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71st session of the General Assembly

**Statement by H.E. Peter Thomson,
Paying tribute to the memory of His Majesty King Bhumibol Adulyadej of Thailand**

Secretary-General,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

This morning, we meet to pay tribute to His Majesty King Bhumibol Adulyadej of Thailand, who passed away on 13 October 2016.

His late Majesty King Bhumibol reigned for 70 years, making him one of the longest serving Monarchs in human history.

He was revered by his people, and admired throughout the world, for his grace, dignity and humility and steadfast dedication to his country and people.

At his Coronation, he declared “We shall reign with righteousness for the benefits and happiness of the Siamese people” – it was a commitment he worked tirelessly to fulfil throughout his life.

King Bhumibol was beloved as the “People’s King”, and through the thousands of development projects that he initiated over his lifetime, he oversaw a period of profound social, economic and development transformation across the country, significantly improving the livelihoods and wellbeing of the Thai people.

King Bhumibol was also a force for peace and unity within Thailand and the broader region and was a strong supporter of the multilateral system. His achievements throughout his life led to numerous awards from the United Nations and beyond, including the UN Development Programme’s first Human Development Lifetime Achievement Award, in 2006.

King Bhumibol was also a committed environmentalist. He played a leading role in the promotion of soil science and conservation and was a leader in sustainable land resource management.

Under King Bhumibol’s leadership, Thailand raised global awareness of the importance of soil as a resource for poverty reduction, climate change adaptation, sustainable development, and security.

In 2013, the General Assembly recognized these efforts by designating 5 December – the same date as the King’s birthday – as World Soil Day, as well as 2015 on the International Year of Soils.

King Bhumibol was one of the most venerated global leaders of our time. His profound legacy to people and nation of Thailand, and the world at large, will always be remembered.

On behalf of the General Assembly I extend our most sincere condolences to the Government, the Royal Family, and the people of Thailand, as we mourn His Majesty the King's passing.

Our hearts and thoughts are with the Thai people at this time.

I now request the General Assembly to rise to observe a minute of silence in memory of His Majesty King Bhumibol Adulyadej.