

A summary of the special lecture in celebration of
the 150th Anniversary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs
*“Building a BETTER WORLD Thailand’s Legacy & Contributions :
การทูตเพื่อการพัฒนา สานอดีต สร้างปัจจุบัน สู่อนาคตที่ยั่งยืน”*

In contemporary times, sustainable development is a vital and effective approach that is widely applied in dealing with several issues. Thailand is one of the countries, which has consistently developed and utilized this approach for a long time, such as the Sufficiency Economy and international cooperation. This lecture discusses about sustainable development, how Thailand applies this method, and how Thailand should further improve it in the future.

Ms. Visit-orn Rajatanarvin, Director of Knowledge and Learning Centre at Mae Fah Luang Foundation under Royal Patronage, expresses her idea that at the core of sustainable development are people within particular areas. Due to this, Thai government or various agencies should consider how they can help empower as well as encourage individuals in specific areas to develop resilience against potential challenges, leading to the success of sustainable development. To achieve this goal, there is a 3S development model towards sustainability that is globally used, including (a) Survival: basic access to food, healthcare, and infrastructure, (b) Sufficiency: the improvement of security in job as well as income, and (c) Sustainability: resilience as well as the stability in career and economy. Although sustainability is the ultimate achievement, the application can vary in numerous nations. The government or agencies are supposed to learn strengths, weaknesses, and potentials of populations in particular areas before adapting sustainable development to be more suitable to their issues and communities.

On a global scale, Mrs. Chulamanee Chartsuwan, former Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, emphasizes Thailand’s roles in Development Diplomacy. Despite past criticisms, Thailand currently serves several vital roles in promoting sustainable development, including exchanging ideas on certain concepts, such as the Sufficiency Economy, and collaborating with other nations. In the present time, Thailand has gained attention and trust on

the world stage, as seen through Thailand's significant participation in South-South cooperation, and hosting diverse international organizations, such as the ASEAN Center for Sustainable Development Studies and Dialogue (ACSDSD), and regional UN headquarters. Because of these strengths, Thailand has great potentials in playing important roles in Development Diplomacy on the world stage.

Mr. Wisoot Tantinun from United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) also supports Thailand's elevating role in Development Diplomacy by highlighting how Thailand has been developing their Sufficiency Economy method. Sufficiency Economy initially consisted of moderation, sustainable production and consumption, as well as self-immunity, which was later altered to resilience. This philosophy was developed by King Bhumibol Adulyadej of Thailand with an aim to prevent potential economic crises. By applying this approach, Thailand lifted their role from development partner to exchanging and expanding their ideas as well as experiences globally. For instance, in the SEP for SDGs program, the focus of human development is shifted from local level where agriculturists were cultivated to grow diverse plants and reduce the use of external funds to broader levels where resilience is supported through free education and healthcare, social welfare, and empowering local government organizations.

Regarding Thailand's success in sustainable development, Ms. Ranchida Rojanakit, Thailand's UNGA Youth Delegate 2024, points out that young people are increasingly engage in this area, forming groups to discuss and brainstorm ideas to solve certain issues. However, certain groups of young Thai people, especially those living outside of Bangkok, still encounter limited access to knowledge of this issue. To address this problem, Ms. Rojanakit suggests to connect and expand opportunities as well as access for youth through education and related activities. With the rising group numbers formed by young people to exchange thoughts about particular circumstances and problems, Thai government and related organizations should allow them to collaborate and offer their ideas for consideration. While Thai government and organizations gain

insights from younger generations, young individuals also gain knowledge and experiences from the institutions.

In the rapidly changing world, resilience is one of the significant skills that countries should develop in order to withstand and cope with various challenges. Despite Thailand's important achievement and success, more can be further developed, such as in economic growth. Mrs. Chartsuwan also suggest that Thai government and organizations create soft power through understandings and knowledge, shaping Thailand's image and global narrative that Thailand not only develops for its own advantages but also for global progress. Moreover, Thailand should also encourage and strengthen Development Diplomacy within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs as well as showcase Thailand's successes on the world stage. Consequently, the world will notice Thailand's strengths and successes, resulting in further crucial roles and opportunities on the world stage.

Summarized by

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From 26 May 2025 to 1 August 2025