The 61st Session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs (CND)

General Statement by
His Excellency ACM Prajin Juntong
Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Justice of Thailand

Agenda 3: General Debate

On Monday 12 March 2018, 10.00–13.00 hrs.
Plenary Hall, M-Building, Vienna International Center
Vienna, Republic of Austria

Mr. Yury Fedotov Executive Director of the UNODC
Chairs of Regional Groups, G77 and the EU Commission
Her Excellency Alicia Buenrostro Massieu
Chair of the Sixty First Session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs
Excellencies,
Distinguished delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of the Thai Delegation, I would like to congratulate Her Excellency, as the Chair of this very important session of the Commission. I would also like to congratulate the Commission of a long-term achievement in international drug control. It is indeed my pleasure and honour to attend this session.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Thailand has been actively taking its role in implementing the plan of actions and measures stated by relevant United Nations General Assembly resolutions including approaches stipulated in the three UN Conventions on Drug control, especially recommendations addressed in the UNGASS Outcome Document. Thailand appreciates the CND and member states that assist UNODC in moving forward on drug control.

The world drug problem remains a common and shared responsibility for all of us. It continues to pose a serious threat and challenges to health, safety and well-being of our people including socio-eco political stability, and sustainable development. Thailand thus reaffirms our commitment to utilizing the three Conventions and the UNGASS Outcome Document as a framework to promote a balanced and comprehensive approach for our national drug control, taking into
consideration of other aspects of human rights, health, proportionality of sentencing and development.

Last two years, Thailand declared our new approach on drug control. Drug is still illegal and is not encouraged to be used. With the support of health authorities, the concept of “people who use drugs are ‘patients’ and should not be sent to prisons” was promoted. The government takes a leading role to support authorities concerned in terms of treatment access and quality of treatment, including follow-up process at no cost. At the same time, Thailand has amended drug laws in order to facilitate the implementing agencies on their public health-led practices.

Moreover, as drug problem is a global and transnational threat, Thailand also champions international cooperation, especially in the Mekong Sub-region and the strategic area, so called “the Golden Triangle” that was once one of the world’s largest opium plantation. Even though the opium plantation in the Golden Triangle has reduced sharply, at present, the area is facing new challenges of synthetic drugs, especially, Amphetamine Type Stimulants (ATS). Thailand has initiated a number of activities. One of our proud examples is the gathering of partners across the sub-region with China, Myanmar, Laos, Cambodia and Vietnam, to counter drugs and precursor chemical trafficking under the “Safe Mekong Operation”. Illicit drugs from the Golden Triangle affects not only countries in ASEAN but also other parts of the world. Through the Safe Mekong Cooperation, a large amount of drugs and precursor chemicals were seized. I view that the Golden Triangle needs development in order to elevate the quality of life of the people so that they will not get involved with drugs. Thailand, therefore, would like to call for support from donor countries as well as international organizations to these frontier countries in the Golden Triangle. I would also like to thank all donor countries for your invaluable support to the fight against drugs in the Golden Triangle.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

To sustainably reduce the supply and drug problems, we need to tackle at root causes which are poverty and lack of opportunities, through development. The UN Guiding Principles on Alternative Development has been applied in association with the Sufficiency Economy Approach. In this regard, Thailand would like to take this opportunity to present to you “The Philosophy of our late King Bhumibhol” and the royal initiative of “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 to live in dignity in secure
and viable environment. Recently, Thailand has also encouraged the application of the “Sufficiency Economy” approach in all drug-affected areas nationwide including urban settings. We are delighted that alternative development is one of the main thematic topics of the UNGASS outcome document. This approach is well linked with and enriches the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Thailand stands ready to be a learning center on AD for any interested countries, as well as, a key supporter in our pursuit to achieve the SDGs.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Thailand also views that community empowerment is crucial for sustainable drug control. Now we are promoting a campaign, so-called “Thai Niyom Yangyuen Development Project”. Based on the need of local people and communities, the Project aims to solve social problems including drug-related crimes at root causes which include poverty, illiteracy, poor health and lack of opportunities. Thus, in order to safeguard the public in general, the community should be empowered and engaged with all essential processes of the Project in their own communities from data collection and problem analysis, promotion of public awareness and commitment to implementation.

In conclusion, I, on behalf of the Royal Thai Government, would like to our strong commitment to the three International Conventions and our active roles to promote a new balanced and comprehensive drug approach, community empowerment and development, regional and international cooperation, especially, the Safe Mekong Cooperation, as well as, to be a learning center of Alternative Development.

Lastly, I would like to express our appreciation to the UNODC once again for this CND Session which provides member states an opportunity to share comments and review the progress achieved and challenges faced in their efforts to reach the goals and targets set out in the Political Declaration adopted by the General Assembly in 2009, including the recommendations shown in the UNGASS Outcome Document which Thailand fully supports.

Thank you.