

**Remarks by the HRH Ambassador Mahidol  
Launch of the UNODC Regional Programme for SE Asia 2014-  
2017  
Bangkok, November 14 2013**

Executive Director Yury Fedotov,  
Minister Chaikasem Nitisiri,  
Permanent Secretary Kittipong Kittayarak,  
Regional Representative Jeremy Douglas,  
Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

I am honoured to speak at the formal declaration and launch of the UNODC Regional Programme for Southeast Asia today.

To arrive at this point, the UNODC Regional Office for Southeast Asia and the Pacific has consulted extensively with Thailand and other States of Southeast Asia, both directly and through different regional conferences and meetings of ASEAN and other settings like the Mekong MOU.

I am personally grateful to UNODC for consultation with the Ministry of Justice, and the Thailand Institute of Justice which has recently emerged as a independent crime prevention and criminal justice research and advocacy centre of excellence. Both the Ministry and the TIJ share a close relation to many UNODC mandates, and ultimately we see working together as a strength. We are now in the process of defining a partnership which we believe will benefit both.

UNODC has long been a partner of Thailand on issues including drug production and alternative development, and drug

trafficking and use, and over the past decade on other forms of transnational crime, and crime prevention and criminal justice issues. We very much welcome the Regional Programme as a signal of UNODC continuing to broaden its support to Thailand and other states and strategic partners in Southeast Asia, addressing the complete range of UNODC mandates, while effectively supporting and encouraging the rule of law.

Indeed the role UNODC plays in rule of law and related crime prevention and drug control mandates continues to evolve through its governing bodies, the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, and the Commission on Narcotic Drugs. Global debates at the Commissions have matured and evolved, necessitating a unified and coordinated response like that provided by the UNODC. Thailand has proudly stepped forward in recent years to lead many Commission preparatory sessions and ensure resolutions are implemented.

Indeed, at the most recent Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, or CCPCJ, Thailand partnered with other like minded states to pass a resolution on the importance and need for the rule of law, crime prevention and criminal justice to be reflected in the UN development agenda beyond 2015. We see this resolution as groundbreaking, having set the stage for larger discussions including those taking place tomorrow at the *Bangkok Dialogue on the Rule of Law*.

Thailand has also passed several other resolutions through the CCPCJ in recent years including on prison reform and the treatment of female prisoners also known as the *Bangkok Rules*, and we are now taking a active role the discussions led by UNODC around improvements to the *Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners*. The CCPCJ has been proven to be the leading global forum to drive forward criminal justice reform.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Importantly, the new UNODC Regional Programme comes to Southeast Asia at a time when it is very much needed.

There is undoubtedly great benefit from the expansion and integration of economies here in the region, but we have also come to realize that there are certain crime prevention, criminal justice, law enforcement and drug control challenges and risks that require a integrated multilateral response.

Some of the issues states in Southeast Asia now deal with were not anticipated a decade ago, and indeed many are transnational and not something a single state can effectively deal with alone. Collaboration at a regional level, through ASEAN and other forums, allows shared priorities to be set, experiences and best practices to be shared, and specialized technical assistance and tools to be delivered.

So as we consider the full implications of transnational and serious or organized crime, we need to think about the laws, institutions, capacities and networks that need to be strengthened in-line with the principles of the rule of law.

Ultimately the beneficiaries of the Regional Programme are the people of Southeast Asia. Policing, prosecution, court and prison systems, and appropriate health services, will be supported to address crime and drug challenges and provide for improvements in the rule of law.

This is where the process of developing the Regional Programme points to its relevance.

UNODC has worked hard over the past half year to ensure the Regional Programme is aligned with relevant ASEAN frameworks, the Mekong MOU, the Bali Process, and other regional plans and frameworks. Further identification and understanding of national institutions and partners, and what others are doing in the region, including within the UN or bilaterally, clearly shows the relevance and importance of the approach.

So what we are here to see today is the start of a very much needed Programme that will benefit the states and people of Southeast Asia. Ultimately the UNODC Regional Programme will contribute to equitable justice and the rule of law.

Ladies and gentlemen,

We are working from a solid foundation of experience and strong cooperation with UNODC. Thailand looks forward to continuing to build on this relationship by contributing both substantively and with political and financial support. Importantly we are going to have a responsive new Regional Programme that addresses regional priorities and supports the rule of law.

I again reiterate that Thailand appreciates the value of the new UNODC Regional Programme for Southeast Asia, and that I am honoured to speak today as it is declared officially launched.

Thank you Executive Director Fedotov, Minister Nitisiri, Permanent Secretary Kittayarak, and Regional Representative Jeremy Douglas.