

(Check against delivery)

**Statement by the Honorable Mr. Kitti Wasinondh, Special Representative of
the President of the National Legislative Assembly of Thailand
At the General Debate on the Theme “Parliaments as platforms to enhance
education for peace, security and the rule of law”
at the 140th Assembly of the IPU, 8 April 2019, Doha, Qatar**

Mr./Madam Chair, Distinguished Colleagues, Ladies and Gentlemen

1. As the Special Representative of the President of the National Legislative Assembly of Thailand, I am pleased to convey our sincere congratulations and deep appreciation to the Speaker of the Qatari Shura Council for hosting this important Assembly and the excellent arrangements for all of us, as well as our best wishes to the IPU President and Secretariat for the success of this gathering and beyond.

2. Many of us maybe well aware that the Thai people are now looking forward to the auspicious Royal Coronation Ceremony, on 4-6 May 2019, of His Majesty King Maha Vajiralongkorn, who has succeeded the Throne since December 2016. We are indeed so proud of our Monarchy, which is highly revered as a main pillar of unity and stability of the nation for many centuries up to the present time.

3. It is also my pleasure to inform you of the General Elections held in Thailand on 24 March 2019, marking a major milestone in our political roadmap towards a stable and sustainable democracy. Even though the official results of the elections have yet to be officially endorsed by the Election Commission in May 2019, unofficial results have been publicized with expectation of a coalition government to be formed, perhaps at the beginning of June 2019.

4. With regard to the theme of this Assembly, Thailand has been assigned as the ASEAN coordinator on Sustainable Development Cooperation since 2016. And while we are chairing of the regional grouping this year, we have chosen the theme “*Advancing Partnership for Sustainability*”, which contains key elements essential for ASEAN to develop a people-centered community that leaves no one behind, and align ASEAN Vision 2025 with the UN sustainable development agenda 2030. One of our achievements is that Thailand will be establishing the ASEAN Center for Sustainable Development Studies and Dialogue in Bangkok by this year.

5. In parallel with the Government’s ASEAN events, the Thai Parliament shall use the 2019 ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly or AIPA chairmanship to promote SDGs by holding a series of regional inter-parliamentary meetings throughout the year. These include the 2nd meeting of AIPA Advisory Council on Dangerous Drugs last month, AIPA-ASEAN Interface between the ASEAN leaders and the AIPA Speakers in June, and the 40th AIPA General Assembly in Bangkok in August 2019.

6. To realize the SDGs, Thailand has long been guided by the **Sufficiency Economy Philosophy or SEP**, initiated by His Majesty the Late King Bhumibol Adulyadej, who was honoured with the first UN Human Development Lifetime Achievement Award in 2006, in recognition of His life-long works dedicated to the well-being of the Thai people and sustainable development of the Kingdom. The SEP, introduced after the Asian economic crisis in 1997, is not only a people-centered and bottom-up approach to sustainability, but also a holistic and lifelong-learning approach that transforms the society and communities by developing righteous and practical mindsets, knowledge, and skills and values needed for sustainable development. This apparently answers the Target 4.7 of SDG4 on Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) and sustainable lifestyles.

7. To create sufficient, strong and vibrant human capital needed for the country's sustainable development, both SEP and SDGs have been incorporated in Thailand's constitution and 20-year National Education Plan, 2017-2036, as well as national education policies and planning at all levels. In this connection, more than 21,000 SEP-guided schools and learning centers are in place, with the core concepts and values of SEP, which is incorporated into our national curriculum, for quality education and a key enabler for sustainable development. As a result, our education shall help advance sustainable, peaceful, stable and prosperous future.

8. As inequality in education remains one of the main challenges for Thailand, the 2018 **Equitable Education Fund Act** has been approved by the National Legislative Assembly to establish funding mechanism to support marginalized and underprivileged youths in Thailand, regardless of their nationalities or immigrant status. Prescribed by the constitution, this education fund will help financing SDG4 by reinforcing the existing free, publicly subsidized 15-year basic education programme and expanding access to equitable and quality education as well as life-long learning opportunities for all.

9. Recognizing that sustainable human development must begin at an early age, **Early Childhood development Bill** was adopted in 2017, introducing the Early Childhood Education Program to promote quality early childhood learning and pre-primary education. Through inter-agency cooperation approach towards the holistic development of young children, Thailand has been praised by UNICEF for being a true leader in early childhood development and education both in ASEAN and beyond.

10. Most recently, the NLA has continued to support the government in building a solid foundation for *Thailand 4.0 initiative* by passing a **bill setting up a new ministry of Higher Education, Science, R&D and Innovation**. The new ministry will bolster Thai universities' academic capabilities, make the funding and spending of research budgets more efficient as well as incubate R&D personnel to promote key technologies and innovation in targeted sectors required for Thailand's transition to a value-based economy of the 21st century.

11. Furthermore, with the view to taking the SDGs implementation upto another level, the NLA, in collaboration with WHO, has recently launched *Southeast-Asian Regional Network for Road Safety Legislators*, aiming at accelerating actions regionally to promote road safety through legal measures and enforcement in line with Target 3.6 of SDG3. Representing Southeast Asia Region in the current Leadership Council of the Global Network for Road Safety Legislators, Thailand is determined to campaign for the role of parliaments in translating regional and global road safety commitments to national legislations and policy frameworks.

12. Keeping in mind the critical importance of education as one of the most powerful vehicles for attaining all the other SDGs, the Parliament of Thailand will continue to play its part in implementing and supporting all agencies to pursue SDGs, including SDG4 of equitable and quality education for all, at our best.

Thank you for your kind attention.
