

Statement
by
Professor Dr. HRH Princess Chulabhorn Mahidol
at the
United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development
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Madam President,
Heads of States and Heads of Governments,
Distinguished Delegates:

I have the honor of representing my father, His Majesty King Bhumibol Adulyadej and it gives me great pleasure to lead the Thai delegation to the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (UNCSD).

I should like to express our appreciation to the government of Brazil for hosting this landmark event and to the Secretary-General of the UNCSD, Mr. Sha Zukang, and his colleagues in the secretariat for their contribution and for their dedication to this event.

Since the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in 1992, and during the past two decades, there have been major systemic changes to the ecological, social,

economic, financial and political systems. Ominously, these changes are converging. It is thus important that we are able to address global, regional and national development from the social, environmental and economic view points in a balanced and integrated manner in order to ensure that the development is sustainable.

In fact, sustainable development has been practiced in Thailand over a long period, after the Sufficiency Economy philosophy was first proposed by His Majesty King Bhumibol Adulyadej as far back as 1974, in realization of the need to change unsustainable practices towards development. His Majesty had put his people and their quality of life at the center of his development agenda, addressing the needs of the people while maintaining harmony with the environment. This philosophy stresses moderation and adoption of sustainable life styles as an over-riding principle for appropriate conduct by the populace at all levels. This philosophy is as relevant and pertinent today as it was then and has been an important basis for poverty eradication and sustainable development for our country.

The environment has a significant impact on development. The planetary boundaries of the atmosphere, hydrosphere, lithosphere, biosphere and geosphere are at risk of soon being breached,

with dire consequences for human well being, welfare and security.

Development can be accomplished only with human resources. Thus, for development to be sustainable, the maintenance and improvement of the health of the people is of extreme importance, otherwise the foundation for development is weakened and cannot be sustained. While the content and parameters for the SDGs will need further discussion and elaboration, the critical importance and central role of human health and well being in sustainable development must be included.

The UNCSD provides a generational opportunity to forge international consensus to urgently respond to the global changes, of which climate change is a major, if not the main driving force of the system changes. This Conference has the opportunity to agree on bold decisions for current and future generations.

We need to agree and support a green economy and green economy policies towards sustainable development and poverty eradication. Capacity building in science, technology and innovation, as well as transfer of environmentally sound technology, are key instruments that can help promote a green economy and sustainable development. The United Nations and its

subsidiary bodies can play an important role in promoting such efforts within and among regions. Thailand, through its centers of excellence is willing to cooperate in this endeavor.

At the same time, we believe that there are many paths to a green economy, which must reflect differences between developed and developing countries and with enough flexibility for countries to develop their own policies.

Thailand re-affirms our commitment towards sustainable development, and, indeed, we have seen a significant shift in the development focus in our country as issues related to the environment and social pillars of sustainable development have been increasingly recognized and mainstreamed into the national development agenda.

I reiterate that, to underpin international commitment to sustainable development, the SDG process, which is receiving wide spread support, including the dialogue mechanism, should be adopted. Equally important, we should also adopt a process that would enable the SDGs and the MDGs to be aligned by 2015, to provide a more robust set of goals that would address the major changes that have taken place, and the emerging opportunities and challenges coming to the fore.

We have the responsibility to leave a sustainable, resilient, inclusive and equitable legacy for current and future generations.

We must not fail in our responsibility to the future.

Thank you.

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