

A time for change

Fellow citizens, brothers, sisters.

For the first time in months, I can stand in front of you and tell you that we are beginning to see the light at the end of the tunnel for the Covid catastrophe that has attacked the world and destroyed the livelihoods of so many millions of people here in Thailand .

While we are still some way from being able to declare total victory in this fight, we can at least see that the situation is being brought under control and that we have been recognised as one of the best countries in the world in managing the pandemic. We are now relaxing as many restrictions as possible, but at a time like this, it is especially important that we not let our guard down as the Covid virus can quickly begin a second wave of attacks. We must be extremely careful, continuing to wear masks, practicing social distancing and hand hygiene, and generally being careful about gathering together.

As we look at the future, we must prepare to face the even bigger challenge that is hitting every person in Thailand: restoring people's ability to earn a fair living.

This virus has ruined people's ability to earn an income; it has wrecked businesses of all sizes, and it has drained away our family savings. And worse, the entire world fears that things will not go back to the way they were for a very long time.

I am determined that Thailand should be as successful a world-leading example in its economic recovery as it was with its health management in the face of the Covid catastrophe. Today, I want to talk about how we might be able to do that.

The Covid-19 crisis has shown me two things about the spirit of Thai-ness and that are among our nation's greatest strengths and which give me hope that we will be able to take charge again of our own future.

- **First, it has shown me the willingness of all Thais to work together as one;** to pull together in times of crisis and help each other; during these difficult days I have seen people with hardly enough to eat themselves, sharing their food with others on the street, and others who risk their own lives so that others may stay healthy. It is something that is repeated across cities, towns and villages of our great country. And it is something that has left a deep impression on me.
- The other most amazing thing that the Covid-19 crisis has shown me is how many **great people there are out there, at every level, with great ideas, great capabilities, great energy, and an unbounded willingness to work for their country.**

So, I have been asking myself – with so many great ideas and capable people out there, and with so many willing to work together in a spirit of national collaboration, **why don't we, as a nation, work like this always?**

Why doesn't the government and the country work as if there was a crisis every day so that we can move further and faster to improve the lives of people, just as we did during the Covid-19 crisis?

In the post-Covid era, it's time for us to look beyond the daily distractions of politics, and for us, as your elected officials, to accelerate our work to better the lives of people.

As the Covid crisis recedes, we will all be entering a new world with 'new normals': a new world in which we must work in new ways to survive and be successful. The need to work in new ways applies to everybody, including the government...

So, today, I would like to tell you that I will lead by example and make the first 'new normal' ways of working in the way that the government works.

- 1. The first thing I have resolved to do in the way the government works is to make sure all sectors and all levels of society have a greater role in developing the nation's way forward in the post-Covid era.**

In the post-Covid era, I would like to change the way we make POLICIES and PLANS in government. The drawing up of policies and plans must become more inclusive of the people who are directly affected by the decisions of government. We must move away from the old world where the public discovers how their lives will be affected by new government policy only after reading about it in newspapers or online, and, instead, the public must become a more integral part of the development of policy. The public's point of view must be heard more as we shape and make policy decisions.

During the height of the Covid crisis I visited a number of business and trade associations and saw how useful it was to hear directly from people in each sector. I would like to expand on that way of working.

What I, as the leader of this nation, will do in the future is to better harness the great body of talent in our country and help it to do greater good for the country. There are so many people who are willing to do more for their country, but they just need the opportunity to contribute. I will do my best to give them that opportunity.

In the weeks ahead, I will be asking various sectors to conceive and propose a plan on how they can contribute to helping Thailand make giant strides forward. I will ask to hear their vision for their sector and transformative ideas that can transform their sector and improve people's lives and incomes.

I will ensure that government studies those proposals transparently and then helps in the implementation of ideas that are right for the country in a way that is based on consensus, and is coordinated with the rest of the economy and the interests of all citizens.

I firmly believe that people at every level throughout the country have a role to play in bringing prosperity to our country – from ministers, civil servants, business owners, professionals, employees, farmers, teachers and representatives of civil society... everyone has a role.

If each can improve their ability to work and earn, even in some small way; if each can improve their opportunities for a better future, then we can, at least, make a start to creating a better society. This country has much talent. And this country belongs to us all. So, this is the way we should work - together. Nobody has all the answers. But between us all, working together, I know that we will find most of the answers.

- 2. The second thing that I have resolved to do in the way that the government works is that, having made plans together, we must also look and see if what we are doing is actually benefiting the people in the way we intended... and if not, then to make changes to those programmes.**

The way we implement must also change. It must become more effective, and we must eliminate waste. This is especially important after we have already spent so much as a result of the Covid emergency, and which has left us less with which to do things to develop the country. People must be able to give direct feedback to the highest levels of government on whether programmes are working and whether they are being implemented well. I will find a way to make this happen, too.

- 3. The third new way of working for government is to move forward with even greater proactive purpose.**

In this time of rapid global change, we, too, must change and run government in a more proactively coordinated way between the agencies. I will, therefore, designate certain urgent priority policies for ministries to submit for cabinet consideration, and I will monitor these projects closely for their efficient and prompt implementation.

As we move forward with these new ways of working, there may, of course, be some critical voices along the way. But I will reach out to those people, too. I will hear them, and I will ask them for their ideas for improvement. The people of this country can no longer wait to get on the path of prosperity... we cannot spend endless months and years debating while the people wait. We no longer want to be discouraged from striding forward towards our destiny and prosperity by political distractions. It is a long road, but one that we must start down now.

I would, therefore, like to kick-off today a national mission to plan a great Thailand together under a nation building programme I have called 'Thais Together Build Thailand'. And I would like to invite every citizen to resolve to do their part and be ready to contribute to that plan.

I am determined – completely and resolutely determined – that this crisis must help us re-shape our nation and that we should emerge from this terrible Covid ordeal a new nation that is stronger, more respected, and as one nation bound together tightly by our common heritage, our common sacrifices, and our love for each other. We must now lay down the fundamentals for sustainable prosperity, and open the way for Thais to rediscover who and what they really are and all that they are truly capable of achieving.

It is a time of change. It is a time for change. And it is a time of great opportunity to improve our country and our lives.

Thank you.

A time for change

ABBREVIATED

Today, I announced an important decision to introduce some New Normal ways of working for myself and the government and based on the valuable learnings from our very successful management of the Covid-19 public health challenges.

1. **The FIRST New Normal is that we must create more opportunities for the talent in this country to contribute to nation-building and let all sectors and all levels of society have a greater role in developing the nation's way forward in the post-Covid era, working together in a united way.**

In the weeks ahead, I will be writing and inviting various sectors to visualize and propose a plan on how they can contribute to helping Thailand make giant strides forward. I will ask to hear their vision for their sector and ideas that can transform their sector and improve people's lives and incomes.

I will ensure that government studies those proposals transparently and then helps in the implementation of ideas that are right for the country in a way that is coordinated with the rest of the economy and the interests of all citizens.

This New Normal way of working is based on the way we worked to successfully manage the public health crisis created by Covid-19 and which has drawn international admiration for our country and for how people from all sectors and groups in society were mobilised and involved in managing the crisis. They were entrusted with important jobs to do and, when they were empowered, we all saw what a great job they could do by combing their capabilities with the great collaborative spirit that is so special to Thais.

I want to work in this way to bring about improvement to every sector of society under a new programme that I have called 'Thais Together Build Thailand'.

2. **The SECOND New Normal is that the highest levels of government must get more direct feedback from the people affected by government policies.**

We need to set up a better 'feedback' loop where citizens can immediately inform whether government programmes are really delivering citizens the benefits as intended, or whether they are hobbled by impractical steps, or unrealistic conditions, or bad implementations. This will ensure that we use state resources effectively, in the best interests of the people, and also help us fix implementation errors quickly.

3. **And the THIRD New Normal will be for government – in this time of rapid global change – to move forward with even greater proactive purpose and coordination. I will, therefore, designate certain urgent priority policies that I believe are of the utmost importance for citizens and ask for ministries to submit them for cabinet consideration. I then will monitor them closely for their quick and effective implementation.**

We saw very clearly how effectively the many government agencies involved dealing with Covid-19 could work when we opened the way for an integrated, coordinated approach. I must ensure that more of that can happen.

This is a time for change to a New Normal. I am determined that the Covid-19 crisis must be a turning point for us to rediscover what all Thais are really capable of achieving, opening up new opportunities for us to improve our lives as well as our nation, and to bring respect to our country on the global stage.

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Prime Minister announces 3 New Normal ways of working for himself and the government in a landmark change

Prime Minister Prayut Chan-o-cha today announced 3 New Normal ways of working for himself and the government, promising a landmark change in the way that he and the government works and which are designed to harness the capabilities of a broad cross-section of society and as well as the knowledge of those directly involved in various sectors of the economy and civil society.

He said, “The Thai spirit of collaboration was the key to Thailand becoming one of the most successful countries in the world at managing the Covid-19 public health crisis,” and that the “government and the country should work as if there was a crisis every day so that we can move further and faster to improve the lives of people, just as we did during the Covid-19 crisis.”

Gen Prayut said that based on the success model of the government’s management of the Covid-19 public health crisis he will lead by example and adopt three New Normals in the way that both he and the government work in the post-Covid world in order to accelerate the development of Thailand.

1. **NEW NORMAL 1:** Greater direct involvement of all sectors in the government’s planning to build a greater Thailand. He will invite representatives from all sectors to present their recommendations to accelerate Thailand’s progress under a programme called ‘Thais Together Build Thailand’. He believes in mobilizing a wider pool of talent in Thailand to help the nation’s development, and in taking direct input from people who live the realities of their sectors.
2. **NEW NORMAL 2:** He will make it easier for stakeholders to feedback to the highest levels of government their evaluation of the efficacy of government projects and any need for adjustment or improvement.
3. **NEW NORMAL 3:** He will take a very close interest in a select number of ministry projects that he believes are of the utmost priority for citizens and champion them for quick and effective implementation.

“Everyone in the world is adjusting the way they work as a result of Covid-19 and that the government must do so, also.”

EXCERPTS from the Prime Minister's Remarks 17 June 2020

- *“The Covid-19 crisis has shown me the willingness of all Thais to work together as one and that there are people, everywhere and at every level, with an unbounded willingness to work for their country... So, why doesn't the government and the country work as if there was a crisis everyday so that we can move further and faster to improve the lives of people, just as we did during the Covid-19 crisis?”*
- *“I would like to kick-off, today, a national mission to plan a great Thailand together under a nation-building programme I have called 'Thais Together Build Thailand'. And I would like to invite every citizen to resolve to do their part and be ready to contribute to that plan.*
- *“I am determined – completely and resolutely determined – that this crisis must help us re-shape our nation and that we should emerge from this terrible Covid ordeal a new nation that is stronger, more respected, and as one nation bound together tightly by our common heritage, our common sacrifices, and our love for each other. We must now lay down the fundamentals for sustainable prosperity, and open the way for Thais to rediscover who and what they really are and all that they are truly capable of achieving.”*
- ***“It is a time of change. It is a time for change. And it is a time of great opportunity to improve our country and our lives.”***