

[UNOFFICIAL TRANSLATION]

**Statement by Prime Minister Yingluck Shinawatra
On the Solution Proposal for Thailand
Friday 2 August 2013
Thai Ku Fah Building, Government House**

My respected fellow Thais,

Today, I would like to request a moment of your time to explain the ideas and approach that the Government will carry out in accordance with the policies announced to you when I became Prime Minister and this Government started working two years ago.

I am always mindful that the reason the Thai people have put their trust in me and the Pheu Thai Party is that the majority of the Thai people wish to see peace, harmony and reconciliation emerge in Thai society so that the country can move forward.

Over the past two years, the Government and I have worked towards national reconciliation with sincere efforts to move forward, with forbearance and without retaliation, to build a reconciliatory and constructive climate built upon trust. This included providing space for all groups with differing political views. The Government is prepared to compromise with all sides and has tried to encourage the use of parliamentary means rather than taking to the streets to resolve problems of conflict.

At the same time, however, I also understand that, given the persistent conflicts, we cannot expect true reconciliation to occur overnight. We have all seen that, at times, the conflicts have escalated into violence which is of no benefit to the public, society or the overall economy.

What is most disheartening, however, is that there are some groups of people who prefer street demonstrations. While that is a right and freedom of expression under the Constitution, its exercise appears not to accept the rules of democracy. There have been incitement and instigations to lead to the overthrow of the democratically-elected Government, as well as calls for a coup and the use of violence.

Under such circumstances, the Government is therefore obligated to protect and uphold the system of democracy with the King as Head of State, as well as prevent possible untoward incidents and disturbances, including ensuring the safety of the lives and property of the people, public and private entities, and of the demonstrators. What is important is to ensure that those who exercise their rights and freedoms do so within the framework of democracy. Therefore, the Cabinet resolved last Wednesday to invoke the Internal Security Act B.E. 2551 (2008).

My respected fellow Thais,

I wish to reaffirm that although the Government has a majority in the House of Representatives, I have always believed that in a democracy we must respect the voices of the majority while honoring and listening to the voices of the minority, as democracy belongs to everyone, not only to those who achieved electoral political victory. This means maintaining the rule of upholding impartiality and equality for all. It is thus evident that the Government has been listening to differing opinions and advice in solving problems, as well as listening directly to the people around the country, such as through the project to hold

public forums for finding solutions for the country, on issues of reconciliation, constitutional amendments, the proposal of the amnesty bill, reducing disparities, creating equality, and safeguarding the state of law and rule of law, in line with the democratic system as accepted internationally.

Amidst all the aforementioned efforts, I do understand that many groups still hold unresolved feelings from past conflicts, whether from differences or disagreements. But I am of the view that it is the responsibility of all of us at this moment, as fellow Thais who wish to see our future generations live happily in a society that is peaceful, politically stable, and economically advanced, to work together hand-in-hand to successfully resolve all these problems.

Many people tell me that what I am thinking is likely to be impossible. However, I take the opposite view. I believe that every time there is a problem, we should see it as an opportunity. When we had the great floods in 2011, I saw the cooperation of the Thai people in helping one another and solving problems together. In the end, we were able to overcome the challenges and put an end to the disaster.

My respected fellow Thais,

I would like all Thais to recall the good feelings during that period. Although it was a different situation, every Thai showed that whatever the colour of our shirts or social status, if we come together in harmony and unity, we will be able to solve the problems and overcome the challenges.

As for the current situation where there is once again political confusion and many people are concerned that conflict will escalate causing unhappiness, I would therefore like to propose a way to find a sustainable solution for the country – a way forward that is constructive, participatory and puts conflict at rest in our minds for the sake of our country. A forum for brainstorming will be launched to invite representatives of all groups, whether from the Government, political parties, the United Front of Democracy against Dictatorship (UDD), the People's Alliance for Democracy (PAD), senators, independent organizations, private sector and academia to engage in discussions and design Thailand's democracy. This is to find a solution for our future that is consistent with Thailand's social realities and acceptable to civilized nations.

Next week, the Government will invite representatives of relevant groups who hold diverse and different views to join us in discussions and exchange opinions to lead to political reform, to think together how to plan the future of the country so that it would not be a burden for our younger generations. This would be the foundation for cooperation in developing the nation, building trust and change out of the cycle of conflict.

I would like to see cooperation in an atmosphere of trust rather than fault finding. Nonetheless, the opportunity given for all sides to participate will not exclude any particular group. After the discussions, I would like to propose that a clear mechanism for political reform be established in the form of a working group or whatever other name as may be appropriate. The mechanism will be an important forum for laying the future foundations of the political structure, prescribing the direction for legal reform and a democratic political system that is stable and sustainable.

I hope all sides will understand my good intentions. Today I am not asking that everyone forget the past, but we must use the past as lessons so that our country may move forward beyond conflict. We must open the opportunity to change the atmosphere of conflict

to one that is constructive and trusting in order to build a participatory democracy and a better society for our younger generations, and should not leave a legacy of conflict that will burden them.

Sawasdee kha.