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Statement

by

Mrs. Maratee Nalita Andamo

Minister Counsellor

Permanent Mission of the Kingdom of Thailand to the United Nations

at

**the Formal Meeting of the Fifth Committee
Agenda Item 136 Proposed Programme Budget for the
Biennium 2018-2019: the Seismic Mitigation Retrofit and Life-cycle
Replacements Project at the Economic and Social Commission for and the
Pacific (ESCAP) Premises in Bangkok**

on 1 November 2017, Conference Room 3

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Mr. Chair,

1. As this is the first time for Thailand to take the floor in the Fifth Committee of the 72nd Session of the General Assembly, we would like to congratulate you and the members of your Bureau on your election. We have full confidence that, under your able leadership and experienced guidance, the Committee will reach a successful and timely conclusion of its work during this session.

2. Thailand aligns itself with the statement delivered by the distinguished representative of Ecuador on behalf of the Group 77 and China.

3. At the outset, Thailand takes this opportunity to thank Mr. Patrick Carey, Officer-in-Charge, Office of Central Support Services, for introducing the report of the Secretary General on the seismic mitigation retrofit and life-cycle replacements project at the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) premises in Bangkok. We would also like to thank Mr. Carlos Ruiz Massieu, Chair of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions, for the related reports and recommendations.

Mr. Chair,

4. The construction and improvement projects for the various Regional Commissions of the United Nations must prioritise health and safety issues. In addition, they must aim to ensure efficient building performance, energy conservation and maximum space utilization. We, therefore, fully support the implementation of the seismic mitigation retrofit and life-cycle replacements project at ESCAP premises in Bangkok, with due consideration given to the most cost-effective approach.

5. As the host country, we reaffirm our support for the implementation of the project. Since we last considered this agenda item, the Thai side has continued to engage with ESCAP to provide assistance and support for the project through in-kind contributions. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Thailand, in particular, has organized an inter-agency meeting to facilitate coordination between ESCAP and the relevant Thai authorities, provided information and clarification on rules and regulations, supported ESCAP in liaising with various local entities to learn about

best practices on seismic retrofitting and construction management in Thailand, and provided options on a provisional office space to be used as a swing space.

6. Thailand is pleased with the progress of the project as indicated in the report of the Secretary-General. We hope that a study of onsite and off-site swing space requirements, as well as the design and construction methodology by the lead consultant firm will be completed in due course. Meanwhile, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs stands ready to continue working closely and give advice, where needed, as ESCAP deliberates on its swing space strategy in consultation with the lead consultant firm.

7. Thailand will continue to collaborate with ESCAP throughout the planning and implementation of the project, as we believe that close coordination between the Organization and the host country is an important key to success. We would also like to encourage ESCAP to implement the project in accordance with the mandate given by the General Assembly in Resolution 71/272. We, therefore, hope that due regard will be paid to the incorporation and use of local knowledge, material, and in-house capacity, as well as attention given to lessons learned and best practices from other capital projects, including the successful and recent renovation and seismic retrofit project at the UNESCO building in Bangkok.

Mr. Chair,

8. Project governance, oversight, cost-effectiveness, transparency and accountability are key drivers to ensure proper management and the successful implementation of this project, consistent with UNSG's efforts on management reform, which Thailand commits to support. We cannot emphasize enough, the need also, to ensure proper guidance, interaction, and close coordination between the Secretariat in New York, including the Office of Central Support Services (OCSS), and the Commission in Bangkok. This will help to prevent untimely and inaccurate reporting, budget planning and management, all of which are essential elements for the smooth implementation of any project.

I thank you, Mr. Chair.

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