

*As delivered*

**Statement**  
**by**  
**His Excellency Mr. Apirat Sugondhabhirom,**  
**Ambassador-Designate of the Kingdom of Thailand to the Republic of Turkey**  
**On the occasion of the**  
**Birthday Anniversary of His Majesty King Bhumibol Adulyadej the Great,**  
**the National Day of Thailand, and Thai Father's Day**

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**  
**Dear friends of Thailand,**

The fifth of December is undoubtedly one of the most important days for all Thais all over the world, as we celebrate three important occasions - namely, the Birthday Anniversary of His Majesty the late King Bhumibol Adulyadej the Great, or King Rama IX, as well as the National Day of Thailand, and the Thai Father's Day. It is a day of national pride for all Thai people. The opportunity also allows us to reflect on and be grateful for His Majesty the late King's vision, leadership, and dedication to Thailand during his lifetime through various endeavors and initiatives, such as His Majesty's "**Sufficiency Economy Philosophy (SEP)**", which has fostered the spirit of self-reliance for all Thais against social changes and economic externalities and uncertainties. For this, His Majesty the late King was recognized as the "Development King". The over four thousand Royal Projects throughout the country aimed to rectify various problems, ranging from water management to agriculture, environment to education, empowerment to health care, are a testament to His Majesty's vision and lifelong efforts for his people's benefit. At his own Coronation Ceremony, the present King of Thailand, His Majesty King Maha Vajiralongkorn Phra Vajiraklaochaoyuhua has solemnly pledged to the Thai Nation to "continue, maintain and build on" His Father's legacy in his own reign.

At the international level, the Fifth of December has also been designated by the United Nations General Assembly and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations as the "**World Soil Day**" to correspond with the Birthday of His Majesty King Bhumibol Adulyadej, in recognition of his works for sustainable management of soil resources when he was alive. As a testament to His Majesty King Bhumibol Adulyadej's tireless efforts to help the kingdom's vulnerable people, His Majesty also received **the first United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Human Development Lifetime Achievement Award** presented by the then United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan.

**Ladies and Gentlemen, and Friends,**

After two years since the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, humanity still encounters disruptions and challenges, recently with the discovery of the

Omicron variant. In this time of global health crisis, the Thai people are reminded of His late Majesty's wisdom on Sufficiency Economy Philosophy and the Royal Projects which have helped lay a solid foundation for Thailand's resilience in the fight against COVID-19, and in the post COVID-19 world order.

**Ladies and Gentlemen, and Friends,**

As a newly-arrived Ambassador-Designate of Thailand to Turkey, I am pleased to note that the bilateral friendship between our two countries remains strong and cordial. His Majesty the present King, while he was the Crown Prince, visited Turkey in 1992 (B.E. 2535) and there have been high-level exchanges of visits of our leaders and ministers other than that Royal Visit. Both Thailand and Turkey are committed to further strengthening our cooperation in all dimensions, in particular, the recent implementation of our own national policy, namely the Bio-Circular-Green Economic Model (BCG) of the Thai government and the Turkish Action Plan on EU Green Deal.

During the pandemic years, the two sides have enhanced bilateral cooperation in the fields of mutual interests for the post COVID-19 world, just to name a few: (1) Science, Technology, and Innovation Cooperation (2) Green and clean energy (3) Health and tourism, and (4) Defence technology and security cooperation.

In spite of the COVID-19 pandemic, the public sectors of both sides have continued to engage with each other, at least in the virtual format, for examples: (1) the 5<sup>th</sup> Round of Political Consultations between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the two countries was held online in July of this year, (2) the online meeting between Turkish Space Agency and the Thai space agencies to discuss the space cooperation took place in June of this year and (3) the meeting between Turkish Ministry of Industry and Technology and National Innovation Agency of Thailand to discuss cooperation in the field of startups and innovation in April this year (2021). In the first quarter of 2022, we hope that the upcoming 4<sup>th</sup> meeting of Joint Economic and Technical Commission, to be co-chaired by the Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister of Thailand on one side and Minister of Industry and Technology of Turkey on the other side, will pave the way for a closer partnership between the two countries.

On multilateral front, besides cooperation in the United Nations framework, both Thailand and Turkey can work together more closely in various other forums, such as the Asia Cooperation Dialogue (ACD) of which Thailand is a co-founder and Turkey has just successfully completed its chairmanship and handed over the chairmanship to Bahrain last month; the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, or ASEAN, with its birthplace in Thailand and with Turkey as a Sectoral Dialogue Partner since 2017 ; and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) of which Turkey is an active member and Thailand is an observer. Next year (2022), Thailand will hold the chairmanship of Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation

(APEC) under the theme “Open. Connect. Balance.” With this role, Thailand can act as a bridge for Turkish public and private sectors that wish to be connected to the region under Turkey’s policy of “Asia Anew Initiative”. Likewise, we hope that Turkey, with its strategic location, may be also our bridge towards Europe, the Middle East, Central Asia, and Africa.

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

As international travel restrictions have eased and Thailand has cautiously and gradually re-opened itself for Thai nationals and foreign visitors, the Royal Thai Embassy in Ankara has endeavored to provide dedicated consular services to Thai nationals as well as foreign friends wishing to go to Thailand, not only in Turkey but also in the four countries under the Embassy’s jurisdiction namely, Azerbaijan, Georgia, North Macedonia and Turkmenistan. In pre-COVID-19 time, Turkey was one of the favorite tourist destinations for Thai people, and Thailand, on the other hand, was one of the favorite destinations for our Turkish friends. We hope to welcome you in Thailand again when, *insha Allah*, the pandemic is put under control and international travels are back to normal.

**Ladies and Gentlemen, and friends,**

Although the current COVID-19 situation does not permit us to celebrate this auspicious occasion in a normal National Day Reception format, I wish to express my sincere appreciation to all of you for kindly joining us virtually to celebrate our 2021 Thai National Day, to commemorate the benevolence of His Majesty the late King Bhumibol Adulyadej the Great who shall always remain in the hearts of the Thais and many friends of Thailand, and also to express our best wishes to Thailand’s present monarch, His Majesty King Maha Vajiralongkorn Phra Vajiraklaochaoyuhua, in the performance of his duties towards the Thai people as our Sovereign under the system of Constitutional Monarchy and Democracy in Thailand.

May I also pledge, as the new Thai ambassador, to do my utmost to further promote the friendship and good relations already happily existing between the Kingdom of Thailand and the Republic of Turkey, as well as the cordial ties between Thailand and the Republic of Azerbaijan, Georgia, the Republic of North Macedonia, and Turkmenistan, to the next level during my term of duty in Ankara. Long live friendship!

I wish you all good health and safety from COVID-19.

Thank you very much.

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