

Statement

H.E. Mr. Anutin Charnvirakul,
Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Public Health of Thailand
at the High-Level Thematic Debate
entitled **“Galvanising Momentum for Universal Vaccination”**
25 February 2022, General Assembly Hall, United Nations, New York

H.E. Mr. Abdulla Shahid, President of the 76th Session of the United Nations
General Assembly,

Distinguished guests,

Ladies and gentlemen,

COVID has taken more than 5 million lives worldwide and the number is still increasing although around 500 million doses of vaccine had been administered to the world population. Equitable access to vaccine is still the challenge. The world nowadays is showing contrasting pictures. The richer countries demonstrate high vaccination rate of over 60% while the poorer countries lack of own ability to obtain effective vaccines and essential medical equipment. We must address this challenge proactively.

At the World Health Assembly Special Session last November, I expressed to WHO Director-General, Dr. Tedros, that Thailand was interested in donating vaccines that are manufactured in Thailand to African countries where the vaccine uptake is low. We would like to encourage countries, with vaccine over-supply, to donate vaccines to COVAX facility as a mean to address vaccine inequality especially in the developing countries.

Thailand is the lead country for ASEAN Vaccine Security and Self-Reliance and has continued to advance vaccine availability not only for Thailand but also the region.

The "Blueprint of Access to COVID Vaccine for Thailand" is developed. Three approaches in the Blueprint are to use Advance Market Commitment, to pursue opportunities for vaccine technology transfer and to support home-grown COVID vaccine research and development. The Blueprint has been successfully implemented, resulting in over 100 million doses of COVID vaccine for Thai and non-Thai people who live in the Kingdom of Thailand.

Currently, 75% of our population have received their first dose, and more than 60% got their second dose. In order to cope with the new Omicron variant, a third shot has been rolled out and a fourth shot is promoted to frontline medical officers and patients with underlying chronic diseases.

Vaccine allocation in a fair and transparent manner is crucial, particularly for those who do not have access to it through a trustworthy mechanism from WHO or United Nations agencies. We believed that these intergovernmental commitments would lead to the achievement of our common goals on equitable access to vaccines. We believe in Universal Vaccination.

Thank you.