



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

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**Country Statement**

by

**His Excellency Mr. Norachit Sinhaseni**

**Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Thailand**

**to the United Nations**

**at the Twenty-Ninth Special Session of the General Assembly**

**on the follow up to the Programme of Action of the ICPD beyond 2014**

**New York, 22 September 2014**

*Please check against delivery*



Mr. President,

1. At the outset, let me express our appreciation to you for convening this special session of the General Assembly on the follow up of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) at this crucial juncture when Member States are getting ready for the elaboration of the post-2015 development agenda to begin early next year and its subsequent adoption at a Summit to be held later in 2015.
2. Thailand has long recognized that population and development need to be viewed as integral parts of sustainable development. Demographic structure has direct impact on country's ability to sustain economic growth. Like many other countries, Thailand has been facing the declining trend in its fertility rate with the disproportional increase of elderly population and decrease of working and child population.
3. In view of this trend, Thailand has adopted **the right-based approach development throughout the human life cycle** to ensure that all age groups from newborns, infants, adolescents, working-age to elderly are self-reliant within the secured environment and quality of life as reflected in our 11<sup>th</sup> National Economic and Social Development Plan for the period 2012-2016.

Mr. President,

4. Allow me to share with you Thailand's **life course approach** on population development strategy from birth to death. We have been promoting such approach among ASEAN Member States to be better prepared in addressing population challenges as we emerge as one ASEAN Community in 2015.
5. First, **universal access to sexual and reproductive health information, education and services is one of our top priorities**. The Government will soon propose the draft Reproductive Health Protection Act to provide a holistic approach to tackle with maternal health, teen's sexual health and health problems for aging population. This is to ensure that that the promotion of quality reproductive health for all ages and gender groups are well protected with equal access to education, health and social services.
6. On this path, the **Universal Health Coverage (UHC)** scheme also helps strengthen health system by providing affordable and equitable health care access for all, particularly for the poor and vulnerable. It also yields positive impact towards poverty eradication by reducing household expenditures and at the same time contributing to ensuring a healthy population through the promotion of right to health.
7. Second, Thailand demographic scenario is changing towards an aging society. In 2040, our aging population is expected to increase to 20.5 million which accounts

for 32% of total population comparing to 1.7 million or 4.9% in 1970. Therefore, **the empowerment of elderly people is indispensable to enable their full active participation in society and development for sustained economic growth.**

8. Bearing in mind the new demographic trend, **Thailand is developing a 20 year long-term Population Development Plan** for the preparation of all Thai population to become self-reliant after retirement including by ensuring financial security and sustainable social welfare systems. At the same time, the said Plan places great emphasis on capacity development and people participation at family and community levels to link with long-term public health care system.
9. Third, **gender inequality and discrimination could derail sustainable development and lead to the negative population dynamics and poverty.** Gender equality could not be achieved without public awareness and knowledge on sexual and reproductive health and rights. The Ministry of Education is mainstreaming gender equality into the national curriculum, engaging men and boys as agents for change to promote gender equality and condemning violence against women and girls.

Mr. President,

10. Thailand wishes to reiterate our commitment to improving living conditions of all population groups, eradicating poverty and reducing inequalities to ensure quality of life for all ages based on gender-responsive and youth-friendly health policies and programmes. We are ready to work closely with the United Nations and other partners and stakeholders to integrate population and development in national and regional policy as well as global post-2015 development agenda

Thank you.

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