



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

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STATEMENT

by

**His Excellency Mr. Vitavas Srivihok
Ambassador and Permanent Representative
of the Kingdom of Thailand to the United Nations**

**Agenda Item 141: Proposed Programme Budget for 2021:
Seismic Mitigation Retrofit and Life-Cycle Replacement Project at the
Economic And Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP)
Premises in Bangkok**

**at the Fifth Committee during the 75th Session of the General Assembly
of the United Nations**

13 November 2020, New York

Mr. kChair,

1. Thailand aligns our statement with the statements delivered by Guyana on behalf of the Group of 77 and China and by Singapore on behalf of ASEAN.
2. At the outset, Thailand would like to express our appreciation to Mr. Chandramouli Ramanathan, Controller, Assistant Secretary-General for Programme Planning, Budget and Finance, for introducing the Secretary-General report 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. Abdallah BACHAR BONG, Chair of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ), for presenting the Advisory Committee's related report and recommendations.

Mr. Chair,

3. Thailand is proud to serve as the host country of ESCAP, the largest regional commission of the United Nations. Since its inception in 1947, ESCAP has played a crucial role in promoting inclusive and sustainable development in the Asia-Pacific region. The Commission's tasks and mandates have never ceased to grow over the years. Thailand therefore reaffirms our commitment in supporting a successful and timely completion of this project in Bangkok. We believe this is crucial for ensuring business continuity and effective operational work of the Commission.
4. Long-term occupational health and safety of personnel, delegates and visitors at the Commission's premises in Bangkok are our top priority. We must also ensure that the project objectives and key features such as efficient building performance, energy conservation, space utilization efficiency as well as accessibility for persons with disabilities remain in consideration in accordance with the mandate given by the General Assembly in resolution 71/272. We further stress that the project design and planning as well as the work executed on the ground comply with local applicable codes, standards and procedures.
5. Close coordination between the Organisation and the host country contributes to smooth and successful implementation of the project. For this reason, the Thai government has been working closely with ESCAP from the beginning of this project. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Thailand continues to provide assistance and supports to the project in facilitating various meetings between ESCAP and the Thai authorities and entities. These meetings were useful for sharing information on local laws and regulations as well as best practices and local expertise related to construction work.

Mr. Chair,

6. Thailand welcomes overall progress of the project as indicated in the report of the Secretary-General, including the construction of on-site swing space and procurement of the key contracts related to furniture, moving and logistical services. Additionally, we welcome the convening of the outreach seminar co-hosted by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, ESCAP and the UN Procurement Division (UNPD) in July 2020, to attract more qualified vendors from various sectors, including construction and services. We are pleased to learn that the project team was able to locate competent bidders from this seminar and trust that ESCAP will be able to begin the construction phase as per revised schedule. Thailand stands ready to assist ESCAP in this regard and look forward to co-hosting another outreach business seminar in December 2020.
7. Project governance, oversight, cost-effectiveness transparency and accountability are keys to ensure proper management and successful implementation of the project. Thailand therefore encourages the project team to continue engaging closely with the Global Asset Management Policy Service at the UN Headquarters on risk mitigation and alignment with lessons learned. We also appreciate the work of the Office of the Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) and support full implementation of its recommendations. We look forward in this regard to further details on the 2020 audit in the next progress report of the Secretary-General.

Mr. Chair,

8. Thailand cannot emphasise enough the importance of voluntary contributions from Member States to help ensure that the project is delivered successfully within the scope, budget, and timeline. We call on Member States to support the construction projects through voluntary contributions, including in-kind contribution of technical experts, and also encourage ESCAP to remain actively engaged with Member States on this matter.
9. In conclusion, Thailand would like to assure you of our commitment to work constructively with other delegations in the deliberations on this important agenda item with a view to reach a positive outcome in a timely manner.

I thank you.