

Country Statement
by
His Excellency Mr. Manasvi Srisodapol
Deputy Permanent Secretary,
Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Thailand
at the 70th session of the Economic and Social Commission
for Asia and the Pacific,
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ESCAP Hall, United Nations Conference Centre,
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Mr. Chairman,
Excellencies,
Madame Executive Secretary,
Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

1. It is a great honour for me to deliver Thailand's country statement at the 70th session of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP) under the theme of "Regional connectivity for shared prosperity".

2. This year's session is very important as we are charting the future for the post 2015 development agenda. To ensure that all countries in the region are benefiting from regional growth and development, my delegation has six points to share:

3. **First**, Thailand sees **regional cooperation and integration** as the way for realizing shared prosperity and closing development gaps. In this connection, various domestic processes have been accelerated in the context of driving our country towards the advent of the ASEAN Community in 2015.

4. **Second**, linking the **sub-regional and regional transport networks** is important. Part of Thailand's recently approved budget for 2015 fiscal year of about 2.6 trillion Thai baht, or about 81.6 billion USD, will be invested in improving our railways infrastructure that will enable the connection of Thai railway networks to those of neighbouring countries and complement the Master Plan on ASEAN Regional Connectivity. Thailand also was one of the fourteen member countries who signed the Intergovernmental Agreement on Dry Ports during the Forum of Asian Ministers of Transport in Bangkok in November last year. The Agreement would create transport and trade corridors of prosperity by transforming landlocked countries into land-linked centres of development. We have ratified the Agreement and strongly encourage other countries to do the same so the Agreement can come into force.

5. **Third**, **promotion of border economic activities and creation of local opportunities are indispensable**. Thailand has assigned 12 border

areas as key development targets. Five, in particular, have been designated for implementation in 2015 at 5 customs check points in border areas with Thailand's four neighbouring countries: Cambodia, Lao PDR, Malaysia and Myanmar. This will help promote border trade, people-to-people connectivity in preparation of the ASEAN Community.

6. **Fourth, building community resilience to disaster should be our top priorities.** Asia and the Pacific is the world's most disaster-prone region and we need to work closely together to ensure that our communities are well prepared to prevent and to respond to disasters. Thailand hosted the 6th Asian Minister Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction in June. The meeting adopted the Bangkok Declaration and the Asia-Pacific inputs for the post-2015 framework on disaster risk reduction or HFA2. The outcome documents reflect our regional priorities, which could transform our region from the most vulnerable into the most resilient, as well as provide recommendations for the deliberation of HFA2, which will be adopted at the 3rd World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction in March 2015 in Sendai.

As disasters have no boundaries, Thailand has been actively engaged in international cooperation on disaster risk reduction and preparedness. In 2005, soon after the Indian Ocean tsunami of 26 December 2004, we contributed 10 million USD to establish the ESCAP Multi-Donor Trust Fund for Tsunami, Disaster and Climate Preparedness in the Indian Ocean and South East Asia Countries. The Trust Fund has been instrumental in helping disaster prone countries in the region to build early warning capacity as well as enhance community resilience. Right now the Trust Fund needs to be replenished. We hope that the international community would contribute to the Trust Fund so as to build more resilient coastal communities, and ultimately contribute to saving lives and reducing economic and social vulnerabilities.

7. **Fifth, deepened integration and enhanced connectivity have also driven increasing migration flows.** Thailand has hosted millions of migrants over the years. We view that migration must occur in safe and legal conditions, with full respect for human rights. This is why Thailand has recently introduced measures to regularize migration, allowing undocumented migrant workers to become protected under our laws. However, many still fall victims to trafficking or smuggling rings.

International cooperation and shared responsibilities are, therefore, required to address this challenge more effectively.

8. **Sixth**, Asia-Pacific is diverse. **Closing infrastructure gaps** is indispensable for closing the existing development gaps. The region's least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States (SIDS) in the Pacific remain special in view of their particular vulnerabilities. Thailand fully supports South-South cooperation and, through our TICA, will continue to support our friends in the Pacific in capacity building. We can share our lessons learnt in Universal Health Coverage and in disaster risk reduction, as well as in sustainable agriculture and integrated water resource management.

9. Last but not least, my delegation would like to assure that Thailand remains ever committed to strengthening democracy and we are in the pursuit of national reconciliation and much needed reform for a more sustainable and functioning democracy. It will take some time to bridge the social divide but we are confident that after this interim period, Thailand will emerge even stronger and as vibrant as ever.

10. Thank you.
