

(as delivered)

Remarks
At a Gala Dinner
“Thai New Year 2558-Songkran Festival 2015”
by
H.E. Mrs. Busaya Mathelin,
Ambassador of Thailand to Spain
Thursday 2 April 2015 at 20.30 hrs. at Hotel Botanico, Tenerife

H.E. Mr. Wolfgang Kiessling, Honorary Consul-General of Thailand in Canary Islands, and President of Loro Parque
Mrs. Sandra Rodriguez, Mayor of Puerto de la Cruz
Mr. Ricardo Fernandez de la Puente, Vice-Counselor of Tourism, Distinguished Guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good evening, buenas tardes.

At the outset, let me express my sincere appreciation to H.E. Mr. Wolfgang Kiessling for a very warm welcome and his dedication in collaborating with the Royal Thai Embassy in Madrid to organize this special event: **Celebration of Thai New Year and Songkran Festival 2015** in this beautiful island of Spain.

Today, the 2nd April 2015, is also the day that Thai people around the world are celebrating the Auspicious Occasion of the **60th Birthday Anniversary of Her Royal Highness Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn.**

Her Royal Highness is well respected and admired by Thai people as the “Working Princess”. Her experiences and her extensive knowledge in several areas have led to her initiatives to create a large number of development projects aimed at improving a livelihood of Thai people across the country.

Today, apart from undertaking programmes in Thailand, Her Royal Highness’ initiatives have extended to other countries such as Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar and Mongolia to improve living conditions of peoples there.

Her dedication to integrated development programmes is widely recognized internationally. In 2004, the World Food Programme invited her to become a Goodwill Ambassador for School Feeding to help promote the benefits of WFP’s Food for Education projects. In 2005, She was designated UNESCO Goodwill Ambassador for the Empowerment of Minority Children through Education and through the Preservation of their Intangible Cultural Heritage, in recognition of her outstanding commitment to education and to the welfare of children in remote areas.

Her Royal Highness Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn is also well known as the Princess of Music, Culture and Arts. She is gifted in painting and making artifacts since her childhood. She has promoted Thai artistic heritage and Thai classical music. She also plays Thai musical instruments, especially ranard or Thai xylophone.

To celebrate this auspicious occasion, the Royal Thai Embassy in Madrid is organizing a mobile exhibition on the “Working Princess” at the Reception Hall of Hotel Botanico to demonstrate Her Royal Highness’ dedication to the development of Thailand and Thai people.

**Distinguished Guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Thailand and Spain have long enjoyed friendly relations since 1870. Close ties between our two royal families are shown through more than 25 royal visits over the past 50 years. Several of them to Tenerife both at Loro Parque and Siam Park ,including visits of Her Majesty Queen Sirikit of Thailand (1996), Her Royal Highness Princess Galyani Vadhana (1992?,2004), Her Royal Highness Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn (2008), and Her Royal Highness Princess Chulabhorn Walailak (2009).

As Ambassador of Thailand to Spain, I attach high priority to promotion of people-to-people relations through cultural activities. I am a believer in cultural diplomacy as I find it a more subtle way to create long and sustainable links between nations and their peoples.

This year we have chosen to organize the Thai Festival in Tenerife. It is a natural choice. We know it will be a success because we work with Mr. Kiessling who is also known as Thai Ambassador to Tenerife.

On this note, I would like to express my sincere thanks and deep appreciation to Mr. Kiessling and Brigitte as well as their hard-working staff for helping us realize this project.

The Celebration of Thai New Year and Songkran Festival 2015 is the joint efforts between the Royal Thai Embassy in Madrid, the Thai Honorary Consulate-General in Canary Islands, the Department of Information, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Thailand, the Tourism Authority of Thailand and Thai Airways International. It comprises a series of activities both in Tenerife from the 2nd to the 4th of April and in Madrid on the 7th of April. We have invited a Thai cultural troupe from the famous Banditpattanasilp Institute to perform Thai classical dances and a group of Thai professionals to demonstrate fruits and vegetable carving as well as umbrella-painting techniques which you can see in front of the lobby. And I wish to thank all of them for their valuable contribution and collaboration.

Lastly, I would like to thank all of you for being with us tonight. I wish you a pleasant evening. Please enjoy signature Thai dishes while watching Thai cultural performances .

Que pasen una agradable velada!
Muchas gracias. Khob khun ka.
