



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

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Statement

by

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of Thailand to the United Nations

to the Third Committee of the 61st Session

of the United Nations General Assembly

Agenda Item 67: Promotion and protection of human rights

New York, 27 October 2006

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Mr. Chairman,

Thailand's commitment to the promotion and protection of human rights has been and will always remain strong. The same goes for democracy. Following the recent political change in Thailand, a civilian government has been put in place. We are committed to the full restoration of a parliamentary democracy within the shortest possible timeframe. The National Legislative Assembly has been convened. Work on a new Constitution will soon begin, paving the way for a stronger democracy. Though we know that many daunting challenges remain ahead of us, we are fully committed and determined to succeed.

As for human rights, Thailand will continue to strive to fulfill all our international obligations. We are now party to five out of seven core international human rights instruments. And we are still moving ahead. Early this year, we have become party to the two Optional Protocols to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography; and on the involvement of children in armed conflict. Earnest efforts are being made to expedite the necessary domestic processes regarding the accession to the Convention against Torture, the United Nations Transnational Organized Crime Convention and its Protocol to prevent, suppress and punish trafficking in persons, especially women and children, as well as the First Additional Protocol to the 1949 Geneva Convention.

We have also accorded our best cooperation to the treaty bodies and have implemented their recommendations to the extent possible. Early this year, we presented our second report to the CRC and the combined fourth and fifth report to the CEDAW. We are now working on our reporting obligations on the CERD and the ICESCR. As a developing country, fulfilling all our reporting requirements is certainly not an easy task. But, we are committed to do our best to meet our implementing obligations.

Thailand has also consistently rendered support to the work undertaken by the special procedures. Over the course of next year, we have agreed to invite three special rapporteurs to visit Thailand, namely, the Special Rapporteur on the Right to Health, the Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons, especially women and children, and the Special Rapporteur on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography. We certainly hope that the visits will be a mutually learning process for both Thailand and the Special Rapporteurs.

Mr. Chairman,

International frameworks and standards alone are not sufficient. Human rights need to be cultivated from within. They need to be locally embedded.

To cultivate a human rights culture, the Thai Government will redouble our efforts to promote human rights education. Among other measures, a national workshop is planned for next year to promote the use of Human Rights Education Manual, which was developed by Austria as part of the Human Security Network. Thailand, which is also a member of the Network, has subsequently translated the said Manual into Thai.

This national workshop would complement and act as a catalyst to other efforts that aim to disseminate human rights principles among the local population in languages and contexts that can be readily understood. For example, blending in human rights principles with local traditions, cultures and religious beliefs as well as entertainments can be an effective educational strategy. This is because respect for human rights is strongest and durable only when people feel that it is in fact a part of his or her daily life, not something alien to their ways of life.

For a human rights culture to grow, an enabling environment is necessary. That said, the Thai Government is firmly committed to achieving stronger democratic governance, both in its form and content, and with more effective checks and balances. We are striving for a system that nurtures individual freedoms in the context of social justice and harmony. We are working towards a system that both the minority and the majority have a place to stand and their voices heard and respected. We want to ensure that our people have greater awareness and deeper understanding of the spirit and principles of democracy. So that they can act as informed citizens and active participants in decision-making processes at various levels – participation that does not just start and end at polling stations important as they are. We are fully committed to this process of democratic revitalization.

Mr. Chairman,

Enabling international environment for the cultivation of human rights culture is also indispensable. And for that reason, we need an effective and credible United Nations.

We have a particularly high expectation for the Human Rights Council and the Universal Periodic Review (UPR). We agree with the High Commissioner that the true test of this new mechanism lies in its universality and its constructive approach based on cooperation, dialogue, mutual respect and understanding. We look forward to the Human Rights Council that talks less, listens more, and acts more promptly to prevent and address gross and serious human rights violations.

Yet, the Human Rights Council should not be the only mechanism. The totality of the United Nations system needs to be mobilized for the promotion and protection of human rights. In this regard, Thailand welcomes more country engagement of the OHCHR as envisioned by the High Commissioner. We agree that country presence would contribute to better monitoring, reporting and provision of technical assistance that is need-driven. We also hope that by working closely with the United Nations Country Team, the OHCHR will serve to focus more on preventing a disease rather than addressing its symptoms.

We expect the OHCHR to engage more in human rights education and public campaign activities. OHCHR can do more to provide advisory services and technical assistance to developing countries in order to support their national efforts to make a human rights culture takes root and grows in their societies. This process of cultivating a human rights culture needs to take into account both the international standards and local specificities. Most importantly, constructive cooperation with all stakeholders at the national level needs to be a guiding working principle. We hope that the OHCHR will rise up to this challenge.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman.