



STATEMENT BY H.E. MR. DON PRAMUDWINAI, MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND SPECIAL ENVOY OF THE PRIME MINISTER OF THE KINGDOM OF THAILAND FOR THE HANDOVER CEREMONY OF THE CHAIRMANSHIP OF THE GROUP OF 77 (New York, 12 January 2016)

H.E. Mr. Luwellyn Landers, Deputy Minister of International Relations and Cooperation of the Republic of South Africa, H.E. Mr. Ban Ki-Moon, United Nations Secretary-General, H.E. Mr. Kairat Abdrakhmanov, Permanent Representative of Kazakhstan and Acting President of the General Assembly H.E. Mr. Mourad Ahmia, Executive Secretary of the G-77, Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates,

On behalf of the Government and people of Thailand, I am truly honored to accept the responsibility entrusted to us by the members of the Group of 77 and China, as Chair of the Group for the year 2016.

I would like to commend South Africa for its admirable and able chairmanship, especially South African strong leadership and tireless efforts during the negotiation processes leading up to the adoptions of the Addis Ababa Action Agenda; the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development; and the Paris Agreement. South Africa's will be a tough act for future Chairs to follow and I know that.

But Thailand is ready. In this connection, I wish to express my sincere appreciation to the Asia-Pacific Group for nominating Thailand, and to the G-77 members for placing your trust and confidence in us to carry out this important responsibility of coordinating and representing the interests and needs of the developing countries. You can be sure that we will bring our experience as former Chair of the Nairobi, Vienna and Geneva G-77 Chapters fully to bear in this respect.

Excellencies,

The year 2015 was a momentous one not only for the UN which celebrates its 70th anniversary, but also for the international community, due to the conjunction of four important international conferences: (1) the Third UN World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction in Sendai, (2) the Third International Conference on Financing for Development in Addis Ababa, (3) the UN Sustainable Development Summit 2015 in New York, and (4) the UN Climate Change Conference (COP21) in Paris.

These major international conferences marked just the beginning of our collective work. The real challenges lie in the implementation and the follow-up, to ensure that we continue to proceed on the right track. If we succeed, we would be able to lift the livelihood of millions to a new height.

In assuming the chairmanship, Thailand is well aware of these challenges, but does not consider them insurmountable. We have chosen the theme "From Vision to Action: Inclusive Partnership for Sustainable Development" as our underpinning principle. It will serve as the driving force in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and in the mobilization of all necessary resources for the implementation of Addis Ababa Action Agenda.

Excellencies,

Please allow me to share with you some thoughts on the priority issues we wish to pursue under our chairmanship.

First and foremost, we will push for the effective implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda on Financing for Development. In line with our theme, we will seek to pursue inclusive development, allowing for the active involvement of all stakeholders. Therefore, we see the need to ensure that the priorities and challenges of the Group of 77's members - especially the LDCs, LLDCs, and SIDS - are adequately taken into account and comprehensively addressed and that commitments made by developed countries to developing countries are duly honoured.

At the same time, we will need to continue to draw on good practices among our members on how to proceed on the development path. Each of us will surely have something to share in this area.

For Thailand, we have been implementing a growth and development model inspired by the Sufficiency Economy Philosophy of our King, His Majesty King Bhumibol Adulyadej.

Although called a "Philosophy," the King's notion of Sufficiency Economy is more a practice - a model for sustainable development that focuses on transforming the economics of exploitation into the economics of moderation and resilience. It also seeks to harmonise the economic, social and environmental aspects of development. In this way, our development will not be at the cost of future generations.

The idea of Sufficiency Economy can be applied to all sectors and at all levels, starting with the individual. It can also be used as a means of achieving the SDGs. For example, because it encourages people to live a sufficient life in accordance with personal capacities and capabilities as well as fosters good business practices that focus on good governance, sustainable commercialism and responsibility to society, it fits in with SDG 12: responsible consumption and production.

When considered in the context of the agricultural sector, Sufficiency Economy encourages a holistic farm management system that aims to minimise farmers' vulnerability and promote sustainability, food security, water preservation and biodiversity. This aligns with SDG 1: Poverty and SDG 2: Zero Hunger.

At the macroeconomic level, practicing Sufficiency Economy in these times of global economic volatility will also help us to cope, boosting our resilience to shocks, internal and external.

Thailand has been sharing our experiences and best practices in the application of Sufficiency Economy as a growth and development model with interested developing countries through various cooperation frameworks, including numerous bilateral development projects undertaken by the Thailand International Cooperation Agency, or TICA. And under our chairmanship, we plan to hold a G-77 and China experts' meeting, as well as a high-level thematic meeting, to share our experiences with the wider membership of the Group in this area as well as pool our "collective wisdom" on approaches to sustainable development. Thailand stands ready to continue to offer our experiences and best practices to interested countries as a contribution to our common effort to achieve the SDGs.

Excellencies,

The second priority issue under Thailand's G-77 chairmanship will be to further promote South-South Cooperation. We pledge our firm commitment to working closely with all members for the cause of South-South Cooperation because we see it as not only a necessary means to enhance our individual capacities in tackling common emerging challenges, but also as a strategy for revitalising the global partnership for sustainable development.

Thailand plans to host the High-level Panel of Eminent Personalities of the South in March 2016 to explore how to further strengthen South-South Cooperation. We also wish to see the early convening of the 3rd South Summit, where G-77 and China leaders can discuss and redefine our Group's development strategy in light of the adoption of the 2030 Agenda and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda.

Furthermore, to add new dimensions to South-South Cooperation, Thailand will organize expert meetings on ICT and on investment to explore ways and means of enhancing cooperation in these areas in order to realise sustainable development.

Of course, without adequate financial resources, it would be difficult to achieve anything tangible for South-South Cooperation. Thailand is therefore pleased to announce a special contribution of 520,000 US Dollars to the Perez-Guerrero Trust Fund for South-South Cooperation to support the Group's economic and technical cooperation activities. We hope to welcome additional contributions from other members of the Group.

Thailand as chair will also ensure that the G-77 continues to play a pivotal role in relation to the United Nations' budgetary and administrative issues. Without adequate funding, it would be very difficult for the United Nations to achieve its existing and newly created mandates, especially those arising from the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

The third priority issue will be to build resilience in response to the impact of climate change and reduce the risks of disasters in an effective and timely manner. Different countries have different capabilities; therefore, it is very important to promote North-South as well as South-South cooperation to help build the capacity of countries that lag behind, keeping in mind the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities. With an historic agreement in Paris, we need to work together and in partnership with our development partners to ensure that what has been agreed upon will be fully honoured and effectively implemented.

And last but not least, as I mentioned earlier, we will try to further strengthen coordination and collaboration between the different chapters of the Group to ensure that our interests and concerns are comprehensively addressed in a well-coordinated manner. In this connection, Thailand will host the 48th Annual Meeting of the Chairmen of the G-77 and China Chapters in Bangkok in March 2016 to maximise use of in-depth knowledge and expertise from our various chapters.

Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates,

The greatest strength and bargaining power of the Group of 77 and China lies in our ability to maintain and negotiate as a united front. Thailand will do our utmost to maintain and promote our "unity in diversity" in pursuing vigorously our common cause of sustainable development through the United Nations-led global partnership. And stronger together we shall become.

I thank you once again for the opportunity for Thailand to take up this responsibility.