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Country Statement
By
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at

The 3rd International Conference on SIDS
Apia, Independent State of Samoa, 1-4 September 2014

**“Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States through
Genuine and Durable Partnerships”**

Honorable Deputy Prime Minister of Samoa,
Secretary-General,
Excellencies,
Distinguished delegates,

1. It is an honour and pleasure for Thailand to participate at the Third International Conference of Small Islands and Developing States (SIDS) as a development partner. Allow me to convey a very warm greeting and best wishes from the Royal Thai Government and people of Thailand to all delegates attending this important gathering. May I also congratulate H.E. the Prime Minister of Samoa on his election as President of the Conference and to express our deep appreciation to the Government and people of Samoa for the warm island hospitality and excellent arrangements of the conference. Our congratulations are also extended to all distinguished members of the Bureau.

Mr. President,

2. Over the past three days here in Apia, we have heard a resounding message from leaders, ministers and heads of delegation of SIDS, including the United Nation Secretary- General on two key concerns. First is the overwhelming concern for climate change and its severe impacts on SIDS. The other, is the concern that SIDS' voice may not be adequately reflected in the international discourse and preparation for the post-2015 development agenda. I am confident that this conference will go a long way to remedy these paramount concerns.

3. On climate change, Thailand fully sympathizes with and shares the concerns of SIDS. Even as a coastal state, Thailand experienced the devastating affects of natural disasters from the seas. This year marks a decade of the Indian Ocean Tsunami that claimed more than 200,000 lives in coastal areas along the Indian Ocean and Eastern Africa region. In Thailand alone, more than 8,000 lives were lost and some of Thailand's most important tourist destinations took several years to fully recover. Indeed, Thailand plans to organize an event at this year's end to pay tribute to those who lost their lives and promote the resiliency of the affected communities. Another more recent natural disaster in Thailand, one that disrupted the global supply chain of electronic components for hard drives, was the 2011 flood that inundated Thailand's central region industrial estates, causing an economic loss of 45.7 billion USD. Thailand has embarked on a nation-wide water management system to ensure adequate sustainable water supply for our agriculture and industrial sectors as well as flood prevention.

4. Alongside these and other critical challenges to sustainable development, there is no question that enhanced cooperation and genuine partnership is of utmost importance.

5. Thailand's partnership with Pacific Island countries has therefore steadily intensified. Early in August, we participated in the *26th Post-Forum Dialogue Meeting (PFD)* in the Republic of Palau. Also in recognizing 2014 as the International Year of SIDS, the Royal Thai Government hosted the *First Thailand-Pacific Island Countries Forum (TPIF)* in Bangkok just last month. The TPIF has opened a new chapter for our closer development cooperation on five priority areas of cooperation, namely eco-tourism, rural areas development and infrastructure, ICT, environment conservation and management, and alternative energy. The new Thailand-Pacific Action Plan will also reflect the ideas and comments from this SIDS conference in order to set the future direction for comprehensive partnership not only with the Pacific Island countries but also beyond.

6. In 2015, with the emergence of ASEAN Economic Community, a new **window of opportunity** for partnership between ASEAN and SIDS should be promoted.

7. Allow me to identify a few areas of common interest that Thailand and SIDS may work together, particularly in the fields of disaster management, agriculture, productive capacities, and connectivity.

8. First: building community resilience to disaster and impacts of climate change should be our top priorities. Like SIDS, Thailand perceives climate change as a major threat to survival. We need to work closely to ensure that our communities are resilient and well prepared to respond to natural disasters. Thailand aims to become a low-carbon society by 2021 and also places much importance on adaptation. We will soon adopt the Climate Change Master Plan (2014-2050) which will set a comprehensive framework for climate change adaptation and mitigation for the next 30 years. We look forward to sharing our best practices with SIDS in agriculture, mangrove plantation and protection of coastal erosion which is indispensably related to food security and land security.

9. In June this year, Thailand hosted the *6th Asian Ministerial Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction* which was also attended by several SIDS Ministers. The Bangkok Declaration and the Asia-Pacific inputs for the post-2015 framework for disaster risk reduction, have incorporated the concern of SIDS and will contribute to the Third World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction in March 2015 in Sendai, Japan.

10. Going back further, in the aftermath of the 2004 tsunami, Thailand initiated and contributed 10 millions USD to establish the ESCAP Multi donor Trust Fund for Tsunami, Disaster and Climate Preparedness in the Indian Ocean and South East Asian Countries to provide mechanism for early warning system as well as enhance community resilience. Over 20 projects have been successfully carried out including some SIDS nations such as Maldives and Timor-Leste.

11. **Second: sustainable agriculture plays indispensable role in achieving poverty eradication and food security.** The high dependence on subsistence fishery for domestic consumption and food import as well as narrow land resource base makes SIDS vulnerable to food security. In this connection, we are fully committed to expanding cooperation projects with SIDS in the areas of sustainable agriculture and food security, including through our development model of Sufficiency Economy.

12. **Third: we can work together to enhance SIDS' productive capacities.** Thailand is ready to cooperate further in tuna operations and processing as we are one of the global leaders of tuna processor. Moreover, we are keen to share ideas on **sustainable tourism**, promotion of **SMEs** and local entrepreneurship stimulus program known as **OTOP** (One Town One Product) in Thailand as well as sustainable coastal tourism management.

13. **Fourth: we can work together on promoting regional connectivity.** The 70th Session of the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia-Pacific (ESCAP) last month in Bangkok under the theme of “Regional connectivity for shared prosperity” highlights the importance of network synergies of trade, ICT, people to people and knowledge-based connectivity. We certainly have room to enhance our cooperation on these aspects.

Mr. President,

14. As a member of the Open Working Group (OWG) on Sustainable Development Goals, Thailand has actively promoted regional discussions on the **post-2015 development agenda**. Together with ESCAP, Thailand convened the *Asia-Pacific Ministerial Dialogue (APMD): from MDGs to the UN post 2015 development agenda* last August and in May this year we hosted the *Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development (APFSD)*. The views of the countries in the region have therefore, through these channels, been brought to New York through the OWG and the ECOSOC.

15. The 3rd International Conference on SIDS could not be held at a more appropriate time as we take stock of the progress made in achieving the MDGs and gear towards the **shaping of a post-2015 development agenda that is ambitious, holistic and inclusive**. It is clear that the new development agenda must leave no one behind and takes into account the special characteristics and needs of all countries, especially LDCs, developing countries and SIDS, to the benefit of all sectors and societies. We are pleased that the issue of climate change has been incorporated as one of the proposed goals of the OWG.

Mr. President,

16. Thailand is fully **committed to working with SIDS**. Thailand is now running for a non-permanent seat in **UNSC** for the term of **2017-2018 and UNHRC** for the term in **2015-2017** to represent voices of developing countries. Thailand is ready and willing to listen to any concern, to bridge the gaps and work closely with all member states so that no one is left behind in all three pillars of the work of the United Nations, be it security, development or human rights.

Thank you
