

**Statement**

**by**

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Ambassador, Permanent Representative of Thailand  
to the High-Level Meeting of the forty-ninth session  
of the Commission on the Status of Women**

**New York, 7 March 2005**

**Madame Chairperson,**

It is indeed a pleasure for my delegation to speak before you and many distinguished delegates both who are based in New York as well as those who have traveled from different corners of the globe to the Special Session of the High-level Meeting of the 49<sup>th</sup> Session of the Commission on the Status of Women. The holding of this special event offers a timely opportunity to jointly review the implementation of Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action formulated a decade ago. My delegation trusts that the outcome of this meeting would significantly contribute to the High-Level Plenary Meeting (HLPM), which will be held during the 60<sup>th</sup> Session of the UN General Assembly in September this year, by ensuring that gender issue is included as part and parcel of the deliberation of this very important high-level gathering. Before proceeding further, my delegation wishes to associate itself with the statement made last week by the Group of 77 and China, as well as join the others in welcoming the Ministerial Declaration adopted on Friday to reaffirm our commitment to the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action in the efforts to promote the advancement of women worldwide.

**Madame Chairperson,**

My delegation attaches great importance to the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action which has been a catalyst for the improvement of legal and institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women in our country.

The major legal achievement to promote the advancement of women in Thailand since the adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action is our present Constitution, adopted in 1997, which ensures equal rights for women and men in all aspects. Another step forward is the amendment in the law to grant married women the right to retain at their own choice the maiden name or to use their husband's family name. The promotion of advancement of women in Thailand would be further pursued by the future promulgation of other laws such as the draft Domestic Violence Act and the draft Prevention and Suppression of Human Trafficking Act which aim to better prevent, protect and assist women and girls from these contemporary forms of violence.

Institutional mechanisms to ensure gender equality have also been further strengthened since October 2002 with the establishment of the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security, under which the Office of Women's Affairs and Family Development is to act as the national machinery for the advancement of women in Thailand. The Ministry has also set up a provincial machinery to ensure that policies can be translated into practice at the

grassroots level. In addition, every ministry and department has set up mechanisms to promote gender equality and act as a bridging body with the national mechanisms on women to mainstream women's agendas in all policies and projects. In particular, the national women's machinery has continued its work in full partnership with academics, business sector, NGOs and local women's networks. This partnership is indispensable for harnessing the synergy needed to fulfill our commitment to the advancement of women in Thailand.

**Madame Chairperson,**

My delegation believes in the intrinsic linkages between the Beijing Declaration and its Platform for Action and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Our national policies and programmes are therefore designed in order to fulfil our commitments in these instruments in a holistic and complementary manner. At this juncture, allow my delegation to share with the Commission our experiences in the following areas:

**On poverty,** the MDGs aim to eradicate extreme poverty and hunger by 2015. In this area, my delegation is pleased to announce that the poverty rate in Thailand has declined remarkably from 27.2% in 1990 to 9.8% in 2002. In order to further our efforts in this matter, Thailand aims to reduce the poverty rate to less than 4% by 2009. With this target in mind, Thailand's development plans have been carried out in a way that ensure greater empowerment of women to promote their contribution to national development. Both women and men enjoy equal access to credit and loans under the assets capitalization scheme, nation-wide village fund, people's bank, micro-credits facilities, farmers' temporary debt suspension scheme, and SME incentive scheme. The Government also recognizes the importance of gender disaggregated data collection and is determined to improve on this critical matter.

In terms of **education**, Thai girls and boys enjoy equal opportunity in education. My delegation is proud to declare that our country has achieved Goal 3 of the MDGs by eliminating gender disparity in primary and secondary education. Although there might be a small gender gap at the primary level, girls are outnumbering boys in higher education.

**Madame Chairperson,**

While achievements have been made in certain areas, the number of **women in power and decision-making** is still relatively small, even though it is currently higher than in the past. Therefore, Thailand is striving to double the proportion of women in the national parliament, sub-district administrative

organizations and executive position in the civil service by 2006 as part of our ambition to fulfill the targeted MDG plus regarding gender equality.

On the issue of **health**, one of the Thai Government's priorities lies in solving the problem of HIV/AIDS. Although reported cases of HIV/AIDS have declined in general, the effect of HIV/AIDS on women, in particular the increasing number of young women affected by this deadly disease, still remains at the apex of our concern. In this regard, my delegation believes that international cooperation is the key to tackle and reverse the trend of this pandemic, with particular focus on affected women, and my delegation wishes to reiterate our strong support for greater international cooperation, including North-South and South-South cooperation.

With regard to **human trafficking**, in addition to strengthening legal and administrative measures, the highest level of Thailand's political will and commitment to the issue have been reflected in the proclaiming human trafficking as a national agenda and the allocation of greater resources to combatting the problem. However, most incidents of trafficking transcend the border of any one country. Thailand has, therefore, actively initiated and supported several measures to promote greater international cooperation, for instance through the signing of bilateral MOUs with neighboring countries to combat trafficking and assist victims of trafficking.

**Madame Chairperson,**

We have all traveled a long way 10 years after the 1995 Beijing Meeting, but our task is far from over. The Beijing Platform for Action has brought about many positive changes for women in probably every country. However, many challenges still exist, such as the lack of gender specific data, traditional perception towards women's roles, general negligence of gender needs, weak law enforcement, limited participation of men and boys to promote gender equality. In this regard, my delegation stands firm in our commitment to continue working closely with all sectors at the local, national, regional and international levels towards the full implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action and the advancement of the status of women worldwide.

**I thank you, Madame Chairperson.**