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**Country Statement by
His Excellency Mr. Jullapong Nonsrichai
Vice Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Thailand
At the Sixty-Ninth Session of
The United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
Monday 29 April 2013, United Nations Conference Centre, Bangkok**

Mr. Chairman,
Excellencies (Prime Ministers and) Ministers ,
(Deputy Secretary-General of the United Nations),
Madame Executive Secretary,
Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great pleasure for me to deliver Thailand's country statement on behalf of His Excellency Mr. Surapong Tovichakchaikul, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Thailand at this important Sixty-Ninth Commission Session, which focuses on building resilience to natural disasters and major economic crises.

Mr. Chairman,
The global economic uncertainties and the far-reaching impacts of climate change, especially natural disasters, have brought about more destabilizing effects on the economic growth and social development of the Asia-Pacific region. It is, therefore, imperative that we place greater emphasis on **building resilience** to better cope with those challenges.

Regional economic integration and narrowing the development gap play an important role in promoting resilience. In this context, **enhancing regional connectivity** will continue to be high on our list of priorities. Thailand commends the work of ESCAP on the development of transport infrastructure in the Asia-Pacific region and emphasizes the urgent need for developing, upgrading and building of the missing links along the Asian Highway and Trans-Asian Railway networks, as well as Euro-Asia linkages and dry ports.

In our view, regional connectivity also serves as an important means to promote food and energy security as well as people-to-people contacts in the region. Thailand envisages a network of connections and is working within the framework of the Asian Cooperation Dialogue (ACD) on the "*Silk Route revival*", which builds upon the

historic Silk Route as well as the Trans-Asian Highway, the Trans-Siberian Railway and the Master Plan on ASEAN Regional Connectivity

Thailand also sees the vital need for additional **infrastructure development** within the country. Recently, the Thai Cabinet approved a 2 trillion Thai baht or 67 billion US dollars special borrowing programme that will secure funding for government investment in the logistics and transport sectors over the next seven years (2014-2020). The proposed projects will include the development of high-speed train routes across the country, expansion of Bangkok's electric train systems, improvement and expansion of road networks connecting Greater Mekong Subregion and ASEAN economic corridors; sea ports; and border facilities. The projects will not only strengthen Thailand's economic competitiveness, but also enhance trade and investment opportunities in Thailand and our neighbouring countries. The Dawei Deep Sea Port project and Special Economic Zone in southern Myanmar, will promote a better connected region linking to Thailand's Eastern Seaboard, unlocking great potentials for social and economic development.

Mr. Chairman,

As pointed out in the Rio+20 outcome document, "The Future We Want", disaster risk reduction and building resilience need to be addressed with a renewed sense of urgency. The challenge posed by disasters are among the emerging issues that were not adequately addressed by the MDGs; therefore, it is essential that **the disaster risk reduction be reflected in the post -2015 development agenda and Sustainable Development Goals**

Thailand highly appreciates ESCAP's crucial role in promoting regional cooperation, including through the **ESCAP Multi-Donor Trust Fund for Tsunami, Disaster and Climate Preparedness in Indian Ocean and South East Asia Countries**. We hope that ESCAP will continue to promote the Trust Fund as a valuable tool to strengthen regional early warning capacity. We also hope that ESCAP will continue to support the Asian Ministerial Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction to be hosted by Thailand in 2014.

In light of Thailand's experiences from the worst flooding in recent Thai history in 2011, the Royal Thai Government is committed to reducing any existing vulnerabilities and enhancing the country's **resilience to water-related disasters**, be they floods or droughts. We are investing around 11 billion US dollars in a comprehensive water resource management system. We wish to share our experiences and lessons learned from the devastating floods at the upcoming **2nd Asia Pacific Water Summit** to be held in Chiang Mai on 19-20 May 2013.

In line with the Government's policy of people-centred development, Thailand wishes to share our 10 year experiences in pursuing and promoting the **Universal Health Coverage (UHC)**, which has proven that UHC is achievable and has a direct positive impact on building resilience and reducing the vulnerability of the people.

Mr. Chairman,

Thailand, as a member of the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals, considers that countries should engage in further discussions in order to narrow their differences and achieve convergence on certain issues. In this connection, Thailand plans to **host the Asia-Pacific Ministerial Dialogue : from the MDGs to the United Nations Development Agenda beyond 2015**, in close cooperation with ESCAP, in August this year. We look forward to the participation of all countries concerned at this important meeting.

Given our past record and present actions to work for the common good of all, Thailand is seeking election to a non-permanent seat of the UN Security Council for the term 2017-2018. We pledge to work closely with the international community as well as regional bodies to achieve sustainable peace and development and the promotion of human rights worldwide.

Thank you.
