

Keynote Speech
by H.E. Mr. Sihasak Phuanketkeow
Minister of Foreign Affairs of Thailand
at Sustainability Week Asia 2026,
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Distinguished guests,
Colleagues and friends,

1. It is a pleasure for me to be here today. I am encouraged to see such strong participation. This is a good opportunity for all of us, including policy makers, private sector, individuals and members of the public, to exchange views because this is a challenge and, in a way, a crisis forthcoming.
2. But you can turn it into an opportunity for international cooperation, and an opportunity to advance towards a renewed and even higher level of economic growth.
3. Our meeting happens at a very pivotal moment. We are not just talking about a pivotal moment insofar as sustainability is concerned, but a pivotal moment for all of us.
4. We have to ask ourselves: how did we come to this stage? We have to ask ourselves when we look at the situation in the Middle East: how did it happen?
5. It is incumbent on the parties concerned to give diplomacy a chance – to give peace a chance – so that all of us can move forward to what is most important: how we can keep this planet safe, prosperous, and green for the next generation.

6. Wherever I go, the subject that is most talked about is the rules-based international order. Unfortunately, it has become increasingly fragmented. We do not know what the new world order is, but clearly, what we have now is a world in disorder. It is incumbent on all of us to see what we can do to help maintain multilateralism and the rules-based international order.
7. Given the state of the world today, many of us may ask: can we still deliver sustainability in a world that is pulling apart at the seams?
8. My answer is yes. But only if we are clear-eyed about the challenges, and deliberate in how we respond.

Peace and sustainability

9. Today, the sustainability agenda is no longer just about carbon emissions. It is increasingly shaped by geopolitics, trade measures, industrial policy, and strategic competition.
10. In other words, it has moved from the margins to the centre of economic security.
11. We see this most clearly in energy. Recent tensions in the Middle East have reminded us how vulnerable we are to fossil fuel dependence and concentrated supply chains.
12. What we see is not just an energy story. It is also a sustainability story. Because it shows that the transition to cleaner, more diversified energy sources is no longer just about climate goals. It is about resilience and sustained economic growth.

13. But there is an even more fundamental lesson here. You cannot build a green factory in a red zone. The most pressing challenge to sustainability today is not just carbon. It is peace.
14. In a world increasingly in disarray, sustainable peace underpins everything else we want to accomplish – investment, supply chains, and growth.
15. And once we recognise this, the implications become clear. For businesses, sustainability becomes a core part of managing geopolitical risk, securing supply chains, and staying competitive in a more uncertain world.

Recalibrating foreign policy

16. And for governments, this means foreign policy must evolve.
17. Foreign policy can no longer be separate from economic security and sustainability priorities. It must help create the conditions for peace, resilience, and growth. And at its core, it must be people-centred.
18. For Thailand, this translates into three priorities.
19. We are strengthening regional cooperation, particularly within ASEAN, so that sustainability standards become bridges, not barriers.
20. We are preparing for the future of trade where digital and green transition will define competitiveness. Initiatives such as the ASEAN Digital Economy Framework Agreement will help drive both growth and sustainability together.

21. And we are working to harmonise our trade agreements and aligning our domestic policies with international standards, whether on clean energy, electric mobility, or green finance.
22. This is not diplomacy for its own sake. It is diplomacy with a purpose: to make sustainability deliver for the people.

Business case for doubling down

23. But creating the right conditions is only part of the equation. If sustainability has become a strategic priority for governments, so too must it be for business.
24. In times of uncertainty, the instinct is often to pause and preserve capital. But such a path would bring on even greater risks.
25. Because the fundamentals are shifting. Climate risks are becoming starkly visible, consumer expectations are rising, and clean technologies are scaling and becoming increasingly cost-competitive.
26. In other words, sustainability now becomes a business advantage.
27. Companies that move early will shape standards, secure supply chains, and access capital on better terms. Those who delay will face higher adjustment costs later.
28. Thailand understands this. That is why we are positioning ourselves as a hub for green investment in Southeast Asia.

29. We are expanding renewable energy capacity, aiming for 50% renewable energy generation by 2037, in line with our Net-Zero target by 2050.
30. We are taking a whole-of-government approach to make it easier to do green business in Thailand.
31. And we are developing sustainable finance frameworks to channel capital where it is needed most.

A call to action

32. So, where do we go from here?
33. I believe progress will depend on alignment between policy, capital and innovation.
34. First, we need credible regulation – clear rules, measurable targets, and continuity of policies.
35. Second, we need finance at scale. Public and private capital must move together, especially in emerging markets where the need is greatest.
36. Third, we need relentless innovation. And not just new ideas, but deployment at a speed and scale that is accessible to all.
37. This is how we turn idealism to pragmatism, as the theme of this event suggests.

Closing

Ladies and Gentlemen,

38. We are living through a period of fragmentation. That much is clear.

39. But fragmentation does not have to mean paralysis. If anything, it raises the premium on leadership, partnership, and pragmatism.

40. Thailand stands ready to play its part -- as a connector, a contributor, and a country committed to a sustainable and inclusive future.

41. The transition will not be easy. But it is still within our ability to do so.

42. And if we act with clarity and conviction, sustainability will not be a casualty of geopolitics. It will be the pathway through it.

Thank you.

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