

Thailand's Country Statement  
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Excellencies,

Honorable delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of the Thai Government and our people, I would like to congratulate the Mongolian Government for hosting this extraordinary 2018 AMCDRR in the beautiful city of Ulaanbaatar. My sincere appreciation also goes to UNISDR for its tremendous contribution to the progress made towards resilience building in the region.

This is my second time participating in AMCDRR and I am delighted to say that our region has made remarkable achievements in putting the Sendai Framework into actions. This is quite apparent when we consider the number of lives saved and the degree of vulnerabilities reduced. I am quite confident to say that we now have disaster warning and risk management systems which are much more effective than in the past at all levels. I and my delegation, therefore, looking forward to exchanging with you the stories behind our progress and what should be done to meet the emerging new challenges.

First, let me share with you the state of Thailand's disaster risk management system.

It is projected that during the next 30 years, Thailand economic growth will continue to rise, especially in the service sector. Such uninterrupted growth will put Thailand at the 10<sup>th</sup> ranking of the fastest growing country in the world. By the year 2036, we believe that we will graduate from a middle-income developing country into a developed one.

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In order to reach our projected aims, we have worked with relevant stakeholders and sectors both nationally and internationally to build a solid foundation to address risks and development opportunities by:

- 1. Strengthening policy and legal frameworks for resilience building.** At this stage, our National 20-year Strategy, National Economic and Social Development Plan, National Climate Change Adaptation Plan, and National Disaster Risk Management Plan, all key national plans central to DRR have successfully been aligned and coordinated. This effort ensures that disaster risk management, risk mapping, and multi-hazard warning system have received national priorities, which is a very significant step forward.
- 2. Optimizing the utilization of scientific and home-grown approach to improve risk modelling and end-to-end warning system.** New agencies have been established and existing agencies have been improved to strengthen risk information service to meet different needs. This results in a more real-time and reliable forecast and warning services as well as proper response and relief.
- 3. Strengthening vertical and horizontal coordination and information sharing mechanisms at different levels.** National and sub-national disaster risk reduction platforms are now linked and in the process of being linked to partner organizations such as public enterprises, private and civil societies. Risk information sharing has been very much improved, resulting in a successful identification of 100 infrastructure sites problematic to flood situation in southern Thailand. Armed with such crucial information, we are developing proper measures to tackle the problem.

In short, we have seen significant improvement in the quality of services, planning and information sharing. Disaster related agencies and mechanisms are now better coordinated. Other sectors are more aware of risk considerations in their planning. People have more access to risk information and actively take part in hazard monitoring and warning process. As a result, number of people died and affected by natural disasters has been steadily decreasing.

In spite of the more positive notes mentioned earlier, there are a few factors which could affect our disaster risk management efforts. They are:

1. Thailand was recently named by the latest Global Climate Risk index (CRI) 2017 as one of the top 10 countries most affected by extreme weather.
2. Rapid increase in the degree of urbanization.
3. Thailand is becoming a predominantly aging society. By 2040, more than a quarter of our population will be 65 years old or older.

To successfully meet these emerging challenges, we need to look for new approaches or measures which will improve our risk reduction management capacity. Here are a few issues that I would like to highlight.

Firstly, municipal administration's leadership is a key success factor to any community-based development project. Our past experience confirms this to be true. Unfortunately, a significant number of our local administrations still do not take risk considerations into their planning and budget allocation. This situation needs to be looked into and remedied as soon as possible. We should, perhaps, consider putting local administration at the heart of our long-term capacity development strategy for disaster risk reduction. Different incentive programs should be engineered to create increasing awareness and commitment to disaster risk reduction among local administration leadership and officials. Apparently, this issue merits further exploration and discussion by this assembly.

Secondly, our risk reduction efforts have not yet received a high priority status they deserve in our national budgetary allocation system. Risk reduction remains, merely, a sub-category under the Security and Environmental Related Program. This structural shortcoming has lessened its chance to receive adequate budget allocation. Obviously, we need to elevate our position in the national budgetary structure to a higher level in order to attract more budgets.

Accessibility to additional funding for disaster risk reduction is crucial to many developing countries. One such funding source is the ESCAP Trust Fund for Tsunami, Disaster and Climate Preparedness. This Trust Fund has served us well for a decade. I have learned that this Fund has significantly receded. I, therefore, would like to urge capable member states to contribute to this Trust Fund so that it can continue its service to our region.

And finally, Just last month, Thailand and Bhutan had jointly implemented technical cooperation on disaster risk management. Our officials had a chance to learn from each other's experiences and lessons especially on National Disaster Risk Management Plan development, disaster preparedness and application of science and technology in risk identification and warning. To us, this peer-to-peer learning is a very powerful tool and cost effective. I would like to thank The Government of Bhutan for making this cooperation possible and worthwhile. Based on this very fruitful experience, I, therefore, would like to encourage all member states to consider similar activities.

As Thailand is assuming the Chairmanship of ASEAN next year, we will continue to keep the region's spirit of sharing and partnership for inclusive growth and resilient society very much alive.

**Excellencies,**

I wish this assembly a very successful and productive week.

Thank you very much for your kind attention.

