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## STATEMENT BY H.E. DR. SURAKIART SATHIRATHAI, MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF THAILAND AT THE 59TH SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY, 27 SEPTEMBER 2004

Mr. President,

At the outset, allow me to begin by congratulating Excellency Jean Ping on your election to the Presidency of the Fifty-ninth Session of this Assembly.

The United Nations has long stood for the loftiest aspirations and the noblest causes of mankind. In times of strife, it is the United Nations that holds out the hope of harmony. In times of deprivation and suffering, it is the United Nations that holds out the hope of healing.

After almost 60 years, however, this organization on which we pin so much hope is finding itself in the midst of an existential crisis. In a world ever more complex and less predictable, the UN has been struggling to redefine its meaning, identity, and relevance for the era of globalization.

To confront these new realities and more, no challenge will be greater than making the UN a more effective organization for the times. No challenge will be greater than living up to the highest ideals of the UN, with more of our actions, and less of words.

Our UN locomotive is powered by the commitment and goodwill of its members. It can take us as far as we want to go, but only if we all pull together. It can take us at any speed, but only if the power of commitment and goodwill is fully energized. For what it is and for what it will be, the UN is the creation of its members. So, in demanding more of the UN, we must also demand more of ourselves. And in asking the UN to do more, we must also be ready to be committed more.

The task ahead of us all is to make sure that all concerted efforts are made nationally, regionally and globally to advance the causes the UN stands for and to restore total confidence in the working of multilateralism.

Mr. President,

Multilateralism cannot thrive nor sustain without foundation. The foundation of the UN and its multilateralism may be its 191 member states. But what bond that binds the 191 member states to the UN multilateral system?

The world's strategic, political and economic landscape of the 21st century is certainly so far different from that of 1945, more complex and more intertwined. The layers of interwoven fiber that support such a multilateral institution as the United Nations must be modified and strengthened.

It is Thailand's belief that given today's international landscape, there is greater need than ever to create new layers of regional and sub-regional building blocks to strengthen the UN multilateral foundation. These building blocks are the bond that binds nations to the multilateral system.

In so doing, these regional and sub-regional building blocks must bear the responsibility of supporting and advancing the UN's goals on security and development: reducing poverty, combating international terrorism, fighting transnational crime, promoting human dignity and human rights and upholding the human race as a whole.

In Southeast Asia, ASEAN is to create its three pillared community: the ASEAN Economic Community, the ASEAN Security Community and the ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community by the year 2020. The realization of ASEAN communities, like in other regional or subregional communities, requires bridging the gap of development.

It was Thailand's initiative to take up the role to build that bridge by introducing the Economic Cooperation Strategy, known as ACMECS, laying the faster track to sustainable development for her neighboring countries: Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar and Vietnam. Creating more jobs and narrowing the income gap, this economic cooperation strategy will serve as a building block for the ASEAN's 3 pillared communities.

Reaching out further to the east, the ASEAN 10 are working with the East Asian friends to create the East Asian Community comprising the ASEAN 10, China, Japan and the Republic of Korea. To the west, Thailand sees the need to connect Southeast Asia's development with the friends in South Asia. The first Summit of BIMSTEC, the cooperation of 7 countries in Southeast and South Asia around the Bay of Bengal, took place in Thailand in July, agreeing on a Free Trade Agreement within the group, which forms an economic and development bridge between the two subregions.

These building blocks and partnership are part and parcel of the firm foundation for the Asia Cooperation Dialogue or the ACD, the first pan-Asian development forum. The ACD was initiated out of Thailand's conviction in the virtue of partnership in drawing strength from diversity, making diversity no longer what tears us apart but a force that unites us together. With 25 member countries from every part of Asia, and still growing, the two-and-a-half year old ACD will become an important building block for multilateral cooperation and the UN multilateral system. Through such building blocks, we can learn to live with one another's differences, to cultivate a culture of peace and tolerance to counteract the violence and terror in today's world.

Mr. President,

We cherish multilateralism as the best means to secure peace around the world. We cherish multilateralism as the best means to develop prosperity around the world. But above all, we cherish multilateralism as the best means to achieve both security and development of the world. By the same token, state security and human security that brings development must always be the two sides of the same coin.

From Iraq to Saudi Arabia, from Indonesia to Russia, shocking acts of terror have broken out, seemingly calculated to shake confidence and undermine hope. As civilized societies, we must come together to fight terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, wherever it may occur. Terrorism is a direct threat to state security, but it also undermines human security.

That is why development of human security and state security must proceed on parallel tracks. Today the world cannot be a secure place if its population is still suffering from poverty and deprivation. The world today cannot really be peaceful if we cannot be successful in our effort to make progress to achieve the Millennium Development Goals.

This is why Thailand prescribes to the enhancement of human security as a means to make the nation secure. Domestically, the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security is in charge of our policy and implementation. Internationally, we are active in the Human Security Network and other international arena where human security issues are at paramount. Thailand has long advocated the balanced development of freedom from fear and freedom from want as the two inseparable prongs of human security. We intend to continue to do so even more intensively as Thailand assumes the chairmanship of the Human Security Network in 2005-2006. We intend to further advocate this balanced development by embracing partnership between government and civil society.

The Human Security Network Statement issued in Thailand on the eve of the 15th International AIDS Conference in Bangkok last July, which was attended by over 25,000 people and recognized HIV/AIDS as an issue of both development and human security, clearly reflects development and security as part and parcel of each other.

We look at the issue of landmines in the same light. They are as much a humanitarian issue as a development one. As President of the Fifth Meeting of the States Parties to the Mine Ban Convention, I have been working with the World Bank to reflect this approach in carrying out the mine action. I am grateful for the Bank's cooperation in realizing the development dimension of the landmine issue. I also appreciate the Bank's readiness to mobilize resources for the training of deminers and capacity building for survivors so that they may function as productive members of society. We are confident that the World Bank partnership will provide State Parties to the Convention with greater resources to achieve the Convention's goal.

Mr. President,

While we are trying to secure peace for the world, while there are attempts to shatter our world's peace and security with terror, fear, hatred and violence, while many are struggling to fight against poverty, and while we are making our pledge for the Millennium Development Goals, the multilateral system that we need to rely upon is facing the challenges and threats on its effectiveness of magnitude and proportion never seen before.

But amidst those challenges, however, we are fortunate to see today some nations building partnership with nations; nations learning to live with differences and turning their differences and diversity into common strength; and nations learning to undergo higher level of tolerance economically, culturally and politically to nurture a culture of peace and a culture of tolerance. Through building blocks just as Thailand has been initiating in Asia, through Africa, through Latin America, Europe and elsewhere, and through the South-South cooperation, a number of responsible nations are ready to make contribution in their own way to turn differences into cooperation and partnership. They are partnership and building blocks that deal with security and development: the two main parameters of the UN. They are partnership and building blocks that can provide layers of foundation for more effective functioning of the UN multilateral system, the system that seeks redefining and redesigning to respond effectively to the new geo-socio and political landscape of the world.

Present-day realities – the emergence of building blocks, the inextricable linkage between development and security, and the need to develop human and state security on parallel tracks – clearly reflect how much the world has changed since 1945.

That is why UN reform is not a mere question of effectiveness of any particular organ of this august body. Nor is it merely a question of number and composition. It is more fundamental therefore to ask some of these pertinent questions?

- How can the UN be made responsive to new needs and realities and equally address the issues of security and development?
- What would be the mechanism to deal adequately with the issues of development and long-term global economic issues?
- What would be the mechanism to deal adequately with post-conflict nation building and reconstruction?
- What would be the mechanism for greater participation of civil society, recognizing them as important constituency for development and conflict resolution?
- What could be a linkage between the UN multilateral system and regional, subregional and inter-regional cooperation, recognizing them as important building blocks for more effective multilateralism?
- The Security Council reform is needed. That much is not in doubt. But if expansion is needed, what are the realistic criteria for the expansion to reach greater effectiveness? Does it need to be more transparent? What are the roles and relationship among its members?
- For the General Assembly, a body represented now by almost 200 member states, more than three times bigger than at the UN foundation, is it too cumbersome and do we remain content with its work process? The UNGA needs to be streamlined, energized, and be more focused?

Mr. President,

These are not all the questions asked. And Thailand is not the only one asking. But all of us will have to find the answers. While we are all entitled to different views, opinions, and analyses, ultimately the decision must be made by us, the members of the United Nations. Reform of such a venerable institution is never easy. We have to be realistic about that. But I have faith in the far-sightedness and wisdom of UN members to take a holistic view and choose the right path, even if it is the path less traveled. Thailand pledges to apply all our experiences in forging partnerships to play a responsible and constructive role in contributing to the UN reform process. We have supported the High-Level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change and will look forward to its report in December as well as the fruitful and constructive debate by all of us thereafter. Whether the UN recovers from its mid-life crisis or sinks into irrelevance is up to us, the member states. For what it is and what it will be, the United Nations is our own creation made of our own commitment and goodwill. It is up to us to rise to the challenge. Only when nations are united, will we get the United Nations.

Thank you.

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