitted diseases**, and **sexual violence and abuse**. Most recently, in November 2022, Thailand was proud to partner with the **Bill & Melinda Gates Institute for Population and Reproductive Health, Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health**, to host the **International Conference on Family Planning 2022 (ICFP 2022)** in Pattaya City.

8. Third, Thailand prioritises universal access to high **quality social services**. As **Co-chair of the Group of Friends of Universal Health Coverage and Global Health** and **Co-facilitator of the UHC Political Declaration**, Thailand is committed towards the realisation of the right to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of **physical and mental health**. Having achieved **universal health coverage (UHC)** since 2002, we have been able to provide non-discriminatory healthcare for all, including during the **pandemic** and as part of efforts to **build back better**.

9. To conclude, as we look to **ICPD30 in 2024**, Thailand will continue to engage constructively with the international community and stakeholders to implement the **2030 Agenda** and progress towards the **SDGs**. Let us not miss this opportunity to achieve inclusive economic growth and sustainable development where **no one is left behind**.

10. Thank you.
