

**Panel presentation by  
H.E. Mr. Norachit Sinhaseni, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of  
Thailand on behalf of H.E. Mrs. Pavana Hongsakula  
Minister of Social Development and Human Security of Thailand  
at Panel 3: A participatory approach to gender equality that champions  
women's voice, leadership and rights - lessons learned,  
UN Women Stakeholders' Forum  
4 December 2013, 15.00 - 16.30 hrs. , Conference 3, Conference Building  
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Ambassador Paul Seger,  
Excellencies,  
Distinguished Delegates,

I have the honor to deliver a statement on behalf of H.E. Mrs. Pavana Hongsakula, Minister of Social Development and Human Security of Thailand, who wanted very much to be here with you but is unable to attend.

Thailand is a strong supporter of women's rights. We are members of both the CSW and the UN Women's Executive Board. We therefore look forward to exchanging views and lessons learned on this important issue of participatory approach to gender equality and championing women's voice, leadership and rights. We hope today's Forum will send a strong signal to the international community that gender equality, women's empowerment and inclusive governance are essential for the achievement of the MDGs and the post-2015 development agenda.

Mr Chair,

For the MDGs to truly benefit women and girls worldwide, women and girls must have equal opportunities to participate in decision making, in both the public and private spheres.

They must be represented in the shaping, implementation and monitoring of all development processes. Thailand's current Women's Development Plan constitutes our national gender policy. The Plan places high importance on women's participation in decision making at all levels. Moreover, Thailand has integrated MDG indicators as one of the indicators for monitoring the implementation of our National Development Plans. These indicators include, for example, an increase in the proportion of women in politics and public decision making, poverty reduction, and closing the income gap between women and men.

On the second question as to what mechanisms have been put in place. In Thailand's case, specific mechanisms ensuring gender mainstreaming and women's needs and priorities in development have been established. At the national level, the National Commission on Policy and Strategy for the Improvement of the Status of Women, chaired by the Prime Minister, comprises representatives from government agencies, experts and most importantly women's rights advocates. The Commission recommends to the Cabinet policies on the promotion of women's rights and gender equality. The Commission also facilitates and monitors the implementation of

Thailand's commitments under the international instruments to which we are Party, including the MDGs. At the agency level, all ministries are required to take into account and respond to the specific needs of women and girls. This is realized through the appointment of Chief Gender Equality Officers (CGEOs) and Gender Focal Points (GFPs). At the local level, Women Development Committees, with technical and financial support from the government, have been initiating and are managing developmental projects for the realization of women and girls' human rights. Apart from such mechanisms, the National Women Assembly, organized annually, brings together women and girls from all walks of life. The Assembly reviews progress, identifies challenges, and provides policy recommendations to the government on women's advancement and national development.

Mr Chair,

Let me now share with you some recent initiatives of the Thai Government for achieving the MDGs for women and girls.

First is the National Women's Development Fund launched by the Prime Minister in 2011. The Fund aims to enhance women's economic opportunities by serving as a revolving fund for women's groups. At the same time, the Fund serves as a tool to promote women's leadership and management skills through initiating and managing women's empowerment projects. The Fund's purposes are in accordance with MDG Goal 1: eradicate extreme poverty and hunger and MDG Goal 3: promoting gender equality and empower women. Approximately eight million women are now members of the Fund and have benefited from it.

Another initiative is the One Stop Crisis Center or the OSCC, which was launched in April this year. These Centers provide a comprehensive, multi-sectoral and integrated referral and response system to social problems, with a focus on human trafficking, teenage pregnancy, child labour and domestic violence.

Looking ahead to the post - 2015 development agenda, Thailand firmly believes that it should continue to place people at its centre, and should be inclusive in both process and outcome. Here, let me take this opportunity to thank UN Women and the United Nations Country Team in Thailand for organizing in 2013 national consultations on the elaboration of the post - 2015 development agenda with 15 marginalized groups, including a focus group dedicated to women's networks.

Now with regard to amb Seger's request for suggestions of concrete. Let me try to offer a few.

First, Thailand supports the continuation of a stand-alone goal for gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls.

Second, gender issues and concerns should be highlighted in the post -2015 development agenda. This includes women with disabilities and older women.

Third and final point is that ending violence against women and girls must also be fully recognized.

I thank you.

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