

**Article on the occasion of the
Celebration of the Birthday Anniversary of
His Majesty King Bhumibol Adulyadej the Great,
National Day of the Kingdom of Thailand, and Thailand Father's Day
5 December 2021**

Thailand celebrates three significant occasions on 5th December, namely the Birthday Anniversary of His Majesty the late King Bhumibol Adulyadej the Great, National Day of the Kingdom of Thailand and Thailand Father's Day. Born on December 5, 1927, His Majesty the late King was considered as the "Father of the Nation" because of his lifelong dedication to bettering the lives of his people. 5th December is a public holiday in Thailand and is now annually celebrated in remembrance of the deeply revered late King. On the day, Thais also celebrate father's day by paying respect to their father and grandfather.

One of His Majesty the late King's most accomplished work during his lifetime was the development of the Sufficiency Economy Philosophy (SEP) as a guidance to his people to live sustainably based on the three core principles of moderation, reasonableness and prudence. The outcomes of decisions based on SEP should reflect balanced progress towards sustainability in the four dimensions of life: economic, social, environmental and cultural. His Majesty the late King's timeless wisdom will continue to guide all Thais and many others around the world to live their lives based on shared prosperity and sustainability. In fact, the teachings of His Majesty the late King were embraced in the country's 20-year National Strategy (2017-2036) where Thailand envisioned becoming "a developed country with security, prosperity and sustainability in accordance with the principle of SEP".

Built upon the principles of SEP, Thailand introduced the "Bio-Circular-Green" Economic Model or BCG as a new economic model for inclusive and sustainable growth. The BCG Economic Model is being promoted to drive forward Thailand's post-COVID-19 economic recovery in a balanced manner. The economic model also conforms to the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) through the promotion of sustainable agriculture, clean energy and responsible consumption and production, ensuring the conservation and sustainable utilisation of biodiversity, and protecting environment and ecosystem. The concept of sustainable development has been adopted in the Eastern Economic Corridor (EEC) project which is Thailand's flagship project aimed to transform its economy by keeping pace and embracing technological advancement and moving towards Industry 4.0. Industry 4.0 is a key enabler of BCG economy, allowing new business models to be profitable while reducing environmental impacts.

The BCG will also be the driving force for the priorities of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) 2022 chaired by Thailand with the theme “Open. Connect. Balance.” Under Thailand’s Chairmanship, APEC economies will be steered to be open to all opportunities, connected in every dimension and balanced in all aspects. One of the major undertakings for Thailand as APEC Chair is working on the implementation plan of the APEC Putrajaya Vision 2040 launched in November 2020. Thailand hoped to achieve this through the three priorities, namely facilitating trade and investment; rebooting regional connectivity, especially travel and tourism and; advancing sustainable and inclusive growth. The 2022 APEC Economic Leaders’ Meeting scheduled to take place in November next year will be the first physical meeting after taking place virtually in the last two years due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

As one of the most visited country in the Asia-Pacific, the COVID-19 pandemic has adversely affected Thailand’s tourism industry which accounts for about a fifth of the country’s GDP and 20 percent of employment. Thailand has reopened its borders on 1 November 2021 in a bold move to revitalise its battered economy because of the pandemic. Under the “Test and Go” programme, fully vaccinated travellers from 63 eligible countries including Brunei Darussalam are allowed to travel freely in Thailand without the lengthy quarantine period after receiving a negative RT-PCR test result after an overnight stay. Alternatively, travellers from all countries may also enter Thailand through the “Blue Zone Sandbox” programme which allowed for fully vaccinated travellers to travel quarantine-free in the country’s 17 destinations for the first seven days before continuing to other destinations in the country. Unvaccinated or partially vaccinated travellers are also allowed to enter Thailand under the “Alternative Quarantine” programme which requires travellers to complete their quarantine period before continuing their journey in the country.

Indeed, the tourism sector was highlighted to be one of the hardest-hit sectors during the pandemic under Brunei Darussalam’s successful ASEAN Chairmanship in 2021 which has resulted in the Post-COVID-19 Recovery Plan for ASEAN Tourism to safely reopen the industry. Thailand applauds Brunei Darussalam in its role as ASEAN Chair 2021 for advancing ASEAN’s comprehensive recovery from the pandemic including for the adoption of the Bandar Seri Begawan Declaration on the Strategic and Holistic Initiative to Link ASEAN Responses to Emergencies and Disasters (ASEAN SHIELD) which will ensure ASEAN’s preparedness and response to future emergencies and disasters making our region to be more sustainable and resilient in facing emerging future challenges. Thailand as the ASEAN Coordinator for Sustainable Development Cooperation is working diligently to promote complementarities between the ASEAN Community

Vision 2025 and the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Thailand plans to organise ASEAN BCG Knowledge Sharing Series in 2022 as the country has promoted the new economic model as an alternative strategy for ASEAN's post-COVID-19 recovery for sustainable growth. The BCG economy model complements other relevant efforts of ASEAN including the development of a Framework for Circular Economy for the ASEAN Economic Community which is one of the priority economic deliverables of Brunei Darussalam's ASEAN Chairmanship in 2021.

As Thailand and Brunei Darussalam both steadily progress towards post-pandemic recovery, Thailand looks forward to continue working closely with Brunei Darussalam in enhancing our close and cordial bilateral relations that were formally established in 1984. Thailand eagerly awaits for Brunei Darussalam to host the second Joint Commission for Bilateral Cooperation (JCBC) Meeting next year to further strengthen our existing cooperation and explore other areas of collaboration such as in the cultural sector, trade and investments as well as people-to-people exchanges through the finalising of the MoU on cultural cooperation, MoU on double taxation avoidance and MoU on OTOP products cooperation. The JCBC Meeting is an important mechanism to move forward our bilateral relations for the mutual benefit of our two countries and peoples.

Thailand reiterates its appreciation for the support and cooperation extended by Brunei Darussalam both bilaterally and as a close partner in multilateral platforms. In facing the challenges of the second wave of COVID-19, Thailand applauds the successful efforts of the Brunei Government by implementing effective control measures and through the vaccination strategy which has expedited the vaccination of the citizens and residents of the country including Thai nationals. It is through the commendable hard work, dedication and sacrifices of the health professionals, front-liners and volunteers that has allowed for the country to transition to the next stage of recovery. Thailand reaffirms its commitment of support and cooperation to Brunei Darussalam in addressing common challenges such as the COVID-19 pandemic, Fourth Industrial Revolution and digitalisation so that both our countries can move towards a secured and sustainable future together.
