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TO THE UNITED NATIONS**

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**Statement**

**by**

**His Excellency General Prayut Chan-o-cha (Ret.)**

**Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Thailand**

**at the General Debate of the 71<sup>st</sup> Session**

**of the United Nations General Assembly**

**on “The Sustainable Development Goals:**

**a Universal Push to Transform Our World”**

**New York, 21 September 2016**

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**Statement of His Excellency General Prayut Chan-o-cha (Ret.),  
Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Thailand  
At the General Debate of the 71st Session of the United Nations General Assembly  
On "The Sustainable Development Goals: a Universal Push to Transform Our World"  
At the United Nations Headquarters, New York, United States of America  
September 21, 2016**

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Mr. President,

1. Last year, the UN General Assembly adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development with 17 Sustainable Development Goals that we all have to 'push together' in order to achieve a balanced and sustainable global development. We have to push for a world where peoples are placed at the heart of the development policy, and no one should be left behind. Such transformative agenda reflects a crucial paradigm shift of the UN development agenda, to be more inclusive and responsive to new challenges.

2. The year 2016 is special for us since it marks the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Thailand as a Member of the United Nations. It is also the first year during which various international frameworks, such as the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, the Paris Agreement, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, and the Sustainable Development Goals, are implemented. The international community should join hands and hearts while heading towards an effective implementation of those agendas.

3. Thailand firmly believes that sustainable development cannot be realised where there is no peace and security or when human rights are violated, abused, or disregarded – and vice-versa. Therefore, we must work together in the spirit of a shared responsibility to prevent and address those challenges in a sustainable manner, at its root causes, and through the 3 pillars of the United Nations. The recent migration crisis is a clear example on how security, development and social implications are intrinsically intertwined. No country is exempted from effects of crisis that happen in the world, even if it is far apart.

4. In the present era of multi-faceted challenges we are facing, the diversity of over 7 billion world population in around 200 countries, with different history, culture and belief, add on to the complexity in addressing those issues and finding universal solution. The international community should therefore strive for and work closely together to achieve a peaceful co-existence, with mutual respect and understanding. Every man and woman, boy and girl, must be granted with opportunities and basic rights in an equitable and non-discriminatory manner. Full compliance with international laws and obligations, in particular those breaches of which may result in serious humanitarian impact, such as obligations regarding nuclear disarmament, should be ensured.

Mr. President,

5. To achieve the SDGs, a shared responsibility and collective efforts, as well as active engagement with and contribution of regional, political, or economic groups are vital. No single country, be it the most powerful or prosperous one, can push for such achievement alone.

6. **International cooperation**, be it North-South, South-South, or triangular cooperation are therefore essential and can serve as a universal push to transform our world. We all have to work together for it.

7. This year, **Thailand has the honour and opportunity to serve as the Chair of the Group of 77**, representing the views of 134 developing countries in various negotiation processes of the United Nations with the objective to transform visions to concrete actions. We have been **coordinating and bridging the Group's position** with other groups and partners to **enhance mutual trust and promote common interest**, in particular, by strengthening cooperation with the group of major economies – the G20.

8. We have shared our experiences and lessons learnt in overcoming socio-economic challenges through **His Majesty the King's Sufficiency Economy Philosophy (SEP)** as an alternative development model, **in which people-centred approach, moderation, reasonableness, inclusiveness and resilience are key principles**. The SEP model has so far been used and adapted to fit the national context in over 20 countries.

9. In assuming its chairmanship of the G77, Thailand has initiated the **SEP for SDGs Partnership programme** as a platform for exchanging views, experiences and good practices among members. The discussions include key global challenges, for instance investment and ICT for development, climate change, disaster risk management, and development models which match specific needs and context of the members. Expanding and strengthening cooperation with partners have also been highlighted. Thailand stands ready to promote further cooperation with all groups, such as BRICS and ASEAN, who are ready to engage with us in the implementation of the Sustainable Development Agenda, in order to ensure a stronger push to transform our world in an inclusive manner. Next month, Thailand will host the 2<sup>nd</sup> Asia Cooperation Dialogue Summit which could also serve as a forum for further discussions on the implementation of SDGs in the region.

10. At the ASEAN-UN Summit meeting in Vientiane earlier this month, the UN Secretary-General mentioned the **importance of regional mechanisms and how the latter could contribute and give a "push" to international peace and**

**sustainable development. All ASEAN leaders, including myself, believe that the implementation towards the achievement of the SDGs will be a key factor for the transformation of our world, of our children's future, in a better way.**

**11. The beginning of the ASEAN Community this year does not only bring the people of ASEAN closer through economic and cultural links, but also develops cooperation and partnerships, which will lead to conflict prevention and further peacebuilding within the region.**

Mr. President,

**12. The Royal Thai Government attaches high importance to translating and incorporating such global Agenda and Goals into concrete action, policy and laws, both at local and national levels. In this connection, we have established the National Committee on Sustainable Development and incorporate the SDGs into our 12<sup>th</sup> National Economic and Social Development Plan (2017-2021), and to our 20-year National Strategy. We also have a continued policy of providing quality healthcare services for all, including migrants and foreign workers, regardless of their status, through the Government's Universal Health Coverage Scheme, as well as other initiatives such as the anti-microbial resistance campaign. On education, the Government has a compulsory education programme to ensure basic education for all, with a view to increase economic opportunity for children and youth in the Kingdom.**

**13. Moreover, the Government places high importance to the freedom, equality and well-being of people, as well as inclusive and equitable access to basic services. We have reviewed related national laws and regulations with a view to achieve tangible and sustainable results. A new legislation on gender equality to promote women's rights has been enacted. Several measures to enhance protection of at-risk and vulnerable groups have been taken, including the establishment of funds to take care of new-born children, persons with disability and elderly persons. Adequate housing and land distribution have also been provided for low-income population, since it is the Government's view that those peoples, if properly empowered and protected, can be valuable asset and contribute to a strong universal push to transform our world.**

**14. On environmental and climate change issue, Thailand is pleased to ratify the Paris Agreement and call on other countries that have not yet done so to become Party to the said Agreement at the earliest opportunity. We have to show our joint commitment, solidarity and shared responsibility in addressing global warming and climate change which affect all humanity, especially Small Islands and Developing States (SIDS).**

15. On our economy, the Royal Thai Government initiated the so-called “**Thailand 4.0 model**”, which **employs technology and innovation as driving forces** for targeted and sustainable economic development in agricultural and industrial sectors, among others. The model places emphasis on education, infrastructure, research and development, and creating incentives and safe environment for private sector, through the review of business laws and regulations to reach international standards and the fight against corruption. We believe that such approach will help **overcoming the “middle-income trap”** and allow Thai people to participate in deciding the country’s future in an inclusive manner.

16. On peace and international security, the Royal Thai Government has consistently supported the United Nations’ peacekeeping and peacebuilding operations. Through their participation in about 20 missions, Thailand’s peacekeepers have contributed to enabling local people to live normal lives, to **strengthen their own society as well as to participate in the long term development of their countries**. These efforts are also consistent with **achieving SDG 16 on peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development**.

17. In addition, Thailand highly supports effective implementation of Goal 17 on the means of implementation through strengthened international cooperation and global partnership. We believe that there is **not a one-size-fit-all model in achieving sustainable development** since each country has its own specific need and limitation. Therefore, we need to adapt relevant development model to the context of each state through experiences sharing, with a view to **galvanise such diversity into a harmonised unity**.

Mr. President,

18. The year 2016 has also been an important year for the Thai people and the direction in which the country is headed. On August 7<sup>th</sup>, **the Thai people voted democratically to approve the draft constitution in a referendum**. At present, constitutional by-laws are being considered which will lead to the general elections to be held in late 2017.

19. This referendum has reflected **the genuine intention of the government to promote democratic processes, while taking into account the views expressed by the international community**. The government came in to oversee the situation during a period of transition, to bring about order and security and to pave the way towards **sustained political governance**. Once the situation returns to normalcy and security restored, the government has put an end to temporary measures such as the recent lifting of military jurisdiction over civilians.

The Government remains actively engaged in addressing **deeply-rooted problems of security, corruption, human trafficking and crime**. We believe that addressing such problems at their root causes can serve as a **strong foundation for a sustainable democracy and good governance**, with the hope that Thailand and the Thai people will sustainably become quality members of the global community.

Mr. President,

20. Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to **pay tribute to the Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon for his efforts throughout the past decade**. The Secretary-General is the man behind many important and commendable initiatives which form parts of the change and progress the international community is witnessing, for example the **Rights-Up Front Initiative and the Agenda for Humanity**. I wish him all the best in his future endeavours

Thank you, Mr. President.

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