



**PERMANENT MISSION OF THAILAND
TO THE UNITED NATIONS**

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**Statement of the Kingdom of Thailand
at the 2020 Humanitarian Affairs Segment (HAS)
of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC)
“Reinforcing humanitarian assistance in the context of the 75th anniversary
of the United Nations: taking action for people-centred solutions,
strengthening effectiveness, respecting international humanitarian law
and promoting the humanitarian principles”**

9-11 June 2020

The United Nations in its seventy-fifth year is at one of its most critical junctures. Less than a decade remains for countries to achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and it is already becoming evident that our chase to end poverty and hunger, and to attain sustainable development at last, has been severely hindered, if not reversed, by the unprecedented impacts of the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic.

While the world exerts its best efforts to tackle this ongoing crisis, we do not have the luxury of time to set aside other pressing humanitarian needs arising from natural and man-made disasters across the globe which are likely to increase in scale and complexity. The more than 145 million lives in need of humanitarian assistance are depending on our collective and timely action. At the same time, we must not lose sight of the health and humanitarian workers who have put their own lives on the line to help others. They, too, are part of our main focus and need our support.

Thailand joins other Member States in expressing grave concerns about the humanitarian impact posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. We commend the efforts taken by Member States and other stakeholders in addressing this pandemic, including through the COVID-19 Global Humanitarian Response Plan. We also join Member States in the call for a global response based on unity, solidarity, international and multilateral cooperation, underscoring the importance of humanitarian assistance as a critical part of such response.

The COVID-19 pandemic presents a valuable opportunity for countries to reflect on the readiness and effectiveness of their health systems to respond to shocks and crises. Pandemics respect no boundaries, hence, each link in the chain of global interconnectedness must be equally strong. Regional and global public health cooperation is essential. In response to COVID-19, ASEAN is in the process of establishing the COVID-19 ASEAN Response Fund with the support of ASEAN's external partners. Internationally, R&D of vaccines and medicines, once available, should be "global public goods", accessible to all and at an affordable price. In the longer term, efforts should be focused on assisting countries to strengthen their health systems. By doing so, we are ensuring a more prepared and resilient community of nations.

Our experience in responding to COVID-19 has shown that an established Universal Health Coverage (UHC) scheme places a country in a better position to respond to pandemics and humanitarian emergencies. And as we address a particular health emergency, it is crucial that we safeguard UHC to ensure continuum and the provision of essential health care and services much needed for the well-being of all persons. In this regard, Thailand reaffirms our readiness to share experiences and lessons-learned to support countries' efforts in strengthening their health systems, including through investing in and achieving UHC.

As a member of the ECOSOC for the term 2020-2022, Thailand is fully committed to building on the ECOSOC's strengths, particularly in supporting prompt humanitarian responses to natural and man-made disasters, and building resilience for communities and countries. In this regard, we wish to highlight three key areas of significance in reinforcing global humanitarian efforts, as follows:

First, Thailand sees a strong linkage between peace and development. The attainment of the SDGs which will lead to sustainable and resilient communities, is key to addressing the root causes of violence, conflict and other humanitarian emergencies. The current repositioning of the United Nations Development System to deliver the 2030 Agenda opens up opportunities to ensure greater coherence, synergy and impact of development and humanitarian action. Thailand would like to see a robust and effective United Nations Resident Coordinator (UNRC) and United Nations Country Team (UNCT) that can efficiently support countries to accelerate their SDGs implementation, including through promoting home-grown development approaches and pathways in order to prevent conflicts and achieve sustainable development. Thailand's Sufficiency Economy Philosophy is a development approach that has been shared with other countries in pursuit of sustainable development. We look forward to further sharing our experiences with other countries, while also learning from theirs.

Second, we must ensure that individuals in vulnerable situations who are disproportionately affected by crises, be they children, women, the elderly, or persons with disabilities, are the focus of humanitarian action. Thailand sees women as important agents of change and advocates their engagement in all phases of the response to humanitarian situations. There is no place for gender-based violence, sexual exploitation and abuse. We must recommit ourselves to ending violence against women in all its form once and for all.

Likewise, we must put a stop to children falling victims to abuse and exploitation in times of armed conflict, including their recruitment and use, killing and maiming, rape, abduction, attacks on schools and hospitals, and denial of humanitarian access. We must make every effort to provide children in conflict situations with the same opportunities to grow and reach their full potential as children elsewhere. This is their right.

Third, Thailand places importance on the health aspects of disaster risk reduction. The Bangkok Principles of the health aspects of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 can help countries prevent and reduce the risk of health emergencies such as pandemics that can have grave social and economic impacts. We believe that these principles should be applied during the COVID-19 pandemic. Thailand stands ready to work with our partners in this regard.

Thailand has been and will continue to be a reliable partner in Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR), both at the regional and global levels. We have been contributing, either in-kind or in-cash, on various occasions, including through our contributions to disaster-stricken countries for immediate relief, as well as our annual contribution to the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF), and the ESCAP Multi-Donor Trust Fund for Tsunami, Disaster and Climate Preparedness in the Indian Ocean and Southeast Asian Countries.

In 2019, Thailand's Emergency Medical Team (EMT) achieved recognition from the World Health Organization (WHO) and we are continuing to do more to strengthen our capacities and our role in humanitarian assistance. Thailand is currently preparing our Urban Search and Rescue Team (USAR) to meet the required international standards to enable us to work alongside international humanitarian professionals. Thailand is committed to working closely with Australia in achieving this goal. In December 2019, Thailand and the International Search and Rescue Advisory Group (INSARAG) held a successful Asia-Pacific INSARAG Earthquake Response Exercise in Chiang Mai as part of the USAR Team preparations.

Thailand firmly believes there is no better way to celebrate the seventy-fifth anniversary of the founding of the United Nations than by all of us joining in unity and solidarity to defeat COVID-19 in what may be the most crucial battle of our generation. There is no better time to strengthen multilateralism and international cooperation than today. In building back after COVID-19, we should focus on sustainability and build resilience by ending poverty, hunger and inequality in all its forms. Our resolve to achieve the SDGs by 2030 in this Decade of Action should be even stronger and be translated into concrete actions on the ground. In our pursuit of sustainable development, with 1 in every 45 people in the world currently caught up in humanitarian crises, let us all make a vow that no one will be left behind.
