

# **The Government of Thailand's National Review**

**Implementation of the  
Beijing Declaration and Platform for  
Action (1995) and the outcomes of  
the twenty-third special session of  
the General Assembly (2000)**

**in the context of the  
twentieth anniversary of the Fourth  
World Conference on Women and  
the adoption of the  
Beijing Declaration and Platform for  
Action 2015**

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## **Section One: Overview analysis of achievements and challenges since 1995**

Thailand as a member of the global community has ratified numbers of international agreements on women and the promotion of gender equality, such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), and endorsed Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (BFPA) and the Millennium Development Goal (MDGs). These 3 agreements are definite, related, and corresponding to Thailand's policies. The Thai government has attached great importance to the social equality and to mainstream gender perspectives in the national policy, giving priority to the promotion of gender equality, women's role in politics and administration at all level, and the respect for human dignity.

Major achievements in promoting gender equality and empowering women in Thailand since the adoption of the Beijing Platform for Action in 1995 can be identified as follows:

### **National policy on gender equality and women empowerment**

Over the past few decades Thailand has implemented a total of nine short and long term women's development plans. Thailand has developed long-term (20-year) and, on a regular basis, short-term (5-year) Women's Development Plans, the national policy and guidelines on gender equality and the empowerment of women, as part of, and a key to integrate women and gender from the global, regional and national commitments into the mainstream of the National Economic and Social Development Plans. The Women's Development Plans have been brought to concrete action at every level of the society, and also worked as umbrella plans for the government departments' 5-year Master Plan on Gender Equality Promotion. Thailand is now implementing the Women's Development Plan in the 11<sup>th</sup> Economic and Social Development Plan (2012-2016). This Plan continues to hold to the principles of the Constitution of the Kingdom of Thailand, the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), the Beijing Declaration, the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), the Millennium Action Plan for the Advancement of Women, and international laws on human rights.

### **Reducing gender gaps through legislation that promote gender equality**

In Thailand, Women's rights have been enshrined as a core principle in the Constitution of the Kingdom of Thailand since 1997. Unjust treatment and discrimination against sex shall not be tolerated. Challenges concerning equality before the law include the knowledge of women on their rights according to the law. Thailand has continuously encouraged public knowledge of the law. Furthermore, legal assistance has been provided through competence authorities, for instance,

Justice Clinic under the Rights and Liberties Protection Department, Ministry of Justices and Legal Aid Office under the Office of the Attorney-General. There are some private organizations providing legal aid specifically for women including Women Lawyers' Association of Thailand under the Patronage of Her Majesty the Queen and Friends of Women Foundation.

Article 30 of the 2007 Thai Constitution guarantees equality between men and women (cross-referring to section 2 of the report). Efforts have been made to undertake legislative amendments and other relevant measures to ensure compliance with the provision. Article 81 (1), (2) and (5) of the Constitution also require the state to comply with the legislative and judicial policies and ensure fair, expedient and universal enforcement of such policies. The provisions require improvement of the working of the judicial process, promotion of legal assistance and knowledge to the general public and participation of the public and professional associations in the judicial process. The state is required to extend support to private organizations providing legal assistance to the public to improve equality in access to legal assistance, particularly those who are affected by violence in the family. According to the Civil and Commercial Code, men and women have equal rights in performing legal transactions, in asset management and in participation in judicial process.

In addition to equality before the law, Thailand has placed a particular attention to specific needs of women, particularly in terms of motherhood. The Criminal Procedures Code has been amended to improve protection for women and motherhood, reducing penalties for pregnant women offenders, effective 13 October 2007.

1) Article 246. Convicted women offenders and related persons (such as husbands, relatives, attorneys and competent officials under the law) may submit a request before the court to have penalties reduced for convicted women who are pregnant or have delivered their babies less than three years ago to give them opportunities to take care of their babies and receive appropriate treatment and care.

2) Article 247 paragraph 2 concerning women prisoners receiving the death penalty. The provision allows a grace period of three years, counting from the day of delivery. After giving birth, the capital punishment shall be reduced to life imprisonment to provide opportunity for taking care of their babies.

One of the challenges concerning equality before the law is the knowledge and access of women on the law. Efforts have been made to improve public awareness and knowledge of related officials of the law and rights of person. Legal assistance has been provided through such bodies as Justice Clinic, Rights and Liberties Protection Department and Legal Aid Office of the Attorney General. There are other private organization providing legal aid especially for women such as Women Lawyers' Association of Thailand under the Patronage of Her Majesty the Queen and Friends of Women Foundation.

A number of laws have been reviewed or adopted in recent years in order to improve gender equality and benefit for women. Progress made includes:

### **Protection during Betrothal**

Section 1445, 1446, and 1447/1 of Civil and Commercial Code has been amended to give equal right to both men and women in claiming compensation from any person who has had sexual intercourse or raped or attempted to rape his or her betrothed. The amended Code has entered in to effect on 13 September 2007.

### **Protection during Marriage**

Section 276 of the Criminal Code has been amended to broaden rape offences to cover marital rape, effective 20 September 2007.

Victims of Domestic Violence Protection Act of B.E. (A.D. 2007) has been issued in order to provide protection to victims of domestic violence and rehabilitation of offenders. The said Act also gives an importance on behavioral change and prevention of repeated offences in order to maintain family relationship. Procedures and methods in this regard are different from normal criminal cases.

### **Divorce**

The Civil and Commercial Code was amended to give equal right to husbands and wives to file divorce, effective 13 September 2007. The amended provision stipulates that if either husband or wife supports or honors another woman as wife or another man as husband or commits adultery or has sexual intercourse with another regularly, the other shall have the right to file divorce.

### **Bigamy**

Bigamy is prohibited under the Civil and Commercial Code. In this regards, the Ministry of Interior established an on-line information system for marital registration that links official registries throughout the country. The ministerial regulation on marital registration was also enacted in 1998 to allow registrars to record marital information and check a person's marital status before endorsing the registration of a marriage.

### **Management of asset**

According to the Civil and Commercial Code, husband and wife have the right to manage their own personal asset. For marital asset, there are cases as prescribed by law that both husband and wife have to manage jointly unless one of them does so with the consent of the other.

### **Tax rule**

In 2012, the Constitution Court struck down Revenue Code clauses that disallowed married women from including their non-earned income when filing a separate tax return. These clauses are viewed as unfair to married women, who have to pay more taxes than unmarried women because some of their income is combined with their husband's, which is usually taxed at a higher rate. In the

past, some women divorced their husbands to avoid paying higher taxes because of these clauses. The Revenue Code allows married women to file a tax return independent of their husbands for income from salaries, wages and pensions. The court ruled that Articles 57(3) and 57(5) contravened the charter's principle of equality and fair practice for all, as they treated married and unmarried women differently. With the verdict, married women are allowed to include non-earned income in their own personal tax returns.

### **Child guardianship**

Section 1566 of the Civil and Commercial Code stipulates that minors are to be under guardianship of their mothers and fathers. In case of divorce, such guardianship is subjected to the parents' agreement. If the agreement cannot be reached, the court will make a decision, considering the best interests of the child and his/her well-being.

### **Marital Designation**

The Form of Address for Woman Act B.E. 2551 (A.D.2008) gives the right to women to choose either to use "Miss" or "Mrs." voluntarily. In case of dissolution of marriage, a woman can also choose whichever title she wants to use.

### **Family name**

Women and men have equal right to choose family name. Formerly, a married woman was required by law to use her husband's family name upon marriage. Article 12 of the Name Act B.E. 2548 (A.D. 2005) stipulates that spouses have the right to choose either to use the other party's family name upon mutual agreement, or their own family names.

### **Gender Equality Bill**

The draft of the Gender Equality Bill has been approved and forwarded to the National Legislative Assembly for consideration. This bill will not only protect women from discrimination, but will also prohibit discrimination on the ground of sexual orientation. It will have a significant impact on legal framework for the advancement of equal opportunities and the eradication of gender discrimination in Thai society as a whole.

Thailand has withdrawn its reservation to Article 16 of the **Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)**, which guarantees the rights of women in all matters relating to marriage and family relations, such as the right to choose a spouse and to enter into marriage, the rights and responsibilities during marriage and at its dissolution, the rights and responsibilities as parents in matters relating to children, the rights to decide freely and responsibly on the number and spacing of children, the rights and responsibilities with regard to guardianship and adoption of children, the personal rights as husband and wife, including the right to choose a family name and a profession, and the rights in respect of property. The withdrawal has taken effect since 18 July 2012.

The Cabinet approved the withdrawal of Thailand's reservation to Article 16 on 10 April 2012, as proposed by the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security, based on the assessment that relevant laws have been revised to promote equal rights of women and men on matters concerning marriage and family relations. The withdrawal of the reservation to Article 16 of the CEDAW is part of Thailand's voluntary pledges during its review under the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) mechanism of the United Nations Human Rights Council (HRC) in October 2011. Thailand is committed to implementing its Obligations under the CEDAW in order to enhance human rights protection for and eliminate discrimination against all women in the country, as well as to continuously ensure progress on the implementation of the accepted UPR recommendations.

### **Progress in the elimination of all forms of violence against women**

Eradication of violence against women is indeed central to our ultimate aim of realizing a gender-equal society. Thailand joins the international community in strongly condemning all forms of violence against women, and reiterates our commitment to eradicating such violence in all of its forms.

Recognizing the importance of a comprehensive legal and policy framework to tackle violence against women, the Protection of Domestic Violence Act has been enacted since 2007 to guarantee comprehensive protection and assistance for victims as well as penalty measures against perpetrators. In addition, Thailand views a multi-sectoral approach as imperative for effective support and response to cases of violence against women and girls. In this regard, one stop crisis centers with multi-sectoral services have been set up nationwide to provide comprehensive assistance for victims. Additionally, Thailand also joins the international community in launching campaigns which aim at raising awareness and changing attitude which are the underlying causes of violence against women.

### **National mechanism and networks to promote gender equality and women empowerment**

The principle national mechanism for the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women in Thailand is the **Office of Women's Affairs and Family Development (OWAFD)**, which is a departmental level unit under the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security. Since its establishment in 2002, the OWAFD has progressed in various aspects while continuing to develop network with other associates for the work on women's affairs. It has become the national focal point for the promotion of gender equality and the strength of family institution by means of proposing policies, measures and mechanisms to support other units both in the public and private sectors to implement policies for the promotion of women's potentiality, the protection of women's rights, gender equality and equity.

Furthermore, the OWAFD also acts as the focal point for monitoring and preparing national report on the follow-up of the development of the quality of life and the status of Thai

women, as well as promoting and accelerating Thailand's implementation of the international obligations, agreements and cooperation.

As of 2014, OWAFD was staffed with 202 officials, of which 170 were women, and consists of Gender Equality Promotion Bureau, Family Development Bureau, Network Development Bureau and Central Administration Bureau. The annual budget as allocated by the Thai Government in the year 2014 is 330,000,000 baht (approximately US\$ 10.312 Million)

While the office is based in Bangkok, the OWAFD's works have been taken to the local level throughout networks such as networks of local administrative organizations, NGO, civil society, women and families' groups and networks. With the hosting of annual assemblies of provincial, regional and national women's network, this serves as a platform for the OWAFD to review the problems and progress in women's affairs, as well as a forum for suggestions and guidelines to reflect issues and challenges of women and their communities. This will lead to the development of measures for women's affairs at the national level.

With regard to decision-making process at the national level, the OWAFD, in its capacity as the national mechanism, is responsible for mobilizing opinions and policy suggestion from networks, and proposing for the consideration of the **National Commission on the Promotion and Coordination of Women's Affairs (NCPCWA)**, which consists of the Prime Minister, or the Deputy Prime Minister designated by the Prime Minister as the president of the Commission. Members of the NCPCWA include 15 committee and 11 experts in the fields of economics, social sciences, culture, the protection of women's human rights, gender equality promotion, mass media, healthcare and law. Policies, strategies and national plans on the promotion and coordination of women's affairs considered by the NCPCWA are to be directly submitted to the Cabinet for approval.

Some most recent policies on gender issues, which have been approved for implementation, are, for example, several measures taken by the Ministry of Transport in 2014 with the aim to boost the safety of female and child passengers on all modes of travel. The Airports of Thailand Plc. on August 12, 2014 launched a 'lady parking' area at its flagship Suvarnabhumi International Airport, with 450 parking slots have been made available under the scheme. With regards to travel on tour buses, coach company Nakhonchai Air has launched a 'lady zone' cluster of seats for female passengers on board tour buses in some of its routes. The Department of Land Transport also revealed it was studying the feasibility of a 'lady taxi' project, in which the taxi drivers are female. In addition to boosting the safety of female passengers, the project will also increase employment of women, enabling them to bring home more income.

The Thai Cabinet has approved paid leave of up to 15 days for male government officials whose wives have given birth to take care of the new mothers and babies since 2012. More efforts are under way, in collaboration with the Ministry of Labour, to encourage the private sector to introduce paternity leave, and to raise awareness on the importance of a father's role before and after birth.

Through collaboration between Office of the Civil Service Commission and the former Office of the National Commission on Women's Affairs under the Prime Minister's Office, the Cabinet approved in 2010 the establishment of Chief Gender Equality Officers (CGEOs) and Gender Focal Points (GFP) at the government departmental and ministerial levels including independent government agencies. The CGEOs and GFPs work as an institutional mechanism to pass through gender sensitivity and to promote gender mainstreaming into government agencies' policies, planning and budgeting processes. The government departments and ministries, as the GFPs, have been entrusted to formulate their Five- Year Master Plan on Gender Equality Promotion in the Women's Development Plan.

Non-governmental organizations, the academics and civil society have important roles to play in the efforts to eliminate discrimination against women and promote gender equality. There have been public-private partnerships in many initiatives, such as the partnership between Friends of Women Foundation and Sukhothai Thammathirat Open University, in collaboration with UN Women, to develop a model to strengthen a multi-sectoral coordination mechanism at the provincial level as well as to develop community systems to prevent and address violence against women in communities and conduct research and studies on women issues. In addition, a women development committee has been established at the provincial, district and sub-district levels since 1995 to increase involvement of women in economic, social and political development of the country. And women organizations and networks have strengthened their partnerships, as illustrated by Women Networks Reshaping Thailand which was formed with the aim of increasing participation of women in national decision making processes. Gender equality and women development projects and activities have been conducted with technical and financial support from the government.

Besides, integrating gender in public sector, Thailand realizes that gender equality should begin within family, the basic socialization unit of society particularly children and youth. Thus, the **Gender in Family** Project has been formulated since 2007. The project aims to create respect, responsibility, and relationship in family with gender aspects such as sharing household responsibility and living together with respecting on human rights and human dignity. CDs and booklets on Gender in Family have been distributed for public and private organizations to raise awareness on this important issue.

**Major challenges in the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of women** still remain in the following areas:

Although Thai women enjoy a relatively high degree of freedom, gender inequality still manifests in violence against women, trafficking, stereotype attitudes on employment and roles between women and men, as well as unequal participation in social and economic development. The challenges remain that some are still not fully aware of direct and indirect gender discrimination and substantive gender equality in society. In addition, some media reproduce stereotype of women and men. Raising awareness and improving the status of women are our main priorities in the Women Development Plan.



Despite the fact that the importance of gender budgeting has been acknowledged, and the implementation of the work plan on gender budgeting has been going on well in Thailand, many challenges still lay ahead. But more can be undertaken, especially by enhancing the knowledge and understanding in gender budgeting, as well as promoting the related sex-disaggregated data. Furthermore, a monitoring system for gender budgeting should be put in place. Policy makers, officers and program coordinators need to have more gender awareness. To respond to this challenge, gender budgeting has been introduced through training and establishing network, recently with the collaboration from UN Women and King Prajadhipok's Institute. Various workshops and seminars have been conducted to provide knowledge and understanding on gender budgeting.

Despite the fact that women play a vital role in the nation's economy, this inclusion is not extended to politics, in which women are still underrepresented, especially at senior levels. In 2011 Member of Parliament, women make up just 16%, or 79 seats out of 500 although they represent more than half of Thailand's population. Moreover, women hold just a small percentage of executive positions in local, village and sub-district administrations.

Thailand has taken many initiatives to increase the participation of women in politics over the past years, through partnership and collaboration among government agencies, non-governmental organizations and women networks. Efforts have been made to improve knowledge, understanding and skills of women on the constitution and relevant laws and the importance of women's participation in politics and administrative functions. Training and workshops have been organized for women on local government administration to prepare women candidates before elections.

In addition, efforts are also made to promote changes in attitudes to recognize the contributions that women can make for the advancement of the country.

**What main in-country, bilateral, sub-regional and/or regional cooperation is the country engaged in to support sharing of knowledge and experiences in the monitoring and implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcomes of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly?**

Thailand is party to a variety of bilateral, multilateral, sub-regional, regional, international and global cooperation and is one among the countries where many regional and international organizations are located. Development cooperation has been an integral part of Thailand's foreign policy. As a development partner and a former recipient country, Thailand has the advantage of understanding the challenges of development and the unique needs of developing countries. As a development partner, Thailand recognizes the importance of fostering partnerships for development and has been an active regional player in assisting other countries in the monitoring and implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action.

Thailand is one of the founders and active members of ASEAN. Recognizing and reaffirming the importance of women and their participation in development, ASEAN Member

States have been supportive of efforts to promote the status of women and have participated actively in the regional and international arena pertaining to women's advancement.

Under the framework of the ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Women (AMMW), the strong link in government and non-government partnerships is illustrated in close partnerships with a number of key international organizations in working for gender equality and advancement, and eliminating violence and discrimination against women. ASEAN Member States have achieved various accomplishments in addressing women's issues. The AMMW has convened various regional workshops, seminars, training sessions and consultative meetings that provided platforms for government officials, civil society organizations, professionals and other stakeholders to exchange views, share experiences and build commitments and a common understanding on various gender issues.

Under the framework of the ASEAN Committee on Women (ACW) and the ASEAN Commission on the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Women and Children (ACWC). Thailand works in partnership with other ASEAN members to close gender gaps in accordance to the Beijing critical areas of concerns. The ACW work plan 2011-2015 and the ACWC 2012-2016, for instance, cover such areas as the elimination of violence against women, women in politics and decision making, women and education, women and health, women and the economy and women and the environment. ACW and ACWC work to promote and implement the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women and Elimination of Violence Against Children in ASEAN, adopted on 9 October 2013, which reaffirms the goals and commitments of ASEAN to eliminate violence against women and monitor their progress as reflected in the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women in the ASEAN region adopted in 2004.

In terms of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC), of which Thailand is also one of the founding members, the APEC Policy Partnership on Women and the Economy (PPWE) was established in 2011 to provide a mechanism to integrate gender considerations into APEC activities. It also provides policy advice on gender issues and supports gender equality where relevant to the APEC process.

**How, and to what extent, have the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) overall, and in particular the gender-related MDGs, facilitated or strengthened the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action?**

The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) adopted by the world leaders is a concrete testimony of a shared commitment to improving the standard of living for people around the world. In the broadest sense, the MDGs presented a set of goals and targets for improving people's well-being and reducing poverty. Thailand has integrated MDG indicators as one of the indicators for monitoring the implementation of our National Development Plans, including the MDG 3 Plus indicators on gender equality. These indicators include, for example, an increase in the proportion of

women in politics and public decision making, poverty reduction, and closing the income gap between women and men. Fourteen years have passed and Thailand has significant progress on certain Goals, especially eradicating extreme poverty and achieving universal primary education, while others goals such as environmental sustainability are still under performing.

Gender Equality and women's empowerment are central to achieving the MDGs because without these capabilities and opportunities, women are less able to reach their full potential, live a life of dignity, and be productive citizens. However, gender is only explicit in MDGs 3 and 5. MDG 3 measures gender parity in education and the proportion of seats held by women in national legislatures, while MDG5 focuses on maternal mortality and, since 2005, on universal access to reproductive health. This explicit inclusion in just 2 MDGs is too narrow. The limitations are compounded by the gender-blindness of other MDG indicators, and the fact that the gender dynamics that cut across the goals are relatively invisible in policy dialogues. This leads us to the point: incorporating gender perspective into national and regional policies and enhance women's participation in projects.

While the three indicators under Goal 3 reflect important dimensions of gender inequality, the narrow focus of Goal 3 fails to address such critical issues as violence against women, inequalities in the division of unpaid care work, women's limited access to assets, violations of women's and girls' sexual and reproductive health and rights, and their unequal participation in private and public decision making beyond national parliaments. Unless all dimensions of gender inequality are addressed, the overall Millennium Development Goal of gender equality and women's empowerment, and to a broader extent, the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action cannot be achieved.

## **Section Two: Progress in the implementation of the critical areas of concern of the Platform for Action since 2009**

### **A. Women and poverty**

Thailand successfully achieved the Millennium Development Goals target to halve the poverty rate. Poverty reduction in Thailand has been continuously improving. In 2009 there were 12.3 million persons, or 17.9 per cent of the total population, living in poverty, as measured by the national poverty line. In 2012 the number was reduced to 8.4 million, or 12.6 per cent of the total population.

Considerable progress has been made regarding rural development and the elimination of poverty in Thailand. The Thai Government's poverty-reduction programmes can be classified in the

following categories: (a) programmes to support the cost of living, such as the Blue Flag Programme (Thong Fah), the programme to support compulsory education and the Energy Credit Card; (b) programmes to promote employment, raise income and create income stability through the B300 minimum wage policy, the B15,000 salary for holders of the bachelor's degree, price raises for agricultural produce and community vocational-training centres; (c) programmes to promote funding accessibility in order to create jobs through the Village/Urban Community Funds, Thai Women Empowerment Funds and the Business Fund; and (d) programmes to improve welfare through increases in allowances for the elderly and persons with disabilities, and expansion of social security coverage to include the informal sector.

Nevertheless, the underprivileged people, especially those who live in rural area and women, still could not claim for equal benefit from the country's economic development as others. 'Feminization of poverty' or the situation when most of the poorest people in the society are women remains a challenge in Thailand.

Factors contributing to women's poverty are limitation of access to resources and services: credit, land, assets, education and training, information, welfare, as well as pay gap. Labour mobility, specifically migration of male family members into big cities, divorces, pregnancy out of wedlock, women being neglected by their husband, and the fact that more females prefer to remain single are some of the reasons. This is partly due to the fact that women in Thailand are still under represented in decision-making and higher-administrative positions, both at the local and national levels. As a result, many decisions that have been made on important issues/areas based on insufficient gender perspectives and consideration e.g. the allocation of micro credits, utilization of the village fund, or selection process of participants in the new vocational training programmes.

Our future challenges lay in promoting and enhancing cooperation and collaboration among various stakeholders in Thailand, which involves the creation of awareness and recognition of feminization of poverty as the issue that concerns not only women or children, but virtually everyone in the society

## **B. Education and training of women**

Thailand already achieved the target of eliminating gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2005. However, Thailand has yet to achieve universal primary education, although the country's gross enrolment rate has exceeded 100 per cent since 2009. The net enrolment rate continued to be lower than the targeted 100 per cent. In 2012 the net enrolment rate was 87.64 per cent. The combination of over-100 per cent gross enrolment rate with the lower-than-100 per cent net enrolment rate indicates that some students started school late. However, the programmes to reduce over aged students and to retain them should be immediately and continuously implemented such that the universal primary education target is reached by 2015.

Despite the fact that the 12-year free compulsory education has been provided for every child in Thailand regardless of their sex according to laws, and national statistics in 2007 reveal that

the numbers of female and male enrollment in all levels of education are equal, or very slightly different, women and girls, especially those in disadvantaged families in rural areas of Thailand, are still less educated than men and boys. This is due to high school dropout rates of girls before completing their primary or secondary education for reasons such as the need to work to earn income for the family, or to take care of young, disabled or elderly members in the family. As a consequence, these girls may end up missing the opportunity to be educated and to earn higher income as they grow up.

According to the study conducted by Ministry of Education in the past five year, women tend to prefer health and welfare, humanity, art, social science, business administration, law and science faculties whereas engineering and agriculture faculties were mostly dominated by men. Also, at the vocational education level, male students outnumbered female students.

There have been many positive developments as far as women's opportunity in education is concerned. Gender Mainstreaming in Royal Police Cadet Academy was initiated in 2009, which the Academy has provided an opportunity for women to study after its 107 years of establishment. The Royal Police Cadet Academy and the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security signed a Memorandum of Understanding to jointly integrate gender perspectives in the academy's curriculum to create awareness and understanding on gender issues as well as having gender sensitivities.

**Minimizing Prejudices in Education** In 2015, Thailand will play a host for 2 projects under the ASEAN Committee on Women (ACW) Work Plan, as the country coordinator for the "Regional Meeting on engendering school curriculum with a view to eliminate stereotyping women and sexist languages" as well as to publish a sourcebook on Best Practices in Engendering the Curriculum. The latter will be in collaboration with Indonesia and the Philippines. The recognition of gender equality and the commitment to eliminate gender prejudices has long been a priority for the Thai government. Regional efforts and cooperation are much needed to minimize gender bias, which are one of the root causes of gender inequality.

To prepare for the upcoming project in engendering the curriculum, and according to the recent meeting of the National Committee on the Women Development Policy and Strategy, the Ministry of Education has been entrusted to be in charge of the curriculum "Gender Roles" to be taught in schools nationwide, starting from primary level. Furthermore, a team of researchers at the National Institute of Development Administration has conducted a research on "Gender Perspectives in Thai Education", which was first presented in September 2014.

The study is based on the concept that schools and educational institutes play a highly significant role in instilling the value of gender equality for the youth. If negative messages such as sexism, gender bias and sex-role stereotypes go unchallenged in school texts, these negative norms of behavior and attitude could be institutionalized and gradually become part of our social and cultural code. This paper presents the preliminary findings of an on-going research study that documents the

extent of gender bias and linguistic sexism in selected primary and secondary school textbooks. The findings indicate a strong presence of gender bias and linguistic sexism in the language and content of educational materials such as textbooks and practice books. It is hoped that this paper will raise awareness and develop critical thinking not only about the issue of gender role stereotypes in Thai school textbooks but also to create awareness for a new, more acceptable, harmonious and equitable notion of the world for the equal place of both males and females in it.

### **C. Women and health**

Thailand has significantly invested in people through human capital development initiatives, such as the Life Cycle Development Strategy, and health-care initiatives, such as the Universal Health Care Scheme. Universal health coverage, which Thailand achieved as early as 2002, ensures equitable entitlement to health care for all Thais and has been integral to Thailand's advances in attaining the Millennium Development Goals on health. Thailand's national health security system, provided through three major programmes, covers services ranging from health promotion and disease prevention to rehabilitation according to the medical indication, with or without minimum charge. In 2013, 47.24 million of 64 million, or 75.29 per cent, of Thais are covered by the universal coverage scheme, 15.24 per cent are covered by social security and 7.89 per cent are covered by the civil service welfare system. Universal coverage has made it possible for the poor to have access to health-care services without charge, for children to remain eligible for vaccines, for mothers to have access to prenatal and postnatal care, and for HIV-infected patients to have access to treatment.

The maternal mortality rate declined from 38.5 per thousand live births in 2008 to 31.8 per thousand live births in 2010, reflecting medical progress and improved accessibility by mothers to health services. Also, the Sai Yai Rak Project, which promotes quality antenatal, delivery room and post-delivery care and skills training for care personnel, and enables mothers and children to have wide access to both health-care and vaccination services. During the same period, the infant mortality rate also decreased in line with wider health-care coverage including pre-maternity medical care and counselling. This helps reduce genetic diseases and improve children's health and live births.

Despite achievements in various areas of access to health care for all, challenges still remain such as the high maternal mortality rates in the highlands particularly the issues of pregnancy in women below 20 years of age and post-delivery care. As to birth control, Thailand has a contraceptive usage rate of 80 per cent as of 2009, which is equivalent to that in developed countries. Despite this fact, underage pregnancy has been increasing. Teenage pregnancy has increased from 31 per thousand women from 15 to 19 years of age in 2000 to 53 per thousand in 2012. Programmes to reduce underage pregnancy include the One Stop Crisis Centre, providing consulting services to underage pregnant women, and the establishment of teenage clinics throughout the country by the Ministry of Public Health to promote sex education, general health care and birth control.

Given an increasing trend of adolescent pregnancy, working with various NGOs, the Royal Thai Government has stepped up its efforts on the prevention in order to minimize its further negative consequences such as (a) the impact on health in terms of physical immaturity, sexually transmitted infection, abortion and risks to the newborn's health, as well as the mental stress of pregnancy and parenting, (b) the impact on education, as pregnant adolescents usually drop out of school (although they are able to return to school after giving birth, the interruption negatively affects the single adolescent mother's capacity and ability to generate income in the future), and (c) economic and social burden to parents, societies, and governments. In addition, the government implemented breast cancer awareness campaign through the training of over 1 million volunteers by June 2013 to facilitate effective sharing of knowledge and breast cancer self examination. The campaign is expected to reach out to at least 20 million women by the end of the year 2014.

#### **D. Violence against women**

All constitutions of Thailand since 1997 specifies equal rights between women and men and bars all forms of discrimination on the basis of sex, race, age and status, among others. According to Protection of Domestic Violence Act 2007, women and children are also guaranteed to enjoy full rights for appropriate treatment in gender-based violence court cases as well as for protection from the state in order to have life free of violence and discrimination. Efforts have been made to eliminate violence against women both in the domestic setting and in the workplace.

a) The Act on the Protection of Victims of Domestic Violence 2007 focuses on the protection of family members from all forms of violence in accordance with the human rights framework. It also protects the right of related persons from media exposure. The DV Act has special characteristics which are different from those of the Criminal Code, which emphasizes punishment rather than rehabilitation and recovery behavior treatment for the offenders. The Act is more appropriate to protect the DV victims by giving the offenders a chance to change and refrain from re-offending as well as maintaining good relationship with the family. The Act specifies proper approaches to end domestic violence through temporary relief measures (such as enforcing medical treatment programs for perpetrators or setting forth childcare arrangements) and initial settlement record made prior to withdrawal of charge or prosecution, whereby the offenders are obliged to comply with a condition/conditions within an appropriate period identified in such settlement record. Moreover, under the law the roles of concerned agencies as multi-disciplinary, as well as legal mechanism such as officers, investigators and reconcilers, have been identified to fulfill its effective enforcement. The law also stipulates that any person witnessing a violent act has a duty to report to concerned officers without delay. Domestic violence is, therefore, no more a private matter but involving social and public responsibility.

The Act on the Protection of Victims of Domestic Violence 2007 was implemented in November 2007, and Ministerial Regulation 2010 specifies that follow-up and monitoring of the implementation of mechanisms involved must be carried out. The Office of Women's Affairs and Family Development (OWAFD) serves as a policy body responsible for the formulation of policy and national action plans as well as support and follow-up of activities initiated under the policy and action plan, including implementation of monitoring work done by competent officers and investigators.

OWAFD has performed the follow-up and monitoring of the aforesaid activities/work through various approaches: seminars, focus groups and questionnaires as well as some visits to local pilot areas. The National Sub-committee provides suggestion to related government agencies and contributes to formulating policy and guidelines of activities and best practices to ensure the successful enforcement of the law.

Thailand has made progress in the implementation of prevention, and protection and to violence against women, particularly domestic violence. To reach its goals various approaches through joint activities between government agencies and NGOs have been carried out, including the enforcement of the related laws, regulations and measures as well as improvement of the laws discriminating against women and coordination of multi-disciplinary teams to ensure the comprehensive protection and rehabilitation system, as well as monitoring of the implementing of the DV Act. Among these are:

- Enhance capacity building and skill development for practitioners of law and relevant authorities such as Ministry of Public Health, National Police Bureau and Office of the Attorney-General are promoted to increase their understanding of the practical issues including legal procedures, rehabilitation and referral systems.

- Providing financial and technical support to the 77 Operating Centers for the Protection of Domestic Violence, which will perform its tasks in promoting awareness, providing counseling services, and referring cases.

- Support the implementing agencies at all levels through the sharing, organization and integration of activities to develop the right protection and support systems, as well as, surveillance at the provincial and community level to deal with the problem. In 2010, the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security, with the kind support of Her Royal Highness Bajrakittiyabha, arranged for the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding on Ending Domestic Violence with 10 government agencies for cooperation in the implementation of the DV Act.

- Initiate guidelines of operation to help the victims by integrating three Acts namely: the DV Act 2007, the Child Protection Act 2003, and the Prevention and Suppression of Human Trafficking Act 2008 to form the model. This model will be a comprehensive protection and support system to help the victims. It has been piloted in 8 provinces in the upper North of Thailand.



- Coordinate with the United Nations Country Team Thailand in the implementation of the UN Joint Program “*Every Home a Safe Home: Supporting Thailand towards Effective Implementation of Protection of Domestic Violence Victims Act B.E. 2550 (2007)*”. The program was funded by the UN Trust Fund to End Violence Against Women. The Program aims to support effective implementation of the Domestic Violence Law. Additionally, it focused on studies and development of multi-stakeholders coordination mechanism and capacity development modules for officials involved in the implementation of the law, development of a coordinated system of data collection and analysis, including violence against women indicators that are in accordance with the international standard as well as development of sensitization programmes and modules for young people in schools to promote the culture of zero tolerance to violence against women and girls.

- Encourage public understanding and awareness of legal rights and benefits of the law through dissemination of the related information in various forms of media including website.

- Develop data information system on violence against children, women and those in the family under the website: [www.violence.in.th](http://www.violence.in.th). Furthermore, in this regard, there has been an attempt to put in place a systematic data collection of different organizations involved, such as the Police, the Office of the Attorney-General, the Office of the Judiciary and the Operating Center for the Protection of Domestic Violence so that it can be utilized for further studies and analysis.

-In 2013, Thailand was the first ASEAN country to have signed on to the UN Women global campaign COMMIT to End Violence Against Women, in which Thailand commits to develop a national strategy; promulgate, revise and implement laws as well as capacity building of related officials; engage in community mobilization and foster culture of gender equality and respect for human rights as well as transform beliefs, attitude and behaviors that condone violence against women and girls through school curricular and education programmes and instructional materials and approaches ensuring gender equality

#### *Measures of social protection*

1) Promote public awareness in the social mainstream of violence against children, women and other family members, including social mobilization through all forms of proactive campaigns to end such violence. In Thailand, since 2000, November is publicly announced as the month of campaign, where all sectors concerned have organized related activities. People, especially men, are encouraged to participate in the event and pin the White Ribbon as the universal symbol of “no acceptance, no ignorance and no act of violence against women, children and family members”

Thailand is most fortunate in that under the gracious leadership of Her Royal Highness Bajrakittiyabha, the UN Women Goodwill Ambassador, partners have come together and shown commitment to end violence against women and children. Under the leadership of Her Royal Highness, Thailand gathered over 3 million signatures for the UNIFEM Say No to Violence against Women Campaign in 2008 and over 600,000 actions for the UNIFEM Say No-UNiTE Campaign in 2010. Her Royal Highness also launched the

Asia Pacific Component of the UN Secretary-General's UNiTE Campaign to End Violence against Women in November 2010 whereby the Prime Minister of Thailand expressed the country's commitment to UNiTE.

2) Initiate activities to change bias attitudes towards gender issues and to increase more awareness of gender-based violence amongst authorities and practitioners enforcing the law through integration of the gender knowledge into training modules.

3) Enhance network agencies at all levels to increase the potential of people having access to their legal rights. This includes the provision of counseling services, public hearing from people, stakeholders and those working in the protection system.

4) Establish the Community-based Centers of Family Development, the organization of people sector. In 2012, there are 6,795 Centers' works which are primarily focused on promoting a warm and caring family setting, being watchdogs of violence, protection and support of the victims or those at risk of domestic violence, as well as promotion of learning centers for families.

#### *Measures of rescue and rehabilitation*

Government agencies in cooperation with their network, including NGOs, have carried out activities such as case conferences to share working experiences and find the solution to the cases. They work together in the form of multi-disciplinary teams to protect and rescue the victims from gender-based violence:

- The One Stop Crisis Centre or OSCC, is a multidisciplinary unit that provides comprehensive services for victims of violence in Thailand. Based in hospitals, the centre is equipped not only with medical doctors and nurses, but also representatives from the Royal Thai Police, the Office of the Attorney-General, NGOs, emergency shelters, and from the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security. As a result, victims will get access to immediate services and assistance. An OSCC usually assumes multifunctional roles. The centre receives reported cases of VAW, and coordinates with other units (e.g. police stations, courts or relevant ministries) if need be. Additionally, some OSCCs provide VAW information, mental supports and advice along with the physical treatments. The counseling and psychological care, free medical and healthcare services, as well as free legal advice and referrals are also available at the OSCCs.

- The launch of Thailand's pioneering IT-equipped One Stop Crisis Centre in April 2013 reinforced the continuing efforts to prevent and protect against violence against women and girls after Thailand joined UN Women on its newest global initiative COMMIT. The national initiative provides immediate social assistance to children, women, elderly and persons with disabilities who confront problems of human trafficking, gender-based violence, child labour and teenage pregnancy. The One Stop Crisis Centre (OSCC) initiative includes a Hotline managed by trained staff and supported by interpreters of neighboring countries' languages, a network of 22,000 crisis centers around the country and 1,300 mobile units to access nationwide communities.

- Prachabodee Center or 24 hr. Hotline 1300. The Ministry of Social Development and Human Security has established the 24-hour hotline service also known as the *Prachabodi Centre*.

The hotline telephone number is 1300. Located in Bangkok, the hotline centres principle functions is to receive report on cases of violence, then coordinate with the organizations/units concerned, notably the Department of Social Development and Welfare in Bangkok, and the Provincial Office of Social Development and Human Security in other provinces. The agencies will coordinate in directing the witnesses/victims/survivors of violence to appropriate services i.e. medical treatments, legal services or other forms of assistances. Moreover, the service is available for all victims of all forms of violence regardless of their nationalities.

- Emergency Home for Children and Family. There are 77 Emergency Homes established in all provinces under the Social Development and Welfare Department as temporary shelters for children and family members in need of assistances and protection. Within the shelters, victims are to be provided counseling service and protection as well as fundamental support. The Emergency Homes have also coordinated with local agencies concerned with referral of the cases. In addition to the above shelters, there are also other emergency homes managed by NGOs such as the Association of the Promotion of the Status of Women.

- The Department of Social Development and Welfare of the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security has allocated an annual budget for rehabilitation/empowerment programmes for women and children who are victims of violence at the **Kredtrakarn Centre for Women and Girls Protection and Career Development**, located in Nontaburi province. The Centre provides compulsory education for women and girls, as well as career training in various areas e.g. culinary skills, hospitality services, and production of handicrafts.

b) In addition, laws and regulations have been enforced to protect women from sexual harassment in the workplace. For example, the Labor Protection Act 2008 version no.2 has been extended to cover the protection of employees, both men and women, and child labor from sexual abuse and harassment as well as sexual distress. Under the Civil Service Regulation Act 2008, it states that “Civil Servants are obliged not to perform any violation or sexual harassment...” Although those in informal labor sectors are not included, there is an attempt to draft the law on sexual harassment in the workplace to protect female labor in the informal sector, including domestic workers and others.

### **E. Women and armed conflict**

While there is **no internal armed conflict in Thailand**, the government attaches importance to the Women, Peace and Security agenda, especially on the integration of a gender perspective in all UN peacekeeping missions and increased participation of women in all stages of peace operations. The presence of female peacekeepers on the ground could provide more comfort to local women and children, particularly those female victims of violations.

Since Thailand has joined the UN as a member state in 1946, more than 20,000 Thai military and police personnel, both male and female, have been deployed and served in more than 20 UN peacekeeping and related missions. Currently, Thai military officers are serving in UNAMID

(Darfur, Sudan), UNMOGIP (India and Pakistan), and UNOCI (Cote d'Ivoire), while Thai police forces are serving in UNMISS (South Sudan), MINUSTAH (Haiti) and UNMIL (Liberia) symbolizing Thailand's active role in UN Peacekeeping Mission abroad.

Moreover, in March and July 2014, Thailand hosted two side-events in New York, namely seminars on "Increasing Women's Contribution to Peace and Security" and on "Increasing the Role of Women in Post-Conflict Reconstruction, from Relief to Development" respectively, aiming at providing opportunities to stimulate discussion among various stakeholders on the issue of increasing female participation at all levels of UN peace operations.

At the national level, the Sub-committee on Women and the Promotion of Peace and Security, established in September 2012, with the OWAFD, Ministry of Social Development and Human Security as its secretariat, is responsible for formulating policies and setting measures to promote and protect women's rights, strengthening women's participation in peace and security as well as ensuring that women enjoy their fundamental human rights. Strategies on Women, Peace and Security were drafted in 2013, which is being considered by the Sub-Committee.

## **F. Women and the economy**

According to the National Statistical Office, in 2008, women at the age higher than 15 worked and contributed to around 45 percent of the National Income in Thailand. If domestic work is included, women's economic contribution accounted as high as 50 percent of the GDP. Recognising the increasing role of women in the workforce and the economy, the Royal Thai Government has strived to strengthen its relevant legislation to ensure their equal economic rights and opportunities.

Thailand adopts international instruments as frameworks for the promotion of equality in work, notably the ILO Convention No. 122 on employment policy which aims at ensuring that there is freedom of choice of employment and the fullest possible opportunity for each worker to qualify for, and to use skills and endowments in, a job, irrespective of race, colour, sex, religion, political opinion, national extraction or social origin. The Labour Protection Act (No. 3) of 2008 has been enforced to ensure equal wages for both women and men in accordance with their skills and capabilities. Efforts have been made to increase women's access to skills development to gain better wages by encouraging workplaces to offer additional training for their workers under the school in factory project, set ratio of women to men for training participants and improve skills of workers already recruited.

Labour Protection Act of 1998 and its Amendment of 2008 were enacted to provide better protection to women and children, addressing key issues as follows:

Labour Protection Act of 1998	Amendment (No. 2) of 2008
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ● Protection of rights of female and male employees under the principle of equal work for equal pay, including wage, overtime and compensation for work at weekends.</li> <li>• The act also prescribe equal minimum wage for workers regardless of nationality, religion or sex.</li> <li>•</li> <li>• ● Gives importance to women and child workers in the transitory provisions concerning female workers and child labour.</li> <li>•</li> <li>• ● Protection to pregnant female workers concerning inappropriate work, working hours, termination of contract and maternity leave.</li> <li>•</li> <li>• ● Protection against sexual harassment.</li> <li>•</li> <li>● Penalties for employers, ranging from a fine of no more than 5,000 Baht and imprisonment of one year (discriminatory practices) to a fine of no more than 200,000 Baht or both (child labour).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ● Maximum working hours of no more than eight hours per day and 48 hours per week.</li> <li>•</li> <li>• ● Protection for sub-contract workers doing the same work as contract workers to receive fair remuneration and welfare on a non-discriminatory basis.</li> <li>•</li> <li>• ● Revise categories of inappropriate works to allow women to perform such works if not harmful to their health.</li> <li>•</li> <li>• ● Pregnant workers are prohibited from working during 22:00-06:00 hours, working during weekends and public holidays, with exception to female workers holding executive, academic, administrative and accounting positions where such works do not impact on their health and with consent from pregnant workers.</li> <li>•</li> <li>• ● Children below 18 years are prohibited from working in sex-related venues.</li> <li>● Broadening protection against sexual harassment to cover both female and male employees.</li> </ul>

Following the introduction of the Social Security Act of 1990, equal numbers of female and male workers were able to access social security fund in 2009, at 50.07 per cent and 49.92 per cent for female and male workers, respectively. (Source: Social Security Office). The Social Security Act was also revised to expand benefits to informal workers, a large number of whom are women, under Article 40 with co-financing from the state.

In November 2012, the Ministerial Regulation No. 14 under the Labour Protection Act was announced, increasing rights and protection of domestic workers, the majority of whom are women. In accordance the Ministerial Regulation, domestic workers are allowed one holiday after six consecutive days of work, 13 traditional holidays per year, and 6 annual leave days.

### **Promotion of entrepreneurial culture**

In terms of women's economic participation, Thailand is one among the countries that provide most opportunities for women to be executives in the private sectors. According to Grant Thornton's research in 2011, Thai women hold 45 percent of executive position, while there are 30 percent of women CEOs.

In 2009, SMEs are a critical component of Thailand's economy, comprising 78 percent of employment, 43 percent of non-agricultural GDP and 30 percent of exporters. Thailand's proportion of working-age females participating in the labour market is 64 percent. Women constitute 47 percent of Thailand's business people. A 2010 study by MasterCard Worldwide found that women-owned SMEs in Thailand contributed approximately 38 percent of the national GDP and that their businesses had an annual growth-rate of 2.25 percent compared to 0.31 percent among SMEs owned by men.

According to the *Global Entrepreneurship Monitor 2007*, social and cultural mores in Thailand have encouraged and supported female participation in the workforce, which explains the high prevalence rates of women's entrepreneurship. Women have played roles as owner, executives and employees in the enterprises. Statistically, a notable feature of Thai entrepreneurship is the equitable proportion of male to female TEA (Total Early-Stage Entrepreneurship)<sup>1</sup>. This may be caused by the fact that, in Thailand, gender is not necessarily perceived as an impediment to business success.

However, GEM revealed that women still face barriers to starting, sustaining and growing their businesses. In addition, certain industry restrictions, cultural expectations, and their areas of expertise may have impacted on how Thai women's businesses tend to be concentrated in the lower-earning sectors such as retail, hospitality and personal services.

From the Department of Industrial Promotion's statistics, there were 49 percent new entrepreneurs in the market during the year 2008-2009, of which 46 percent were women. In this

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<sup>1</sup> Global Entrepreneurship Monitor, 2011

light, the Women SME Association of Thailand has been established in the year 2007 to promote accesses to the markets for women entrepreneurs, and to promote strength of networks of female entrepreneurs. Also, the Women Enterprise Incubation Center to provide advice for women entrepreneurs, and to organize activities to promote motivation, to develop the body of knowledge on business and E-learning kit to promote capacity building for women in career and earning their living, access to information and rights (Office of SME Promotion, 2011) Another strategy that may significantly improve Thai women's social equity is the government's stipulated policies to encourage labour in the informal sector to be registered and included in the social security system by at least 50 percent and to assist disadvantaged people to have more access to loans, resources, employments, which will increase their incomes by at least 50 percent in 2016.

Furthermore, the policy to facilitate access to finance for entrepreneurs, essentially for SMEs and micro-enterprises has been driven and supported by various financial institutions, both in the public and private sectors, such as the Bank of Agriculture and Agricultural Cooperatives (BAAC) and the SME Bank. The latter was set up under the supervision of the Department of Industrial Promotion, Ministry of Industry, to provide financial support to small manufacturing businesses, while the BAAC is a state enterprise under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Finance. Its primary objective is to enhance social and economic well-being of Thailand's agricultural population through financial services in the form of loans for agricultural production, investment and marketing. It has played significant roles in boosting rural economy and finance; creating jobs and value addition along the agricultural supply chain.

Nevertheless, while women are taking up more roles in the economy, men and the society are still expecting women to do their traditionally expected gender roles in the household. Survey of time consumption of Thai population by the National Statistical Office revealed that women had less free time than men and spent more time on household work than men. In addition, women spent more time than men taking care of family members, resulting in less spare time than men. Women's "double burden" in this respect is an important hindrance prohibiting women from enjoying their full potential in the public sphere.

### **G. Women in power and decision-making**

Despite prominent increasing role of women in private sector and entrepreneurship, challenges remain in promoting women's roles in power and public decision-making. Women's representation in the parliament is low, and so is participation at a higher level of public administration and judiciary. In 2011, women made up 15% of Member of Parliaments, 16% of senators, 7.53 % of judiciary and 17% of senior civil service positions despite outnumbering men as civil servants.

At the central government administration, data during 2003-2010 showed that women holding executive positions had slightly increased, from 20.94 % in 2003 to 24.44 % in 2010. At the regional level, the statistic from the Permanent Secretary, the Ministry of Interior shows that female

administrators appointed in 2011 were two provincial governors (2.63 %) and eight deputy provincial governors (4.76 %). In 2010, only 0.46 % of deputy district officers and 24.96% of deputy district officers were women. The representation of women in executive positions in independent bodies under the 2007 Constitution had been more positive, increasing from 47.06 % in 2006 to 55 % in 2007. However, in 2010, women's representation in such positions dropped to 25 %. Meanwhile, the number of women holding positions in the court system remains low. There are currently no women holding the positions of attorney-general and deputy attorney-general. There were only seven female judges in senior positions, representing 8.14 % to the Supreme Court and division presidents in 2010. In regard to female police, there were no women holding positions of police commissioner and deputy commissioner. However, there were four women commissioners in 2009.

Thailand has not achieved the 2006 MDG+ target to double the share of female representation in the National Assembly, sub-district administrative organizations, high-level executive organizations, and high-level executives in the central administration. Various factors including education, social values and traditional norms that hampered progress in these areas are continued to be addressed.

The challenge to increase female representation in politics is the priority of the current Women Development Plan. The strategy is to cultivate a new social norm, which will be beneficial to women's advancement leading to their increasing roles in politics and decision-making. Over the years, Thailand has taken many initiatives to increase the participation of women in politics. Through partnership and collaboration among government agencies and non-governmental organizations, there is an ongoing effort to establish a quota system to improve the ratio of women candidates in national and local elections. The proposed idea of gender quota system will need to be further debated and discussed as, once established, it will be a groundbreaking development in terms of gender and political equality in Thailand.

Work has been undertaken to improve knowledge, understanding and skills of women on the constitution and relevant laws and has raised public awareness on the importance of women's participation in politics and administrative functions. Training and workshops were organized for women on local government administration to prepare women candidates before elections. Discussion forum were held to build up networks and budgetary support has been given to activities at the local level to build capacities of women and campaign for greater participation of women in local politics. There were visits and discussions held with party leaders to sensitise them on the issue. Office of the Civil Service Commission also holds regular training and networking sessions for women executives.

Awareness raising campaigns on the importance of women's participation in politics were conducted by Regional Public Relations Offices. Public assemblies were held in eight provinces and broadcasted on television and radio. There were radio and television programmes and discussions on women and politics. Trainings were organized for local media to raise awareness on women and politics at the community level. Campaigning activities were also conducted in seven leading



educational institutions to encourage young generations to promote participation of women in politics.

Recognizing the need to promote political participation of women from all walks of life, in 2011-2014, the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security together with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) launched a Leadership Academy for Muslim Women. The Academy Programme exercised in 14 provinces in the South will equip participants with skills to participate and take leading roles in community development activities. Upon completion, participants will be assigned to work in political entities in their respective areas on internship basis, and where possible, be mentored by Muslim women who are already in political positions.

## **H. Institutional mechanism for the advancement of women**

In Thailand, institutional mechanisms were set up to promote gender mainstreaming and women's advancement as follows:

### **Parliamentary mechanisms**

During 2003 - 2010, with a strong support of relevant Parliamentary Committees, the Parliament passed anti-discrimination and gender equality-related legislation, such as Protection of Domestic Violence Victims Act 2007, among others. Various committees and sub committees are usually set up by the decision of parliamentarians to take care of the issues of national interests. That includes, among others, the issues of gender equality, rights and development of women and children, as well as trafficking in persons as Thailand's long standing national priorities.

### **National mechanisms**

The National Commission on Policy and Strategy for the Improvement of the Status of Women was established in 2008 by the Ministerial Regulation of the Office of the Prime Minister on the Promotion and Coordination of Women's Affairs. It is chaired by the Prime Minister with the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security as Deputy Chair, while the Office of Women's Affairs and Family Development (OWAFD) acts as a secretariat to the Commission. The Commission is a multi-stakeholder body, composed of high-level representative of government agencies, experts and the civil society. It is responsible for recommending to the Cabinet the policy and national plan for the promotion of women's roles, legislative amendments and for monitoring and evaluating the plan. It is also a mechanism through which a national assembly on women's affairs is organized to garner support and participation from all sectors of society.

### **National coordinating mechanisms**

As a result of the bureaucratic reform in 2002, OWAFD became the main coordinating body at the national level, responsible for the formulation of guidelines, measures and mechanisms for women's empowerment and promotion of gender equality and family development. It is tasked with

determining policies, measures and mechanisms and coordination with relevant government and non-governmental agencies to implement Thailand's international obligations to women's rights instruments. Its functions also include the development of a body of knowledge on gender equality promotion and family development.

The structural change has in fact resulted in more flexibility and effectiveness in reaching targeted population, particularly at the regional level. This is due to the administrative structure of the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security (MSDHS) and its provincial branches, covering 76 provinces. The provincial administrative branches of the MSDHS are responsible for translating the national policy into practice. For example, women assemblies were organized at the provincial level to encourage discussion and experience sharing on situation, problems and recommendation concerning gender equality to contribute to the development of policies, strategies and measures for the promotion of women's affairs. The assembly provides opportunities for the public to voice their opinions and participate in the government's decision making process. Such assembly was organized for the first time in 2006 at the national and regional level, and since then has been extended to the provincial level through the coordination of MSDHS.

## **Networking agency**

### **Central level**

As of 2010, Chief Gender Equality Officers (CGEOs) and Gender Focal Points (GFPs) were established in 19 (out of 20) ministries, covering 131 agencies which can be broken down further into 127 departments and 4 independent agencies. All of these agencies have developed a master plan on the promotion of gender equality within their agencies.

Evaluation on the effectiveness of the CGEOs and GFPs was done annually by the OWAFD in order to learn from best practices and to improve the strategies of GFPs. The results show that during the period of 2004-2006, which was an initial stage of the establishment of CGEOs and GFPs, the functions of these mechanisms were confined to gender equality promotion for staff of the agencies, such as setting up a day care center and conducting gender-sensitized training for staff. From 2006 onwards, CGEOs and GFPs have taken a more pro-active approach by integrating a gender perspective into their programmes and projects. Outstanding CGEOs and GFPs have been annually awarded for best practices in the promotion of gender equality. Some of the achievements include:

*Royal Irrigation Department, Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives* was awarded in 2006 for a comprehensive collection of sex-disaggregated data at the central and regional levels and for welfare promotion which benefits both women and men.

*Department of Skills Development, Ministry of Labour* was awarded in 2007 for establishing a quota system to increase women's participation in training programmes, developing training manuals to improve skill of women labourers.

*Department of Fisheries, Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives* was awarded in 2008 for a collection of sex-disaggregated data, promotion of women's participation in fishing activities, and establishment of a working group to mainstream a gender perspective into its work.

*Department of Welfare and Labour Protection, Ministry of Labour* was awarded in 2009 for conducting gender-sensitized training for employers and leaders of labour unions, and for the childcare center initiative in the community and workplace.

*Office of the Civil Service Commission* was awarded in 2009 for the inclusion of sexual harassment issue in the Civil Service Act of B.E. 2551 (2008) and for the development of gender sensitization training curriculum for civil service.

*Department of Health, Ministry of Public Health* was awarded in 2010 for initiating the draft Reproductive Health Act to address the special needs of women with regard to reproductive health.

### **Non-governmental organizations, academics and civil society**

Non-governmental organizations, the academics and civil society have important roles to play in the efforts to eliminate discrimination against women and promote gender equality. There have been public-private partnerships in many initiatives, such as the partnership between Friends of Women Foundation and Sukhothai Thammathirat Open University to develop community systems to prevent and address violence against women in communities and conduct research and studies on women issues. In addition, women organizations and networks have strengthened their partnerships, as illustrated by Women Networks Reshaping Thailand which was formed after the recent political crisis with the aim of increasing participation of women in various reform committees to ensure gender perspective is reflected in all processes and activities. In addition, a women development committee has been established at the provincial, district and sub-district levels since 1995 to increase involvement of women in economic, social and political development of the country. Gender-equality and women development projects and activities have been conducted with technical and financial support from the government.

#### **I. Human rights of women**

Thailand has acceded the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) in 1985 and its Optional Protocol in 2000, and has continued its efforts for the implementation since then. A number of laws have been reviewed or adopted in recent years through a participatory process in order to improve gender equality and benefits for women.

#### **National Plan on Human Rights**

The National Plan on Human Rights outlines strategies and obligations to promote and protect human rights. The first plan was initiated in 2000 and an action plan was developed for each identified target group, including women, stateless persons, children, the elderly and HIV/AIDS infected people. The second plan (2009-2013) aimed to raise public awareness on respecting human

rights and human dignity as well as to empower human rights networks at all levels to protect human rights through various activities which has been integrated into the action plans of related agencies. The draft third plan (2014-2018), which is currently under the Cabinet consideration, focuses on the effective implementation of the relevant international human rights conventions as well as the accepted Universal Periodic Review (UPR) recommendations.

### **The Women's Development Plan under the National Economic and Social Development Plan**

Over the past few decades Thailand has implemented a total of nine short and long term women's development plans. After 2002, the government adjusted the sequence of the Women's Strategic Plan to be consistent with the National Plan. The Women's Development Plan under the 11<sup>th</sup> National Economic and Social Development Plan (2012-2016) approved on July 3, 2012 continues to uphold to the principles of international human rights laws and instruments including the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), abide by the spirits of the Beijing Declaration, and to strive to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) has set the principle aimed to promote and protect women's rights as well as to empower women in Thai society through the following strategies:

**To promote the positive attitudes towards issue of gender equality:** Recognizing the roles of family, schools and the media in cultivating the right attitudes towards the issue of gender equality, this strategy aims at promoting knowledge on gender roles, recognition of human dignity, and the importance of gender equality for the creation of balance, healthy and sustainable development among family members as well as through educational courses, programmes and the media, while correcting traditional prejudices regarding women's roles in the family and the society.

**To develop women's capacity and opportunity:** As the best way to assure that national policies and programmes be truly beneficial for women is to let women be in the position to make decisions, as well as to voice their concerns on matters that affect their way of life and status in the society, this strategy focus on the promotion of women's potential to participate in politics and administration in all levels. Also, it seeks to provide equal opportunities among women and men to access resources, public services, and to create appropriate legal mechanisms and measures to support women's participation in politics and administration. All laws and regulations that are considered to be hindrances for women to participate in such positions will be reviewed and amended.

**To promote women's health and reproductive health and rights:** Healthy women allow them to work and develop to their fullest potential so that they can contribute meaningfully to the society and economy. This strategy, thus, seeks to promote women's healthy lifestyle through formal and informal education for women about health, sanitation, human security, and prevention and protection of communicable and non-communicable diseases. Funds are also allocated to conduct a series of research related to women's health and security, including violence against women.

**To promote women's participation in the economy:** This strategy aims to enable Thai women to obtain access to more economic opportunities in all forms of education and skill development programmes. Greater opportunities will also be provided for women to learn information and communication technology to upgrade their skills, capacities and knowledge so they can actively participate in economic and social activities.

### **Implementing the 11<sup>th</sup> Women's Development Plan**

- Public and private sector organizations as well as all women's networks and organizations can utilize the Plan as a guideline to formulate an action plan that responds to the needs and concerns of Thai women at all levels.
- Public agencies and the Chief Gender Equality Officers (CGEOs) of the 19 ministries can use the Plan to formulate ministerial policies and action plans where women can fully and equally benefit from the Minister's policies and programs. In addition, the Plan can be used as a framework to develop a gender equity program for civil servants of every agency.

### **Mechanisms for monitoring the conduct of state authorities and protecting human rights**

#### **Ombudsman**

The Ombudsman is an independent mechanism for protecting human rights and acts as a channel whereby people can submit complaints against the conduct by the government which is considered unfair. The Ombudsman has expedited the investigations to ensure actions are taken to address the concerns and to ensure the rights of complainants are fully respected.

#### **National Human Rights Commission**

The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), an independent body comprising one chairperson and six members, has the powers and duties to propose policies and recommendations to the government with regard to the revision of laws, rules and regulations for the purpose of promoting and protecting human rights.

The Commission appointed a Sub-Committee on the Promotion of Opportunity and Gender Equality, tasked with the promotion of respect for equal rights and opportunity as well as investigation of complaints on such issues. Two sub-committees were appointed in 2009: 1) the Sub-committee on Child Rights, Women's Rights and Equality and 2) the Sub-committee on the Investigation of Violation of Human Rights of Children, Youth and Women in the Justice System. The NHRC has been providing assistance and advice, including mediation, on individual cases, including complaints on human rights violations concerning children, youth, women, and people of all sexual orientations and gender identities

## **J. Women and the media**

The media has an important role to play in supporting the Government's efforts in promoting public awareness on gender equality and women's rights as it can potentially reach out to a wider groups of audiences. TV and radio commercial spots have, therefore, been utilised in the promotion of gender equality campaign. The Thai government has been promoting women's active role in the media by providing awards for women in mass media profession and mass media with outstanding roles in promoting women's advancement and gender equality in the annual celebration of International Women's Day. Nevertheless, the Government is working closely with the media as there are also needs for certain media monitoring and censorship particularly on the inappropriate sexual content involving women in vulnerable situations and minors. In addition, the Media Monitor campaign ([www.mediamonitor.in.th](http://www.mediamonitor.in.th)) was launched in 2005 to support the efforts made by the Government in this regard.

In Thailand, a lot of women from all sectors are active on social media, including those in business, non-government organisations, the media and politics. Currently, about the same number of women in Thailand are on Facebook as men, according to Social Breaker - with around 51 percent and 49 percent of total users respectively.

Efforts are also made to promote greater job opportunity for women in media professions and to increase women's participation rate particularly in journalism.

## **K. Women and the environment**

Sustainable economy is the key guideline to promote better quality of life. Accordingly, Thai people have been adopting the Sufficiency Economy Policy initiated by His Majesty the King as a way of life in order to sustain and strengthen economy and environment. This has positive impacts on women's participation in the sphere of innovative green technology to achieve a sustainable economy.

The Thai government has attached great importance to environmental protection, and has emphasized women's role and participation in the protection, and promotion of a sustainable environment. An important strategy is to mainstream gender perspectives in the national policy and planning process to ensure that gender perspectives are reflected in development policy and planning process. This can be seen in the following policy initiatives:

Thailand has integrated community forest with sufficient economy and encouraged community to take part in forest conservation and promoted network of women protecting the environment in Ta-Chine River, Bangpakong basins and Songkhla lake areas, and the Environmental Research and Training Centre, Department of Environmental Quality Promotion has organized trainings to promote women's capacity in environmental protection. Furthermore, annual awards have been given to women with remarkable roles in environmental protection, and to units or organizations that have mainstreamed gender aspects into their projects or activities on environmental protection.

An example of how women play an active role in environmental project can be seen in the way the Bank for Agriculture and Agricultural Cooperatives promotes women's leadership in their 'Tree Bank scheme'. The scheme was established to encourage members to plant trees in their own lands, helping members earn income to improve their financial security while increasing the amount of trees in the community. This eventually leads to the increasing awareness in environmental protection. The scheme is currently operated in over 800 communities, with 50% women's participation, and of which the committee members comprises of women for 90%.

Since Tsunami erupted in 2004, the nation learned that these disasters produce very gender-specific aftershocks, and that gender-blind disaster management leads to unequal access and deprive the rights of women. More emphasis must be placed on understanding and addressing the specific problems and needs of women, children and other marginalized groups. Realizing this, governments, NGOs and civil society have cooperated to develop a guideline on disaster management with gender aspects. Currently, the guideline is applied as a manual for the Department of Disaster Prevention and Mitigation to prevent and assist victims in disaster. Moreover, the Office of Women's Affairs and Family Development and the Department of Disaster Prevention and Mitigation has worked with Sustainable Development Foundation (SDF), a Thai non-governmental organization to integrate gender perspectives into disaster risk reduction.

#### **L. The girl-child**

Thailand has made consistent steps to revise and enact legislation to harmonize its national laws with the principles and provisions of CEDAW and CRC in order to protect and promote the rights of girls to equal treatments and opportunities. The Thai Government, for example, enacted the Child Protection Act in 2003 as a primary mechanism to safeguard the rights of the child regardless of their gender. Thailand has also given its attention to provide forum for children both boys and girls to express their opinions. In 2005, the Thai Government initiated a process that led to the establishment of children and youth councils in four provinces, which later on was expanded throughout the country in 2006. These councils become places where girls can suggest what should be done to elevate their status and well beings. Through this channel, their voices can be heard. Furthermore, Thailand's achievement to be highlighted is the decrease disparity among boys and girls in primary and secondary levels of education which is, in fact, the goal no. 3 of the Millennium Development Goals.

In addition, Thailand is aware that violence against girl child occurs both in family and in private and public sphere. Therefore, our policies and plans to address this issue target these two areas especially. Campaigns to strengthen the relationships among family members are organized with the objective to prevent violence in all forms against women and girls in domestic area. Annual campaign to eliminate violence against women and children are also held to raise public awareness about violence and its impact on the victims so that the whole society unites to fight against it.

Besides, Thailand realizes that gender equality should begin within family, the basic socialization unit of society particularly children and youth. Thus, the Gender in Family Project has been formulated.

The project aims to create respect, responsibility, and relationship in family with gender aspects such as sharing household responsibility and living together while treating each other with respects based on the principles of human rights and human dignity.

### **Section Three:            Data and statistics**

Thailand has carried out national gender information system development on a continuing basis since 2005. The manual on the formulation of indicators and information on the situation of Thai Women 2005 was developed at the start. Women status indicators are of vital importance with sex-disaggregated data utilized as the agencies' tools in assessing the situation and needs of women, linking to decision-making as to policies, measures and mechanism in the protection of, and prevention of the problems related to, women in corresponding to their real situation in the society. The framework of the indicators were designed following the 12 critical areas of concerns of the Beijing Platform for Action, in order to select appropriate indicators and gather information from relevant agencies. A total of 123 qualitative and quantitative indicators were selected.

In 2008, the second operational phase of the sets of indicators formulation, the Office of Women's Affairs and Family Development collaborated with the *United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)* in implementing 2 Projects: Thailand's Gender Disaggregated Database and Information System in the year 2007, which collected the database following the 12 issues from the Beijing Platform for Action.

The progress in statistical development has been an ongoing process. The National Statistical Office developed the first Thailand's five-year Statistical Master Plan (2011-2015), approved by the Cabinet in 2010. Mechanism for implementing the Master Plan includes a Committee on National Statistical System Management in 3 major Statistics Groups - social, economic and natural resources and environment, together with 76 Provincial Statistics Sub-Committees and 21 Sectoral Statistics Sub-Committees responsible for 21 statistical sectors, of which gender statistics is one among the 21 sectors. With the 1<sup>st</sup> Sectoral Gender Statistics Development Plan (2015 2013) in place, sex-disaggregated data and statistics are advancing to a maximum extent.

The implementation of the Master Plan has contributed to systematic development of the country's information system, on the basis of Sectoral Statistical Development Plans. The Sectoral Development Plans have as their core components charts of official statistics which define the lists of vital statistics necessary for planning and follow up of national and sectoral development, designate a statistics unit responsible for the production and development of statistics, design development strategies or guidelines for the production, dissemination and utilization of statistics and the analysis of problems and constraints and ways to resolve difficulties encountered in the operation, as well as guidelines for developing the performance of the various statistical agencies, and support of resources and other necessities. Situation and development guidelines for production of the gender statistics sector are as follows:



<b>Data situation</b>	<b>Number of official statistics</b>
-rather complete/complete, ready-to-publicize;	18
-under development (coordinating with the authority responsible for the report on the situation and adding lists of official and gender-disaggregated statistics);	43
-located in various other sectors;	104
-no authority responsible for.	
Total	165

As mentioned, Thailand has been carrying out gender information system development at the national level since 2005. As a result, many reports on national women and gender information and statistics have been issued as follows:

- 1) The Report “Gender Development: Similarities and Differences”, a collaboration between the National Statistical Office (NSO) and the Office of the Women’s Affairs and Family Development (OWAFD). The NSO is the national focal point on the production of key national statistics to support policy, planning, monitoring and evaluation of national socio-economic development and the government’s urgent policies;
- 2) Gender Related Development Index Plus (GDI Plus), a measurement reflecting the inequalities between men and women in the following dimensions: education, health, employment, income, participation and employment;
- 3) Reports on Women’s Situations in Thailand between 2005-2011;
- 4) “Gender dimension: The Development Tendency towards Gender Equality”, produced by the NSO

The production of gender statistics sets will enable government agencies working to promote gender equality to use gender-disaggregated statistical data as a tool for determining programme and project with gender perspectives, and further for concrete implementation of Gender Responsive Budgeting (GRB).

Awareness is needed to be raised on the importance of establishing financial benchmarks, with associated means of tracking expenditure on gender equality; implement targeted financing for gender equality and women’s empowerment; promote gender-responsive budgeting, and ensure that women’s organizations, at all levels, can access funding mechanisms.

With regards to VAW/C indicators and data, four UN agencies, i.e. UN Women, the UN Population Fund (UNFPA), the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) and the UN Development Programme (UNDP), have worked with the Office of Women's Affairs and Family Development in a joint programme - the UN Trust Fund to End Violence Against Women - for 3 years) 2010-2013 in the development of indicators and data on violence against women and children in Thailand under the project, "Every Home is Safe :Support to the Implementation of the Protection of Domestic Violence Victims Act 2007" .In 2010, data on statistics and indicators of violence against women and children was compiled. The framework for VAW/C indicators was mainly based on "Violence against Women and Girls: The Compendium of Monitoring and Evaluation Indicators". Altogether 41 indicators that fit the context of the Thai Society were adopted and adapted and the report on the Project was issued. In 2011, appropriate definitions for VAW/C related terminologies were determined to enable implementing agencies to develop a standardized data collecting system. In 2012 piloting the coordinating mechanism was conducted in Bangkok and Phang-Nga Province in the South, to coordinate data collection of the compiled indicators at the provincial level.

To date, the Office of Women's Affairs and Family Development has integrated all related data being collected into the gender-disaggregated statistics sector, which is pivotal to monitor commitments made on gender equality. As for data on the situation of particular groups of women, this has been collected through official statistics in the Social Welfare Sector. The development of the country's statistical system is expected to systemize and unite statistical linkage and exchange between different agencies in the foreseeable future.

#### **Section Four: Emerging priorities**

- a) **What are the key priorities for action over the next three to five years for accelerating implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcomes of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly, and subsequent intergovernmental agreements for the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of women at the national level?**

The Royal Thai Government reaffirms its commitment to continue to attach great importance to addressing the problems of violence against women as well as feminization of poverty as mentioned in Section 2. Taking note of significant progress made in Thailand with regard to education and healthcare for women, in looking ahead, Thailand will seek to prepare the country to cope with the emerging issues as follows;

- **Changing demographic structure: toward an aging society**

Like many other countries all over the world, Thailand's population has continually been aging. Proportion of young and working age population has continuously declined and will affect the supply of labor in the future. Shortage of skilled labor is a critical concern. Moreover, health expenditure will increase and become a burden on the public finance, household expenditure and social security. Statistics show that the proportion of persons aged over 60 years in Thailand now accounts for 13 percent of the total population. In the next 20 years, the aging population is expected to account for 25 percent of the population. Older Thai women tend to live longer and therefore have substantially lower mortality rate. As a result, older Thai women are more likely to experience widowhood. Thailand needs to take action to cope with the situation by empowering female senior citizens, so that the community will fully benefit from their wisdom and experiences. Several relevant government agencies are working together in promoting physical and mental health among senior citizens. The Ministry of Social Development and Human Security now serves as the core agency in organizing various activities to enhance the potential of senior citizens and provide them with occupational training, as well as looking after their well-being and welfare.

Thailand's Older Persons Act of 2003 aims to protect, promote, and support the rights and benefits of older persons, including social welfare, medical services, education, occupation, training, and recreational activities. In this regard, public and private organizations have been urged to participate and share responsibility in development programs for the elderly. Since 2009, those over 60 years of age without any pension plan have been entitled to receive a monthly allowance of 500 baht as a part of Government's policy to ensure income security among older persons in Thailand. Under a new income support policy, starting from October 2011, senior citizens have been provided with progressive monthly allowances, above the previous flat rate of 500 baht. Those aged between 60 and 69 receive a monthly allowance of 600 baht. Older persons aged between 60 and 69 receive 700 baht, and the elderly, aged 70-79, receive 800 baht. A monthly allowance of 1,000 baht is offered to persons aged 90 and over.

To intensively tackle the interrelated priority issues of increasing feminization of ageing population in the coming years, Thailand needs to pursue a more holistic approach covering all sectors of the society, and considering all inter-related issues for ageing population particularly the female groups. These include the issues of human rights, gender equality, the empowerment of women; social inclusion and participation; social protection and justice, social and economic security; healthcare; and social welfare and services. Government's support and assistance program for older persons in preparation for their retirement and old age transition on the basis of gender equality and sensitivity is also necessary.

- **Promoting a positive attitude towards gender equality and youth engagement**

The concept of gender equality needs to be cultivated since childhood through education both at home and in schools. Government must, therefore, mainstream human rights and gender

equality at all levels of education, provide training for teachers and educational staff to enhance their understanding about gender issues, and encourage the media to help raise awareness about gender roles and gender equality both within the family and within society.

Nowadays, youth do exchange their views on various global issues across borders using the social media. Their power and nature in worldwide network and rapid transfer of information made them a valuable agent for changes. Youth engagement is, therefore, encouraged to help promote positive attitudes of the public towards women and gender equality. Youth can also potentially stimulate public debates and discussion on gender related policies. They can also help advocate public campaign to end discrimination and to promote the rights of women.

**b) What are your country's priorities and recommendations to strengthen gender equality and the empowerment of women in the current discussions on Sustainable Development Goals and the post-2015 development agenda?**

The on-going discussions on Sustainable Development Goals and post-2015 development agenda have put emphasis on the issues to promote and protect the rights of women and girls. As reflected as a stand-alone goal in the outcome of the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals (OWG on SDGs) in July 2014, the proposed goal 5 aims to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls, with various targets that are Thailand's priorities, namely elimination of violence against women and girls, women's participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making positions, and universal access to sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights. Also, other related issues of priority for Thailand such as inclusive and equitable quality education for all, as well as full and productive employment and decent work for all women and men, are also included in various proposed goals.

In order to enhance Thailand's capabilities to further promote gender equality and women's empowerment and to better monitor its progress made towards achieving the above-mentioned targets and goals, the national women's machineries need to be strengthened in the following areas:

- Consolidate the mandate of national women's machineries, including ensuring continuous political commitment from the highest leadership.
- Establish and/or strengthen coordination mechanisms between line ministries and national women's machineries at national and sub-national levels.
- Increase gender-responsive multi-sectoral responses to social and economic issues.
- Strengthen the gender focal point system, including by ensuring the appropriate level of seniority of gender focal points and within gender working groups to effectively influence policy agendas in the respective line ministries.
- Undertake gender budgeting and participatory gender audits.

- Monitor, evaluate, report and share lessons learned on the impact of gender mainstreaming and budgeting, and policies for women's empowerment, in line with relevant international human rights instruments.

- Focus on gender sensitisation (particularly amongst the youth, men and boys) with a view to promoting gender equality and women's human rights (for example, by compulsory education on gender equality and women's human rights for university students).

- Require government projects to be approved to include gender analysis, consisting of gender-sensitive project planning, design, implementation, monitoring and post-evaluation; and

- Promote the use and collection of sex-disaggregated data so that specific needs of women can be better identified and responded.

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## Annexes to the National Review

- **Information on the process of preparing the national review, including an indication of which Government departments and institutions were involved, and consultations held with stakeholders**

The Government of Thailand's National Review was prepared under the coordination of the Office of Women's Affairs and Family Development, Ministry of Social Development and Human Security. In the process, active support and cooperation were received from government departments and institutions, as well as from non-government organizations, the private sector and individual experts, in providing guidance and inputs to the development of the draft National Review. In the Validation Workshop conducted in partnership with UN Women, invitation was extended to seek their further advices and inputs to finalize the draft and complete the National Review.

Lists of organizations involved include:

- Ministry of Public Health
- Office of the Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Information and Communication Technology
- National Statistical Office, Ministry of Information and Communication Technology
- Department of Community Development, Ministry of Interior
- Department Of Intellectual Property, Ministry of Commerce
- Department of Business development, Ministry of Commerce
- Department of Skill Development, Ministry of Labour
- Department of Agricultural Extension, Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives
- The National Human Rights Commission
- Office of Natural Resources and environmental Policy and Planning, Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment
- Southern Border Provinces Administration Centre (SBPAC)
- Office of Promotion and Protection of Children, Youth, the Elderly and Vulnerable Groups, Ministry of Social Development and Human Security
- Election Commission
- Office of the Attorney General
- Office of the National Economics and Social Development Board, Prime Minister's Office
- Bureau of International Cooperation, Office of the Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Education.
- Association for the Promotion of the Status of Women
- Center for Philanthropy and Civil Society, National Institute of Development
- ASEAN and Asia Studies Center, National Institute of Development

- National Council of Women of Thailand
- Teerarat Kanjanauksorn Foundation
- Association for the Promotion of the Status of Women
- Social Agenda Working Group (Social Watch, Thailand)
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- Ministry of Justice

**Table Illustrating Gender Equality and Promotion and Protection of Women and Disadvantaged Groups Provisions in the 1997 and 2007 Constitutions of Thailand**

THE 1997 CONSTITUTION	THE 2007 CONSTITUTION
<p><b><u>CHAPTER 1: GENERAL PROVISIONS</u></b></p> <p><u>Section 4.</u> The human dignity, right and liberty of the people shall be protected.</p> <p><u>Section 5.</u> The Thai people, irrespective of their origins, <i>sexes</i> or religions, shall enjoy <i>equal protection</i> under this Constitution.</p>	<p><b><u>CHAPTER 1: GENERAL PROVISIONS</u></b></p> <p><u>Section 4.</u> The human dignity, rights and liberties <i>and equality</i> of the people shall be protected.</p> <p><u>Section 5.</u> –ditto-</p>
<p><b><u>CHAPTER 3: RIGHTS AND LIBERTIES OF THE THAI PEOPLE</u></b></p> <p><u>Section 30.</u> <i>All persons are equal</i> before the law and shall enjoy equal protection under the law.</p> <p><i>Men and women shall enjoy equal rights.</i></p> <p><i>Unjust discrimination</i> against a person on the grounds of the difference in origin, race, language, <i>sex, age</i>, physical or health condition, personal status, economic or social standing, religious belief, education or constitutionally political view, shall not be permitted.</p> <p>Measures determined by the State in order to eliminate obstacle to or to promote</p>	<p><b><u>CHAPTER 3: RIGHTS AND LIBERTIES OF THE THAI PEOPLE</u></b></p> <p><u>Part 2: Equality</u></p> <p><u>Section 30.</u> –ditto-</p> <p>–ditto-</p> <p>Unjust discrimination against a person on the grounds of the difference in origin, race, language, <i>sex, age, disability</i>, physical or health condition, personal status, economic or social standing, religious belief, education or constitutionally political view, shall not be permitted.</p> <p>– ditto -</p>

<p>persons' ability to exercise their rights and liberties as other persons shall not be deemed as unjust discrimination under paragraph three.</p>	
<p><u>Section 43.</u> A person shall enjoy <i>an equal right to receive the fundamental education</i> for the duration of not less than twelve years which shall be provided by the State thoroughly, up to the quality, and without charge.</p> <p><u>Section 52.</u> A person shall enjoy <i>an equal right to receive standard public health service</i>, and the indigent shall have the right to receive free medical treatment from public health centres of the State, as provided by law.</p>	<p><u>Part 4: Rights in Administration of Justice</u></p> <p><u>Section 40.</u> A person shall have the following rights in the administration of justice: (6) the <i>children, the youth, women, the elderly or the disabled</i> or persons of infirmity have the right to be accorded protection with regard to appropriate trials and have the right to receive proper treatment in cases related to <i>sexual violence</i>;</p>

THE 1997 CONSTITUTION	THE 2007 CONSTITUTION
<p><u>Section 53.</u> <i>Children, youth and family members</i> shall have the right to be protected by the State against <i>violence</i> and unfair treatment.</p> <p><u>Section 54.</u> A person who is <i>over sixty years of age</i> and has insufficient income shall have the right to receive aids from the State, as provided by law.</p> <p><u>Section 55.</u> The <i>disabled</i> or handicapped shall have the right to receive public conveniences and other aids from the State, as provided by law insofar as it is possible.</p>	<p><u>Part 8: Rights and Liberties in Education</u></p> <p><u>Section 49.</u> – ditto - (<i>Para.1 of Sect.43 in left Col.</i>)</p> <p><u>Part 9: Rights to Receive Public Health Services and Welfare from the State</u></p> <p><u>Section 51.</u> A person shall enjoy <i>an equal right to receive public health services</i> which are appropriate and up to the quality, and the indigent shall have the right to receive free medical treatment from public health centres of the State.</p> <p><u>Section 52.</u> <i>Children, the youth, women and family members</i> shall have the right to be protected by the State against <i>violence</i> and unfair treatment and shall also have the right to receive rehabilitation in the event of such</p>



	<p>circumstances.</p> <p><u>Section 53.</u> A person who is <i>over sixty years of age</i> and has insufficient income for the living shall have the right to receive such welfare and public facilities as suitable for his or her dignity as well as appropriate aids to be provided by the State.</p> <p><u>Section 54.</u> The <i>disabled</i> or persons of infirmity shall have the right to have access to and use public welfare and conveniences as well as appropriate aids to be provided by the State.</p>
<p><b>CHAPTER 4: DUTIES OF THE THAI PEOPLE</b></p> <p><u>Section 68.</u> <i>Every person</i> shall have a duty to exercise his or her right to vote at an election.</p>	<p><b>CHAPTER 4: DUTIES OF THE THAI PEOPLE</b></p> <p><u>Section 72.</u> – <i>ditto</i> -</p>
<p><b>CHAPTER 5: DIRECTIVE PRINCIPLES OF FUNDAMENTAL STATE POLICIES</b></p> <p><u>Section 75.</u> The State shall ensure the compliance with the law, protect the rights and liberties of a person, provide efficient administration of justice and serve justice to the people expediently and <i>equally</i> and organise an efficient system of public administration and other State affairs to meet people's demand.</p>	<p><b>CHAPTER 5: DIRECTIVE PRINCIPLES OF FUNDAMENTAL STATE POLICIES</b></p> <p><u>Part 4: Directive Principles of State Policies</u> in relation to Religions, Social Affairs, Public Health, Education and Cultural Affairs</p>

<b>THE 1997 CONSTITUTION</b>	<b>THE 2007 CONSTITUTION</b>
<u>Section 80.</u> The State shall protect and develop <i>children and the youth, promote the</i>	<u>Section 80.</u> The State shall pursue directive principles of State policies in relation to Social Affairs, Public Health, Education

*equality between women and men*, and create, reinforce and develop *family integrity* and the strength of communities. The State shall provide aids to the *elderly*, the indigent, the *disabled* or handicapped and the underprivileged for their good quality of life and ability to depend on themselves.

Section 86. The State shall promote people of working age to obtain employment, protect labour, especially *child and woman labour*, and provide for the system of labour relations, social security and fair wages.

and Cultural Affairs, as follows: (1) to protect and develop *children and the youth*, encourage their up-keep and primary education, *promote the equality between women and men*, foster and develop solidarity of the institution of *family* and the community as well as provide aids and welfare to the *elderly*, the indigent, the *disabled*, persons of infirmity and persons suffering a state of difficulty to enable their better quality of life and self-dependence;

Part 5: Directive Principles of State Policies in relation to Legislation and the Administration of Justice

Section 81. The State shall pursue directive principles of State policies in relation to legislation and the administration of justice, as follows: (2) to protect rights and liberties of the people against violation by State officials and other persons, provided that the administration of justice shall be offered to all people *on the basis of equality*; (5) support the operation of private organisations rendering legal assistance to the public, especially the people who suffers from *domestic violence*.

Part 6: Directive Principles of State Policies in relation to Foreign Affairs

Section 82. The State shall promote relations and cooperation with other countries and shall adhere to the *equal treatment principle* and comply with treaties related to human rights to which Thailand becomes a party as well as international obligations made with other countries and international organisations.

	<p><b>Part 7: Directive Principles of State Policies in relation to Economy</b></p> <p><b>Section 84.</b> The State shall pursue directive principles of State policies in relation to economy, as follows: (4) to provide savings for the people and</p>
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THE 1997 CONSTITUTION	THE 2007 CONSTITUTION
	<p>State officials for their living at the <i>old age</i>; (7) to promote jobs for the working-age population, <i>protect child and woman labour</i>, organize labour relations and the tripartite system under which employees may elect their representatives, organise the social security system and provide protection to the effect that employees doing the work of the same value should receive fair remuneration, fringe benefits and welfare <i>without discrimination.</i></p> <p><b>Part 10: Directive Principles of State Policies in relation to Public Participation</b></p> <p><b>Section 87.</b> The State shall pursue directive principles of State policies in relation to public participation, as follows: (1) to promote public participation in the determination of policies and plans for economic and social development at both national and local levels; (2) – (5). <i>Public participation under this section is founded upon the consideration of close proportion between men and women.</i></p>

<p><b>CHAPTER 6: THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY</b></p>	<p><b>CHAPTER 6: THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY</b></p> <p><b>Part 2: House of Representatives</b></p> <p><b>Section 97.</b> The preparation of a list of candidates of a political party for the election of members of the House of Representatives on a proportional representation basis shall be as follows: (1) A list of candidates in each constituency shall contain names of candidates in a full number equal to the number of members of the House of Representatives on a proportional representation basis allowable for each constituency, such names being placed in a numerical order, and the list shall then be submitted to the Election Commission prior to the opening date for receiving applications for candidacy in the election on a constituency basis; (2) The names of persons listed under (1) shall not be duplicated by names of candidates both in the constituency category and in the proportional representation category of any political party and regard shall be had to appropriate opportunities and proportions <i>as well as the equality between men and women.</i></p>
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<p><b>THE 1997 CONSTITUTION</b></p>	<p><b>THE 2007 CONSTITUTION</b></p> <p><b>Part 3: The Senate</b></p> <p><b>Section 114.</b> The Senators Selection Committee shall select suitable persons from those nominated by organisations in the academic sector, the public sector, the private sector, the professional sector and</p>
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	<p>other sectors, who are of value to the performance of duties of senators as senators in the number equal to that to be achieved as specified in section 111 paragraph one. In the selection of persons under paragraph one, particular regard shall be had to the knowledge, expertise or experience beneficial to the performance of duties of senators, and regard shall also be had to factors in relation to persons with varying knowledge and capability in varying fields, <i>sexual opportunities and equality</i>, a close proportion of persons in each sector under paragraph one, and the provision of opportunities to the socially underprivileged persons.</p>
<p><u>Part 5: Provisions Applicable to both Houses</u></p> <p><u>Section 190.</u> In considering a bill the substance of which is decided by the President of the House of Representatives to be concerned with <i>children, women, the elderly, the disabled or handicapped</i>, if the House of Representatives does not consider it by its full committee, the House of Representatives shall appoint an ad hoc committee consisting of representatives, from private organisations concerned with the respective types of persons, of not less than one-third of the total number of members of the committee.</p>	<p><u>Part 7 : Enactment of Acts</u></p> <p><u>Section 152.</u> In considering a bill the substance of which is decided by the President of the House of Representatives to be concerned with <i>children, the youth, women, the elderly, the disabled or persons of infirmity</i>, if the House of Representatives does not consider it by its full committee, the House of Representatives shall appoint an ad hoc committee consisting of representatives, from private organisations concerned with the respective types of persons, of not less than one-third of the total number of members of the committee, provided that it shall be represented by <i>a close number of men and women</i>.</p>
<p><u>Part 8: The National Human Rights Commission</u></p>	<p><u>CHAPTER 11: CONSTITUTIONAL ORGANS</u></p> <p><u>Part 2: Other Constitutional Organs</u></p>

<p><u>Section 199.</u> <i>The National Human Rights Commission</i> consists of a President and ten other members appointed, by the King with the advice of the Senate, from the persons having apparent knowledge and experiences in the protection of</p>	<p><b>2. National Human Rights Commission</b></p> <p><u>Section 256.</u> The National Human Rights Commission consists of the President and <u>six</u> other members appointed, by the King with the advice of the Senate, .....</p>
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THE 1997 CONSTITUTION	THE 2007 CONSTITUTION
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<p>rights and liberties of the people, having regard also to the participation of representatives from private organisations in the field of human rights.</p> <p><b>Section 200.</b> The National Human Rights have the powers and duties as follows:</p> <p>1) to examine and report the commission or omission of acts which violate human rights or which do not comply with obligations under international treaties to which Thailand is a party, and propose appropriate remedial measures to the person or agency committing or omitting such acts for taking action. In the case where it appears that no action has been taken as proposed, the Commission shall report to the National Assembly for further proceeding;</p> <p>2) to propose to the National Assembly and the Council of Ministers policies and recommendations with regard to the revision of laws, rules or regulations for the purpose of promoting and protecting human rights;</p> <p>3) to promote education, researches and the dissemination of knowledge on human rights;</p> <p>4) to promote co-operation and co-ordination among Government agencies, private organisations, and other organisations in the field of human rights;</p> <p>5) to prepare an annual report for the appraisal of situations in the sphere of human rights in the country and submit it to the National Assembly;</p>	<p><b>Section 257.</b> The National Human Rights Commission has the powers and duties as follows:</p> <p>(1) = 1)</p> <p>(2) to refer the matter, together with an opinion, to the Constitutional Court in the case where it agrees with a complaint addressed by a complainant that any provision of law affects human rights and begs a question of constitutionality, in accordance with the Organic Act on Procedure of the Constitutional Court;</p> <p>(3) to refer the matter, together with an opinion, to the Administrative Court in the case where it agrees with a complaint addressed by a complainant that a bylaw, order or any other administrative act affects human rights and begs a question of constitutionality or compliance with the law, in accordance with the Act on Establishment of Administrative Courts and Administrative Court Procedure;</p> <p>(4) to file a lawsuit to the Court of Justice on behalf of the injured person when a request is made by the injured person and it is deemed appropriate to find a solution to violation of human rights vis. the public at large, as provided by law;</p> <p>(5) = 2)</p> <p>(6) = 3)</p> <p>(7) = 4)</p> <p>(8) = 5)</p>
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**Source:** Constitutions of the Kingdom of Thailand (1997) and (2007), Official Translation provided by the National Assembly of Thailand.

**Table Summarizing Thailand's 2014 Assessment of the MDG and MDG+ Targets**

<b>MDG Goal 1: Eradicate poverty and hunger</b>		
Target 1A	Halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of population living in extreme poverty	Achieved
MDG+	Reduce poverty to less than 4% by 2009	Not achieved
Target 1B	Achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all, including women and young people	Potentially
Target 1C	Halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of population who suffer from hunger	Achieved
<b>MDG Goal 2: Achieve universal primary education</b>		
Target 2A	Ensure that, by 2015, boys and girls alike, will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling	Achieved
MDG+	Universal lower secondary education by 2006	Not achieved
MDG+	Universal upper secondary education by 2015	Unlikely
<b>MDG Goal 3: Promote gender equality and empower women</b>		
Target 3A	Eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education, preferably by 2005, and in all levels of education no later than 2015	Achieved
MDG+	Double the proportion of women in the national Parliament, Sub-district Administrative Organizations, and executive positions in the civil service by during 2002-2006	Not achieved
<b>MDG Goal 4: Reduce child mortality</b>		
Target 4A	Reduce by two-thirds, between 1990 and 2015, the under-five mortality rate (U5MR)	Not applicable
MDG+	Reduce infant mortality rate (IMR) to 15 per 1,000 live births by 2006	Cannot assess due to change of data
MDG+	Reduce by half, between 2005 and 2015, the U5MR in highland areas, selected northern provinces and three southernmost provinces	Unlikely
<b>MDG Goal 5: Improve Maternal Health</b>		
Target 5A	Reduce by three-quarters, between 1990-2015, the maternal mortality ratio	Not applicable



MDG+	Reduce maternal mortality ratio to 18 per 100,000 live births by 2006	Cannot assess due to change of data
MDG+	Reduce by half, between 2005 and 2015, the maternal mortality ratio in highland areas, selected northern provinces and the three southernmost provinces	Potentially
Target 5B	Achieve, by 2015, universal access to reproductive health	Likely

<b>MDG Goal 6: Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases</b>		
Target 6A	Have halted by 2015 and begun to reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS	Achieved
Target 6B	Achieve, by 2010, universal access to treatment for HIV/AIDS for all those who need it	Likely
MDG+	Reduce HIV prevalence among reproductive adults to 1 % by 2006	Cannot assess due to change of data
Target 6C	Have halted by 2015 and begun to reverse the incidence of malaria and other major diseases	Malaria: achieved Tuberculosis: unlikely Coronary Artery diseases: unlikely
MDG+	Reduce malaria incidence in 30 border provinces to less than 1.4 per 1,000 by 2006	Achieved
<b>MDG Goal 7: Ensure environmental sustainability</b>		
Target 7A	Integrate the principles of sustainable development into country policies and programmes and reverse the loss of environmental resources	Potentially
Target 7B	Reduce biodiversity loss, achieving, by 2010, a significant reduction in the rate of loss	Potentially
MDG+	Increase the share of of renewable energy to 8 % of the commercial final energy by 2011	Likely
MDG+	Increase the share of municipal waste recycled to 30% by 2006	Not achieved
Target 7C	Halve, by 2015, the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water and basic	Achieved

	<b>sanitation</b>	
Target 7D	<b>Achieve, by 2020, a significant improvement in the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers</b>	<b>Likely</b>
<b>MDG Goal 8: Develop a global partnership for development</b>		
Target 8B	<b>Address the special needs of the least developed countries</b>	<b>Achieved</b>
Target 8E	<b>In cooperation with pharmaceutical companies, provide access to affordable essential drugs in developing countries</b>	<b>Achieved</b>
Target 8F	<b>In cooperation with the private sector, make available the benefits of new technologies, especially information and communications.</b>	<b>Achieved</b>

**Source:** Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the National Economic and Social Development Board of Thailand (July 2014). Thailand: National Voluntary Presentation (NVP) for the Annual Ministerial Review (AMR) of the ECOSOC 2014 - Addressing ongoing and emerging challenges for meeting the Millennium Development Goals in 2015 and for sustainable development gains in the future

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