

**59<sup>th</sup> Session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs (CND)**

**Statement by  
His Excellency General Paiboon Koomchaya  
Thai Minister of Justice**

**The Special Segment of the General Assembly on the World Drug  
Problem to be held in 2016**

**On Monday 14 March 2016, 10.00 – 13.00 hrs.  
Plenary Hall, M-Building, Vienna International Center  
Vienna, Republic of Austria**

**CHECK AGAINST  
DELIVERY**

Mr. Yury Fedotov                      Executive Director of the UNODC  
H.E. Mr. Vladimir Galuska      Chairman of the 59<sup>th</sup> Session of the CND  
H.E. Mr. Khaled Shaama        Chair of the UNGASS Board  
Excellencies,  
Distinguished delegates,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

To be precise, please allow me to deliver my speech in Thai Language.

1. First of all, Thailand would like to convey our gratitude to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime for hosting this Special Segment during the 59<sup>th</sup> session of the CND in order to properly prepare for the upcoming UNGASS next month.
2. Drugs and Psychotropic substances undermines the well-being of everyone, harming families, with in turn impedes every nation's competitiveness. We could no longer stand this situation. We would like to share our current efforts in the fight against drugs, especially the reduction of demand and supply. We are not trying to claim the best, instead to share our experiences that may be applicable for the contexts of other countries or regions.
3. Golden Triangle is a significant case study, reiterating that drug problem is global, transnational and always dynamic. This region was once considered the world's largest opium and cannabis plantation area. Drugs produced from the region spread to and had impacts on other regions. Due to our tireless efforts, we are proud to say that the cultivation and production of opium in the area has successfully been reduced to insignificant number and no longer a problem. Nevertheless, instead the Golden Triangle is now facing the new challenge of the inflow of precursor chemicals from other regions for the illicit drug

production that causes a lot of problems for countries in this region. Therefore, we would like to call for a serious attention of countries, particularly, the origin of those precursor chemicals to look back and join hands with us in order to effectively solve this issue.

4. In the past, we were often labeled as a main drug-producing area of the world. However, now the world drug problem and the problem in our region are caused by those who used to blame us and are the origin of precursor chemicals. From our perspective, this is a matter of integrity and responsibility. Unless we cooperate, the origin countries also inevitably encounter the negative consequences. We need to identify the sources of chemical production and send them an important message that together, we can! We can help each other to eradicate this problem. I also recommend that the outcome document of the UNGASS emphasizes the urgent need for precursor control measures and the necessity of origin countries to have a close cooperation with us in stopping the diversion and the illicit smuggling of precursor chemicals to drug-producing areas.
5. In response to the change of situation, we have established the joint cooperation in the Greater Mekong sub-region under "Safe Mekong Operation Plan". Safe Mekong highlights the importance of regional cooperation to tackle drugs and precursors as well as other transborder crimes that once we may have overlooked. In Thailand, we used to amend laws to increase penalties for drug offences, but this resulted in the overcrowded prisons in which 70-80% of the inmates were charged under drug-related offences, and the drug networks got expanded instead. This has brought us to the point where domestic measures prove insufficiently effective; and countries in the region need to unite and make concrete plans for drug and precursor control at regional, national, and operational level together. Thailand would like to take this opportunity to express our gratitude to the member countries of the Safe Mekong Plan, namely, China, Myanmar and Laos as well as the Government of Australia, and UNODC for your continued cooperation and support for the drug control in this region.
6. In addition, Alternative Development has proved, with reference to Thailand's experience, an effective mechanism for sustainable drug control. Thailand recently organized the ICAD2 in November last year in order to emphasize the importance of tackling drugs at root causes that are poverty, illiteracy, lack of opportunities and access to public health through "The Philosophy of the King" and "Sufficient Economy" approach. The approach succeeds not only in improving the quality of life of the needed but also instilling the principles of sufficiency economy in them, which is very important because the alternatives provided may not make them rich overnight but feel safe, secure and live their life in dignity. Thailand stands ready to be a learning center on AD for any interested countries. This approach is well linked with the

Sustainable Development Goals in terms of reduction of poverty and inequality, access to education and public health. We will not leave anyone behind.

7. The most challenging issue at this moment may involve with the implementation according to the three main international drug control conventions. Thailand fully supports of having these drug control instruments as a cornerstone for our work. Our standpoint is to support the ASEAN's position document, that is, we disagree with legalization of dangerous drugs and decriminalization for serious offences of major drug traffickers. At the same time, drug users should receive treatment and rehabilitation, not incarceration. We have diversion measures to keep drug users away from prosecution but treatment. We strictly comply with the Bangkok Rules for female inmates. Importantly, Thailand has also recently improved and integrated the drug laws under a new single code within which penalties for drug offences are also made more proportional.
8. For the upcoming UNGASS -- a very important forum for uniting the world efforts against drug problem, Thailand would like to reiterate the importance of regional cooperation such as the Safe Mekong Operation Plan, the joint cooperation of the golden triangle countries. We would also like to emphasize the utilization of AD as a tool to sustainably eliminate drug problem and as a model to be applied for countries affected by drug problem and illicit cultivation. We support the use of the United Nations Guiding Principles on Alternative Development as guidelines to implement AD programs. Most of all, we urge that the matters we discuss over the course of this session should be integrated into national plan and operation plan, delivered from policy makers to practitioners. Thailand stands ready to cooperate with all countries in all respects, since drug problem is a vital global issue that cannot be solved by any single country on their own.
9. Lastly, we would like to invite you to Thailand's two exhibitions during this 59<sup>th</sup> session of the CND firstly, on the cooperation among Great Mekong Sub-region countries under the Safe Mekong Project and secondly, on Alternative Development. The opening ceremony of the two exhibitions will be held today's at 1.30 pm. The exhibition will be displayed until next Tuesday. This exhibition will showcase the commitment and shared responsibility among Great Mekong countries and concerned parties to the regional and world drug problem.
10. Thank you.

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