



STATEMENT BY H.E. MR. DON PRAMUDWINAI, MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF THE KINGDOM OF THAILAND, CHAIR OF THE GROUP OF 77 FOR 2016, AT THE HANDOVER CEREMONY OF THE CHAIRMANSHIP OF THE GROUP OF 77 (New York, 13 January 2017)

Your Excellency Rafael Correa, President of the Republic of Ecuador;
Your Excellency Antonio Guterres, Secretary-General of the United Nations;
Your Excellency Durga Prasad Bhattarai, Vice President of the UN General Assembly attending on behalf of the President of the 71st session of the UN General Assembly;
Mr. Mourad Ahmia, Executive Secretary of the Group of 77;
Excellencies;
Ladies and Gentlemen,

1. I have the honour to welcome you to the handover ceremony of the Chairmanship of the Group of 77. Please allow me to begin by presenting you with our best wishes for the New Year 2017. We are meeting today to welcome the new Chair of the Group of 77, the Republic of Ecuador, whose candidacy was endorsed by the 40th Ministerial Meeting of the Group last September.

2. A year ago (a year and one day ago, to be exact), Thailand was given the honour and privilege of chairing the Group of 77, and we took such responsibility to heart. Before passing the gavel to the new Chair today, I wish to convey my Government's sincere appreciation to all Members of the Group, as well as to the G77 Secretariat, for the unwavering support and guidance given to us throughout our tenure as Chair.

3. I also wish to thank the former and current Presidents of the General Assembly; the Secretary-General of the United Nations; the United Nations Secretariat; the United Nations System; as well as development partners from the broader international community for their continued and valuable support to the Group and to our Chairmanship.

4. In concluding Thailand's role as Chair of the Group of 77 for 2016, please allow me to highlight what we see as major achievements as well as share with you a few observations and reflections on the past year.

Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

5. A key challenge for the Group in 2016 was laying down the groundwork for the full realization and implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Thailand recognized that moving forward on this ambitious agenda, not a single country or government could do it alone and no one or no country should be left behind. The implementation must be inclusive and this could only be achieved through genuine partnership. We, therefore, fully committed to work under the theme "From Vision to Action: Inclusive Partnership for Sustainable Development", striving to promote the spirit of the Global South in the process.

6. We have accomplished much and gained sincere respect over the past year together, from main committees' work to major intergovernmental processes to conferences. To name a few, the UNGA resolution on Follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development at the global level lays out the mechanism to review progress of the 2030 Agenda during the first cycle. The

outcome document of Habitat III, the New Urban Agenda, was negotiated after 20 years and will guide us towards sustainable urban development. Other important milestones include the Inaugural ECOSOC Forum for Financing for Development Follow-up, the Mid-term Review Conference of the Istanbul Program of Action for LDCs including the full operationalization of the Technology Bank for LDCs and the implementation of the Paris Agreement to ensure that the pre-2020 ambition is enhanced. Last but not least, we engaged constructively in the UNGA71 and met the expectations which were put upon us.

7. These tasks required collective talents and perseverance, for which the Group were united in support of the Chair. Thailand is proud that during this first year of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, we have laid a solid foundation to ensure that no member of this Group, particularly peoples and countries under foreign occupation, is left behind. You can count on Thailand to defend the principles which the Group attach to. We are proud that major outcome documents such as the Ministerial Declaration of the 2016 High-Level Political Forum, the New Urban Agenda, and the QCPR resolution included every member of the Group. We did it; you did it; our experts did it.

8. We continued to seek to address the consequences of the unequal distribution of power in the world and cope with distorted and inadequate global trade as well as an unbalanced governance structure. We recognized the need to engage in critical dialogues as equals, and with common goals; and made progress here by being invited to the G20 Summit in Hangzhou last September. The Summit put priority on development and redressing the imbalances in the international economy. Our voice was heard and we hope that this dialogue with the G20 will continue in the years ahead.

9. We continued to give importance to the issue of financing the 2030 Agenda and pushing for adequate resources which was an uphill challenge. But as Chair, Thailand saw it as our duty and responsibility to forge ahead and secure the foundation for the Agenda's effective implementation. We recognize this is a mere first step. We hope the Group will stay on course.

10. Therefore, the first task we were determined to undertake was to ensure that we invested in the shared future of the Group. Thailand contributed 520,000 US Dollars to the Pérez-Guerrero Trust Fund (PGTF) for South-South Cooperation. We did this in the simple belief in the immeasurable return on this type of investment. We wanted to expand meaningful cooperation by and for the people and countries of the Global South. And in commemoration of the 70-year reign of His Majesty the late King Bhumibol Adulyadej, Thailand also made available 70 scholarships to those from the Global South who would otherwise not have the opportunity to pursue their dreams.

11. Thailand also organized different meetings to revitalize South-South Cooperation as well as to promote the coherence and coordination of the Group at the global level. We were honoured to host the Group's two important meetings, namely, the High-level Panel of Eminent Personalities of the South on South-South Cooperation and the 47th Meeting of the Chairs/Coordinators of the Chapters of the Group of 77 in Bangkok in early March 2016.

12. Bearing in mind the many diverse and emerging issues as well as core interests of the Group, Thailand also invested in other important meetings and activities throughout the year, enabling developing countries to better understand the issues and to contribute to enhancing the unity of the Group in negotiations as well as laying the groundwork for future coordination of the Group, covering such areas marine biological diversity in areas beyond national jurisdiction; investment and ICT for sustainable development; and new debt workout mechanisms.

13. The Group also worked together on important emerging and current issues such as

antimicrobial resistance (AMR) and the new selection process for the next Secretary-General of the United Nations. The Group also managed to crystalize its common interests on the working methods of a functional commission on population and development that had previously been considered a deeply divisive issue for the Group.

14. Finally, the Group regained its ability to overcome difficult and delicate conversations, in particular on what constitutes "family". And in the process, we managed to strengthen our own family. We also managed to recover our critical and common interests on the issues of ageing and social development.

15. These opportunities were possible in large part due to the willingness and flexibility of all Group members.

Excellencies,
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16. Thailand hopes that when the Group looks back on our Chairmanship, you will remember that we shared with you our home-grown approach to sustainable development in a globalized world - and that is the Sufficiency Economy Philosophy, or SEP. This was the development philosophy of our late King Bhumibol Adulyadej; and it was the philosophy that enabled Thailand to become the upper middle-income country it is today. And it will be one of the enduring legacies of our revered late King.

17. The SEP encourages us to make decisions and take actions in all aspects of our lives on the basis of moderation, reason and prudence, guided by knowledge as well as ethical and moral considerations. Doing so will help us to build resilience and self-immunity; and will help to create balance economically, socially, environmentally and culturally. And from all of this, sustainability is born.

18. Over the past year, Thailand organized a number of activities to share with you our Sufficiency Economy Philosophy and its applications in a number of areas and sectors, public and private. We believed that the SEP was one approach to achieving the SDGs - and that it could be adapted and applied by different countries towards this end. It was, therefore, our goal to create "SEP for SDGs Partnerships".

19. We also sought to bring the development debate and the values of the SEP to other international forums, such as ASEAN, the ACD and the G20. In fact, work is on-going in ASEAN on aligning efforts to achieve the ASEAN 2025 Vision with those for Agenda 2030.

20. Thailand is encouraged to see such debate becoming more focused and intense. I recall here the fruitful and productive discussions held at the Fortieth Annual Meeting of Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the Group of 77 on the SEP for SDGs, which was chaired by our Prime Minister last September. The sharing of best practices, experiences and home-grown approaches to achieving the SDGs was of great benefit for us all.

Excellencies,
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21. From Thailand's experience as Chair over the past year, we believe that three elements are essential for the Group: common interest, flexibility and trust. The diversity of the Group is undeniable. But what binds us together is common interest. The ability of the Chair to identify that common interest and to gain the Member States' trust were what enabled us all to come together to

leverage our solidarity for our common aims.

22. Thailand is honoured to have been entrusted by all of you to serve as Chair over the past year. So we committed ourselves to strengthening Group solidarity. This meant reaching out to each and every member of the Group. It meant truly listening to their concerns. It meant putting the Group's interests ahead of national interests. And it meant recognizing that the real strength of the Group comes from all of its Member States.

23. Thailand will take away from our experience as Chair many proud moments, made possible because of Member States' flexibility and trust, dynamism, ingenuity and professionalism.

24. In the final equation, Thailand is grateful for the opportunity to have led such a catalytic force for the Global South. We are also deeply appreciative of the opportunity to share with the Group the country's proud development legacy as guided by the SEP; and we would hope that you will bring a sustainability mindset to bear on all aspects of your lives, personal and professional.

25. The future is full of possibilities for the G77. But we must continue to build and strengthen our solidarity, not only on critical issues such as revitalizing global partnership; the financing and management of the Organization; and implementing and financing the 2030 Agenda; but also on emerging and new issues in public health and other areas. We also have to continue to pay close attention to the highly sensitive political issues that at times threaten to unravel the important agreements we reach here at the United Nations. We have to depoliticize them in sacrifice for the common good of the Global South. Perhaps more importantly, we must continue to dialogue with our partners to join our cause.

Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

26. As a founding member and one-time Chair of the Group of 77, this past year has been demanding. It has also been exhilarating. And it has been intense and, immense. But more than anything, it has been humbling, because of the trust given us to represent the Global South. It has also been exhilarating, to be reminded of the vast potential that members of the Group, individually and collectively, represent. Thank you, once again.

27. The time has now come to hand over the Chairmanship of the Group of 77 to the Government of the Republic of Ecuador. We wish Ecuador great success in leading the Group in 2017 and would like to underline to the delegation of the Republic of Ecuador our full support in all its future endeavours and efforts under the Group of 77.

I thank you.